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The Multi-Faceted Nature of Racially Transformative Practices:
Bringing to Light the Invisibilized Labor and Leadership of Teachers of Color

A dissertation in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Josephine Hoang Pham

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Multi-Faceted Nature of Racially Transformative Practices:
Bringing to Light the Invisibilized Labor and Leadership of Teachers of Color

by

Josephine Hoang Pham

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Thomas M. Philip, Co-Chair

Professor Megan Loefer Franke, Co-Chair

A growing body of scholarship has suggested that K-12 Teachers of Color are uniquely positioned to enact instructional and institutional changes in classrooms and schools that expand educational opportunities for Students of Color; yet, a holistic understanding of the situational dynamics in which social change occurs remains insufficiently theorized, examined, and practiced. In this dissertation, I contribute to addressing this gap by investigating the *racially transformative practices* of four Teachers of Color serving a predominantly low-income Student of Color population in Los Angeles, California. Applying my *place-based raciolinguistics framework* as a theoretical and methodological approach, I examine how racialized dimensions of inequities are reproduced and transformed in schools through micro-level interactional

processes, situated within broader historical, structural, and sociopolitical contexts. Designed as a yearlong critical ethnomethodological study with a humanizing approach to research, I draw on 110 hours of video and audio recording, ethnographic field notes, interviews, and artifacts as data to examine various social spaces in which Teachers of Color engage in racial justice work, including classrooms, teacher union meetings, professional development, school-wide events, and community protests.

Through my multidisciplinary, multi-scalar framework and embodied raciolinguistic analysis, I describe how Teachers of Color draw on collective racialized experiences to recognize and transform place-based dynamics of marginalization. In addition, I detail how place-based dynamics influence the way Teachers of Color strategically foreground particular aspects of their social identities to mobilize students, families, teachers, and community members towards social change in the interests of marginalized communities. I also demonstrate the fluidity and constructed nature of “leadership” by documenting how the transformative resistance of Teachers of Color at the intersections of multiple identities and oppressions shape the extent to which they are seen and treated as “leaders” in certain contexts. Considering the multi-faceted nature of racially transformative practices, particularly social activities that are seemingly mundane yet contribute significantly to ongoing struggles for liberation and justice, I argue that teachers’ racially transformative practices are often overlooked, misunderstood, and underappreciated—factors which contribute to issues of teacher preparation, retention, and sustainability.

Offering a more comprehensive framework of social change that considers the embodied and place-based dimensions of racially transformative practices enacted over time, as well as an analytic tool for examining and amplifying the invisibilized labor and racial justice leadership of

Teachers of Color, I provide implications for teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders, and researchers seeking to prepare, support, and retain Teachers of Color who work towards social transformation and restoration of humanity for and alongside marginalized students, teachers, families, and communities.

Keywords: *Teachers of Color, change agent, teacher education, social transformation*

The dissertation of Josephine Hoang Pham is approved:

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2019

DEDICATION

To former, present, and future Teachers of Color in the struggle:

In honor of your pain & joy and the seeds you sow,

seen and unseen, heard and unheard.

(Y)our work matters.

Thank you.

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“When I decided to speak, I had many things to say, and many ways in which to say what I wanted to say....” –Maya Angelou

In the spirit of Maya Angelou’s sentiment on healing from trauma and learning to speak our truths, this dissertation is a labor of love and self-reflection, and one form of reclaiming my truth. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the people who have helped me develop the language to say what I want to say, and “many ways in which to say what I wanted to say.”

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CHAPTER ONE:

ILLUMINATING RACIALLY TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES

Our schools are under attack, what do we do? (Stand up fight back!)
Our students are under attack, what do we do? (Stand up fight back!)
Our teachers are under attack, what do we do? (Stand up fight back!)
Our workers are under attack, what do we do? (Stand up fight back!)
The unions are under attack, what do we do? (Stand up fight back!)

Julissa¹ led a chant through a megaphone as a group of about forty teachers, family members, staff, and community members responded to her calls while marching in a circle. With her small 5’4” frame in the sea of people wearing red, you might have missed her, but there was nothing little or forgettable in spirit, heart, and volume about this Pinay. She was the lead organizer who also happened to be Makario’s life partner. The Filipinx couple met almost fifteen years ago as undergraduates organizing for the inclusion of Ethnic Studies in higher education, and now shared space as teacher union organizers. Millennials would probably refer to them as “#relationshipgoals.”

It took a while for me to actually find Makario, who had invited me to the event, as I scanned the crowd, and I finally found him wearing a newsboy hat and red T-shirt that read “AMERICA NEEDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS” in bold capital letters. Caught off guard that he was not clad in his usual button-down long sleeve shirt and tie, I noticed how much at ease he looked as he blended in with the crowd.

Makario waved me over and introduced me to an energetic man fluidly speaking in both Spanish and English to a Latinx parent holding volunteer-made signs. “Chivos, this is

¹ Pseudonyms are used in place of all identifying information to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Josephine.” As this lead union organizer of Colombian descent handed me one of the signs that read “Nicki Community needs: a ‘fair and equitable’ school for our students,” he shook my hand with a warm smile and asked, “So are you a teacher, too? A student? A parent?”

“I’m a grad student at UCLA, but I used to teach.” I laughed at the thought I could really fit into any three of those categories as Chivos kindly assured me it was a compliment and fist bumped me, having been a UCLA Bruin himself. I held the gifted sign to my chest and skipped over to join the march circulating from the end of the block to the front office of Nicki Elementary School.

It was 9:30 a.m. on a Tuesday in late September 2017, and leaders of the teacher union, including Makario, were given release time from their teaching responsibilities to organize parents, teachers, community members, and staff to come together to kick off their yearlong campaign for public schools that students deserved. While most of the signs created for the campaign primarily focused on demands for quality public education given the rise in privatizers investing in charter schools, there were also printed signs with an emphasis on immigrant rights given Trump’s decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program earlier that week. As Makario had texted me earlier that week, Nicki Elementary School was a prime location for the media, and there was easy access to parking, a major plus for a demographically concentrated place like Los Angeles. Strategically, he shared, elementary parents tended to have a higher attendance rate than secondary parents, and the timing was ideal: parents who dropped off their children at school were already present drinking coffee and eating donuts, and teachers who worked at the school came out during their nutrition break to join the chant. Two Latinx children who looked to be seven and eight years old also rushed to the fence, with their hands gingerly wrapped around the diamond-shaped wires and little noses peeking out

the center, to see the commotion of adults chanting in a circle at the front of the school. A Latino man, holding a printed sign that read “SHIELD AGAINST Immigrant Detention & Deportation,” marched in front of me while taking a picture of the children and pumping his fist in the air: “Look at our little Dreamers!” As I circulated away from the children at the fence and towards the front office, I saw elderly Latinas holding signs that read “We want OUR classrooms back” and “Keep public schools PUBLIC,” chanting along while seated in a chair, not physically mobile yet still a part of the march nonetheless. I smiled at Makario as I caught his eye across from my position, holding his own sign that read “Co-Location is Wrong,” as we all responded “We’ll never be defeated!” to Julissa’s “The teachers united!”

As we rounded the block one last time, we gathered around a podium ready to hear Latinx parents and teachers, as well as Black community organizers, take the stand to share their stories and support for the union’s demands for quality public education, including smaller class sizes, more nurses and psychologists on-site, fair living wages, and charter school accountability (See Figure 1.1). Right before the cameraman from Channel 5 started recording, a White man with salt and pepper hair asked us if we wanted water, and we nonverbally passed water bottles down the line. While quenching our thirst, I marveled at the feeling of being connected to the group of people I had just met that morning: in that moment, I was not just a researcher, I was also part of this collective action. Looking around to see where the staff members and union leaders were, I noticed they stood behind the camera. Chivos was wiping sweat from his head while leaning in to whisper to Makario; Julissa looked onward while taking pictures of us gathered around the podium, while other staff members reorganized posters from the march back into a pile.

Figure 1.1: Campaign Launch



I had so many questions for Makario after the campaign launch: *How did conversations for selective timing and location happen? How were decisions made around who would speak at the event? Who do I thank for my poster? Who knew to put out chairs for the elderly?* Makario shrugged and gave a hearty laugh, “I guess I’m so used to this model of organizing, I don’t really think about it anymore.” Sensing his surprise to my stream of questions, I asked Makario to elaborate; he replied:

I think because of the world we live in it's like whoever's the loudest or whoever's front and center is who we automatically think is the person that is in charge or the person that made shit happen. Even when it comes to a show right? You have the actor that's like the main actor, Leonardo DiCaprio, where everybody is like, "Oh he's the best actor in the world. He made *Titanic* the best." But the people that made it happen were the people that you don't see or the supporting actors that fucking rips and sets everything up, the fucking person that ordered food so that they could eat, you know? But in our eyes, in American eyes, the person that made *Titanic* is Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio (Interview).

Bringing the “Background” to the Foreground

A growing body of scholarship has suggested that Teachers of Color² are uniquely positioned to enact instructional and institutional changes in classrooms and schools that expand educational opportunities for Students of Color; yet, a holistic understanding of the situational dynamics in which social change occurs and unfolds remains insufficiently theorized, examined, and practiced. Considering Makario’s wisdom, attention towards social change tends to focus more on what is happening at the forefront of these efforts than on the conditions that enable the platform needed for social change to take place. Given the complex strategies involved to co-create the platform for the campaign launch described in the opening of this chapter, and the regional responses to the sociopolitical climate at that time, I wonder how often seemingly mundane, seemingly simple yet critical and multi-layered moments for racial justice happen so frequently, so quickly, often quietly, that these “behind-the-scenes” practices situated in a broader historical and structural context go underappreciated and unnoticed, even by the teachers themselves. These efforts have great influence over the trajectories of social change, and given their taken-for-granted nature, the cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, political, and ethical dimensions of these situated practices may slip out of sight. After all, it is through these everyday and escalating social activities that ongoing struggles for liberation and justice are sustained and bolstered. As was the case for the social activities that contributed to the media campaign launch, for instance, such intentional engagement in activities over the course of three years eventually led to the largest teacher strike Los Angeles had seen in thirty years, with over 50,000 educators, students, families, and community members marching for quality public

² To challenge the marginalization of racially minoritized groups and to align with the traditions of critical race scholars, I purposely capitalize terms such as *Teachers of Color*, *Communities of Color*, *Woman of Color*, and *People of Color*.

education. What happens, then, if an understanding and examination of antiracist work shifts from what happens at the foreground to an attention to what happens in the background? What can be learned by focusing on the processes of racial justice work rather than on outcomes themselves? What do Teachers of Color actually do (and why do they do it) in the moments leading up to these events to galvanize actions that center the interests and needs of marginalized communities? The answer to these questions are necessary if teacher educators, teacher education researchers, and teacher education policymakers seek to better prepare, support, and retain (prospective) Teachers of Color in realizing their potential for social change.

What's more is that not enough is known about how to talk about the varied dimensions involved in the moment-to-moment choices involved in these practices, let alone the social contexts in which teachers are situated and racialized. Even when Teachers of Color are offered space and time to reflect on or make sense of their actions, chances are they may not be able to holistically capture an embodied phenomenon through retelling alone, as evidenced in Makario's struggle to articulate exactly what it is that he does and has done to contribute to the campaign launch. Chances are even greater, then, that teacher educators, teacher education researchers, and educational leaders don't know enough about how to holistically examine, prepare, support, and sustain (prospective) teachers' abilities to realize their potential for intentional and strategic racial justice work within their schooling contexts.

As a response to the increasingly diverse student population and enduring trends of racialized inequality, policymakers, scholars, and teacher educators debate about how to best prepare teachers as change agents in schools, particularly in urban contexts where issues of racial equities are prevalent (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2008; Villegas & Davis, 2008). And while there are differing opinions on how

best to prepare teachers due to general disagreements about the fundamental causes and remedies for inequitable schooling, I argue that part of the answer lies in the seemingly mundane, everyday work of socially conscious teachers committed to social justice, particularly in regards to Teachers of Color who are already engaging in ongoing struggles for liberation. I refer to such social activities as *racially transformative practices*, which are social activities that challenge, disrupt, and transform ideologies, practices, and structures that uphold whiteness in an effort to serve the interests and (re)claim the humanity of Communities of Color. With an understanding that race is a *social construct* wherein racial ideologies and racial structures *reconstruct* social realities that benefit the dominant race through disproportionate access to resources and power (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), an attention to *social activities* as a unit of analysis can unveil how racial hierarchies and social relations are maintained, reproduced, and transformed. While micro in nature, these interactional processes are critical, as described by sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2012):

Racial politics is an ongoing creative practice, both individual and collective. Our actions and ideas – both individual and collective – should be seen as political projects that have the potential to undo racial injustice and generate broader racial equality, and indeed greater freedom in every way... to make choices and locate themselves over and over in the constant racial “reconstruction” of everyday life (p. 327).

This is not to say that teachers’ individual and collective practices alone are enough to “undo racial injustice and generate broader racial equality,” but that their racially transformative practices significantly contribute to and are interconnected with ongoing collective struggles to reconstruct meanings of race³ in everyday life. Considering the permanence of racism that is embedded in institutions (Bell, 2004), racially transformative practices must be seen as an

³ While I privilege “race” as a category to better understand dominant and subordinate groups in my understanding of justice, I recognize intersectional layers that characterize disenfranchised communities, including those from differing cultural, linguistic, abilities, and economic backgrounds from dominant groups.

ongoing process that must occur “over and over” again. Thus, in this dissertation, I intentionally use the term *activity* to acknowledge these practices as social processes rather than isolated, static, single actions wherein justice is “achieved.” Given my ontological emphasis on social activities and the experiences of racialized groups, I also use the term *social actors* to acknowledge people as producers of social activities that reproduce, maintain, or transform racial inequities.

Purpose and Significance of Study

With an understanding that schools are institutions of civil society in which inculcation and production of power relations are prevalent (e.g., Apple, 2012), and that Teachers of Color serve as critical social actors who are uniquely positioned to produce social transformation (e.g., Montecinos, 2004), my aim in this research project is to examine the situational dynamics in which racially transformative practices, as enacted by Teachers of Color, emerge. The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) to illuminate the invisibilized labor and leadership of Teachers of Color working towards social change; 2) to develop a comprehensive theory and analytic approach to investigating processes of social transformation and social reproduction through an intersecting lens of race, place, and social activity; and, 3) to contribute to conversations about the preparation and retention of Teachers of Color as change agents.

Tracing the social processes of racially transformative practices enacted by Teachers of Color as it happens can unveil the particularities of how and why they (re)create schools as liberatory spaces. Acknowledging the endurance of racialized inequities in schools, as well as varying meanings of race across space and time (Cheng, 2013; Molina, 2014; Ochoa, 2013; Omi & Winant, 1994; 2012), my investigation of these micro-interactional processes considers the historical and structural corollaries that have shaped how race and racism operate in micro-

geographical contexts. By situating my analysis of racially transformative practices enacted by Teachers of Color through conceptual lenses of race, place, and social activity, I consider the dynamic ways they respond to local meanings of race and racism in institutionalized contexts, and how these social processes are interconnected to and/or complicate regional and national scales of inequality. I also intend to contribute to conversations about how to prepare teachers as innovators and change agents who are responsive to the conditions they encounter in schools as they currently exist, as well as how to prepare teachers to radically (re)envision and (re)imagine schools that do not exist yet (Kelley, 2002; Oakes, et.al., 2013; Orellana, et al., 2017). Through my proposed conceptual framework and empirical analysis of racially transformative practices, I offer implications for teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders, and researchers seeking to prepare, support, and retain Teachers of Color as change agents.

Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I provide an extensive literature review of conceptual and empirical research conducted about the preparation and possibilities of Teachers of Color as change agents. Arguing that fragmented approaches and understandings of social transformation lead to fragmented approaches to preparing and retaining Teachers of Color as change agents, in Chapter 3, I propose a *place-based raciolinguistics framework* as a more comprehensive theoretical and methodological approach to studying agency for change. This multidisciplinary and multi-scalar framework considers how “new” forms of social reproduction and social transformation are (re)constructed in schools situated in broader contexts, and the dynamic processes of social activities that have the potential to reproduce and recreate power relations. In Chapter 4, I describe my methodological design and analytic approach to examining racially transformative practices enacted by four Teachers of Color in diverse schooling contexts in Los

Angeles, California. I present three major findings in Chapters 5 through 7, i.e., the micro-
interactional processes through which Teachers of Color: 1) developed place-based initiatives for
racial justice work, 2) fostered place-based coalition building, and 3) navigated place-based
constructions of “leadership.” For each of these chapters, I offer three case studies to illuminate
the subtle, contextual, and diverse ways Teachers of Color enact racially transformative
practices. In Chapter 8, I discuss how a multi-faceted understanding of racially transformative
practices necessitates reframing of issues related to the preparation, learning, and retention of
Teachers of Color. I conclude with Chapter 9 by considering theoretical, methodological, and
pedagogical contributions of my study for teachers, teacher education programs, policymakers,
and researchers committed to understanding, examining, and practicing social change.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Literature Review

In a recent literature review of 1500 studies on teacher preparation research published within the last decade, Cochran-Smith and colleagues (2015) found that very few studies “raised questions about who does and does not have access in the first place, why and how systems of inequality are perpetuated, under what circumstances and for whom access makes a difference, and what the role of teachers (and teacher education) is in all of this” (p. 118). Building on the insights of select scholars who have contributed to conceptions and empirical investigations of Teachers of Color as change agents, in this chapter I consider theoretical and methodological possibilities and constraints of studying social change enacted by Teachers of Color. My literature review is organized into three themes in regard to Teachers’ of Color: ways of *knowing*, ways of *being*, and ways of *acting*.

Teachers’ of Color Ways of Knowing

Through their research, scholars have proven that the epistemological insights of Teachers of Color are critical to the educational experiences of Students of Color. Due to their own sociocultural experiences as marginalized social actors, Teachers of Color tend to be more aware of racism in schools (Sleeter, 2001), more likely to have equity-minded goals (Knight, 2002), and more likely to engage in activism in marginalized communities (Collay, 2010). Race, culture, and class are critical factors that shape students’ educational experiences in schools (Howard, 2010; Milner, 2015), and the knowledge production of teachers who share similar racial, cultural, and/or linguistic backgrounds with students can positively impact

educational outcomes for Students of Color (e.g., Klopfenstein, 2005; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). This argument implies that the epistemological insights, historical experiences, and “moral status” of People of Color serve as critical levers for social transformation (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Mills, 1997; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Achinstein and Ogawa (2011) refer to the argument that Teachers of Color are critically equipped to teach Students of Color as “the democratic imperative.” This does not mean that White teachers cannot be effective teachers for Students of Color, or that all Teachers of Color are effective teachers for Students of Color. Rather, this imperative acknowledges that the cultural and racial knowledge can expand democratic possibilities for Students’ of Color learning.

Nonetheless, Teachers of Color and their ways of knowing may not translate to practices that promote social change. While Teachers of Color may bring valuable insights that support the educational needs and interests of Students of Color, they do not inherently develop counterhegemonic ideologies and practices that challenge racial injustice and combat racist policies and practices (Villegas & Davis, 2008). For this reason, Teachers of Color are often essentialized as effective educators for their students, and their unique strengths and diverse needs are inadvertently homogenized. Not only do Teachers of Color struggle to enact practices that support the educational needs of students from other racialized groups (e.g., Philip, 2014; Lee, 2018), Teachers of Color from the same racial group of students can also be viewed as “culturally suspect” (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008). Furthermore, they may inadvertently reinscribe dominant ideologies that they are trying to counter, what Philip, Rocha, and Olivares-Pasillas (2017) refer to as “friendly-fire racism.” Knowing that many Teachers of Color have been educated within the same oppressive schooling systems they are trying to change, scholars have advocated for structured spaces to help them heal from and unpack their understandings of

their K-12 experiences (Kohli, 2014), to understand their racialized experiences in relation to their students' experiences (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Gay, 2000), to develop and nurture their racialized and politicized identities (Pour-Khorshid, 2016), and to combat alienation and isolation by sustaining their own critical development (Kohli, et al., 2015; Martinez, et al., 2016). In essence, deeper attention to learning structures that enable Teachers of Color to build upon their experiences and knowledge as it relates to understanding, recognizing, and challenging systemic racism is needed.

Teachers' of Color Ways of Being

Education scholars have also recognized the value of the presence of Teachers of Color in K-12 schools. As a response to the inverse relationship between U.S. teacher and student populations, many scholars have called upon the need to diversify the teaching population (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter & Milner, 2013; Sleeter, Neale, & Kumashiro, 2015). On a national scale, Teachers of Color make up 16.5% of the overall workforce, while 83.5% are White and mostly female; conversely, Students of Color make up 40.6% of U.S. schoolchildren, while 59.4% are White students (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Advocates for an ethnically and culturally diverse teaching population argue that honoring the ways of being of Teachers of Color – how they exist and relate to social actors – sends a message that schools and education belong to everyone (Bower-Phipps, et al., 2013), despite societal structures that naturalize and reward White middle-class norms of language, literacy, and cultural ways of interacting (Paris & Alim, 2016). In fact, Teachers of Color are two to three times more likely than White teachers to work in high poverty, high minority, urban communities with high stress factors (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Using Achinstein and Ogawa's (2011) term *demographic imperative*, the demographic gap between teachers and students may contribute to the democratic failure to

provide low-income Students of Color with equitable opportunities to learn.

Attention to the presence of Teachers of Color must also consider policy contexts in which they are situated. Despite the potential of ethnic matching between teachers and students as a way to improve student academic achievement (Easton-Brooks, 2014), scholars also argue that market-driven reform, through structures such as standardized measures of academic achievement and high-stakes accountability, only serve to reinforce dominant social order (see Croft et al., 2016). Thus, scholars have called for a more critical understanding of the pervasive racist and structural inequities that have and continue to contribute to Teacher of Color attrition across the pipeline despite their justice orientations (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Brown, 2014; Jackson & Kohli, 2016), including standardized tests that act as gatekeepers for people of Color (Brown, 2005), and diversifying the predominantly White teacher education population (Howard & Milner, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Without challenging the federal regulations and structures that re-inscribe dominant social order, a diverse teaching population in itself is not enough to promote social change.

Furthermore, an understanding of the presence of Teachers of Color must also consider the schooling context in which they are racialized. The teaching demographics in California, for example, skews the data on national teaching demographics. Particularly in Los Angeles where this study is situated, about 60% of the teacher population are Teachers of Color, as compared to 40% being White teachers. Specifically, 35% of the teachers within this region are Latinx and 11% are Black. Not only do local demographics and history of place shape what it means to be a Teacher of Color in these contexts, it also shapes their structural positioning. For example, Flores (2015) found that the structural positioning of Latina teachers varied in two multiracial schools in an ethnoburb setting and an urban setting: They were positioned below Asian

American social actors in one context, due to relative valorization, and below Black social actors in another context, due to political power. Thus, an attention to national and regional scales of race relations can further illuminate the possibilities and complexities of the presence of Teachers of Color in K-12 schools.

Teachers' of Color Ways of Acting

Scholars have also recognized that Teachers of Color are more likely to enact counterhegemonic ideologies and practices. Sociologist, philosopher, and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1997) concept of *habitus* offers one way to understand how these ways of acting are constructed. Habitus "comprises a set of historically rooted, socially organized dispositions that enable persons who have been socialized into these dispositions to interpret and creatively engage in the flow of social practices... That is, habitus affords both regularity and improvisation in social life, yielding social practices that are spontaneously orchestrated" (as cited Ochs et al., 2005, p. 547). In a Bourdieuan sense, racialized groups may develop justice-oriented dispositions and practices in response to the political, economic, and cultural conditions they have encountered. People of Color who have deep understandings of their racialization are able to engage in politics for education reform more effectively (Hoffman, 2009). "Race-identifying leaders see themselves as contemporary activists [of Color] who focus on [people of color] issues to keep the social justice agenda explicitly in the center of discourse" (Hoffman, 2009, p. 393). Their deep understandings of their own racialization and critical analyses of structural inequalities influence one another to construct their distinctive historical, social, and critical consciousness as political beings (Ralph, 2013; Sullivan, 2012). In other words, Teachers of Color who understand their shared oppression in relation to other marginalized communities are distinctively socialized to produce knowledge and practices that create a

counter-social order, one that (re)imagines liberation for their students and themselves through the possibilities of education.

However, Teachers of Color may struggle with sustaining counterhegemonic ideologies and practices due to limitations of teacher preparation and professional development. In her literature review, for example, Brown (2014) found that Teacher Candidates of Color often felt marginalized and isolated in the profession. Much of this marginalization stems from pervasive structures embedded in whiteness, excluding and neglecting the knowledge, experiences, and needs of teachers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, Teachers of Color do not adequately develop the tools needed to advance educational interests of Students of Color, skillsets to engage dialogue about race and equity issues at school sites, and resources to receive financial and social support in the profession (Achinstein et al., 2010). The barriers that hinder the preparation of Teachers of Color as change agents are linked to a broader critique of teacher preparation programs that do not support teachers to meaningfully develop relationships among teachers, schools, families, and communities in the education of students (Zeichner, 2016).

Teachers of Color must account for foundational knowledge about the communities they serve as it relates to their own racialized experiences, as well as develop the leadership skills to work within and beyond the classroom (Nieto, 2007). Not only are these understandings and skillsets important for teacher learning purposes, they are important for teacher activism purposes. Pantic (2015) challenges the work of social justice educators by moving beyond teaching as an isolated teacher-classroom activity, and reframing teachers' actions through a lens of relational agency. Rather than seeing change as an individualistic endeavor, Pantic (2015) advocates for developing teacher candidates' capacity to work purposefully with students, teachers, administrators, and community members.

Many educational scholars have outlined important characteristics, qualities, dispositions, and pedagogical content knowledge needed for effective teaching in urban schools (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ginwright, 2015). However, these approaches to understanding and implementing social change may not holistically account for the dynamic methods by which Teachers of Color engage ways of knowing, being, and acting in context. It also overlooks the complex relationship between ideology and practice in that social actors may inadvertently reproduce inequities, even with well-meaning intentions (Garcia-Sanchez, 2016; Nyachae, 2016; Philip et al., 2017), or simultaneously challenge whiteness while reproducing cis-heteropatriarchy (Alim, et al., 2018). At the same time, not all justice-oriented Teachers of Color take the step from private individual to public actor and engage in racially transformative practices in schools. For various reasons, including “fear, pervasive nature of hegemonic discourses and the internationalization of self-hate, apathy and limited faith in their ability to effect change...” people – and those of Color specifically – might “...choose not to act publicly, regardless of how exploited or oppressed they may be” (Pulido, 2006, p. 30). Thus, a deeper understanding of the diverse ways they engage in micropolitical activities to navigate institutionalized context (Armstrong et.al., 2013; Ryan & Armstrong, 2016) as it relates to their ways of knowing and being are needed to understand how they act as change agents.

Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Social Change

Making the case that fragmented approaches to examining racially transformative practices contribute to fragmented understandings about the preparation and retention of Teachers of Color, I argue that a comprehensive theoretical and methodological approach is needed to understand how ways of knowing, being, and acting intersect in social space to create social change in schools as situated within a broader societal context. The political project that

my research agenda aims to illuminate, then, is how power relations are reproduced and transformed through an examination of situated racially transformative practices. A multi-scalar and multi-disciplinary framework to studying social change, one that illuminates how Teachers of Color meaningfully work across different interactional spaces to enact change within a local context, can offer new possibilities for teacher preparation and professional development as change agents.

CHAPTER THREE:
PLACE-BASED RACIOLINGUISTICS FRAMEWORK

Overview of Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I describe a multi-disciplinary, multi-scalar lens to study the construction, maintenance, and evolution of race and racism in K-12 schools. Bringing multi-disciplinary lenses together to conceptualize the joint process of top-down and bottom-up aspects of social change, I propose *place-based raciolinguistics* as a theoretical and methodological framework to examine racialized places, and the everyday interactions that happen in them, as inextricably linked processes of social reproduction and social transformation. My overall framework draws inspiration from Ethnic Studies, a critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity, with a political and ethical commitment to center the ways of knowing, being, and acting of racialized groups. In the section that follows, I describe how I draw upon *critical geography* to conceptualize the central role of race and racism in the purposeful and dynamic reconstruction of space and place (macro scale). Then, I discuss the utility of *raciolinguistics* to conceptualize how place-based racial dynamics are reproduced, maintained, and transformed through everyday interactional processes, particularly with how race is experienced in body and in being by racialized groups (micro scale). Arguing that the historically and structurally contingent nature of racial formation across scales are mutually constitutive social processes and must be examined as such, I end this chapter by considering how a multi-scalar framework of social change can illuminate a more comprehensive understanding of the (re)construction of race, and in turn, offer new learning opportunities for the preparation and retention of Teachers of Color.

(Re)Construction of Schools as Racialized Places

To understand schools as places of social reproduction and social transformation, I draw on *critical geography* to conceptualize the central role of race, racism, and white supremacy in the purposeful and dynamic construction of place. Acknowledging that schools are reflective of the social, racial, economic, and political orders of the larger societies in which they are embedded, a critical geographical lens considers larger historical and structural conditions that produce schools as racialized places. According to critical geographers, places are not “simply a setting, but rather [they play] an active role in the construction and organization of social life” which are “entangled with processes of knowledge and power” (Neely & Samura, 2011, p. 1937). With an understanding that race is a central feature to power relations in the U.S., “this suggests that race – in all of its complexity and ambiguity, as ideology and identity – is what it is and does what it does precisely because of how it is given spatial expression” (Delaney, 2002, p. 7). In other words, schools are social spaces that constitute and reinforce social reproduction through dominant race relations in geographical form. Racial hierarchies are reflected in spatial expressions of power and dominance in schools (Soja, 1996), including structures such as racial tracking and discipline structures that disproportionately impact Black and Latino males. Racial hierarchies are also reflected in physical boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (Anyon, 2014; Solórzano & Vélez, 2016), such as the production of segregated schools through state-enabled local zoning exclusions based on race and social class. In other words, as long as schools function as racialized places that benefit dominant groups through disproportionate access to resources and power, schools as social spaces and physical places can be described as “ideological” and “political” (Cresswell, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991; Lipsitz, 2005; Omi & Winant, 1994, 2012).

While historical and structural conditions produce schools as racialized places, the conditions under which racialization emerge are not uniform. Place-specific processes of racial formation are linked to local demographics, regional economics, and local histories, which differentially shape how race is experienced in body and in being (Cheng, 2014; Pulido, 2006). The fluidity of racial hierarchies from a lens of space and place complicates and even challenges racial formation on a macro scale: at different places and times and at various scales, social actors may be socially positioned as subordinate, dominant, or in some intermediate position. Thus, a micro-geographical lens to understanding how race is reconstructed and experienced can illuminate dynamic ways in which racial inequities are produced in relation to social actors and social spaces (Molina, 2013). Place-based dynamics (re)shape characteristics of social life in schools, and in turn, (re)produce regionally-specific forms of inequalities.

Although macro- and meso-level productions of race shape the experiences of social actors in these situated and socially constructed realities, schools are also lived spaces that are actively shaped by social activity (Delaney, 2002; McCann, 2002). Given these dynamic processes, school spaces and race relations are not determinant: racialized places can be transformed to better serve the interests of marginalized groups, and new spaces can be created to serve the interests of marginalized groups. In other words, place distributes economic and educational resources inequitably to racialized groups across space and time, yet social actors can still (re)make meanings of what kind of place it is and whom the place is for. Thus, in my conceptualization of schools as spaces of social reproduction and social transformation, I consider the joint presence of larger social structures that reinforce constraints and enablement, and social processes that are conventional and innovative (Erickson, 2004).

(Re)Construction of Race through Social Activities

While a critical geographical lens enables me to theorize race, space, and place as social constructs shaped by power, this lens in itself does not adequately describe how race is conventionally and innovatively reconstructed in everyday life. Therefore, I draw on raciolinguistics as a discipline to theorize and examine racial formation through a lens of discourse (Alim, et al., 2016). From a raciolinguistic perspective, language is a critical resource that contributes to the construction, maintenance, and transformation of racial and ethnic identities (Alim & Smitherson, 2012; Reyes, 2007) as well as the construction, maintenance, and transformation of racial hierarchies (Alim et al., 2017; Goodwin & Alim, 2010; Lo, 2016). For example, in educational anthropologist Mica Pollock's (2005) three-year ethnographic study of everyday race talk in a multiracial high school, she found that social actors used a wide range of race labels to discuss school discipline, student academic achievement, and educational inequality. Regardless of the (in)accuracies or (in)appropriateness of teachers' and school leaders' race talk about and to Students of Color, Pollock (2005) concluded that suppressing race talk by being "colormute" altogether resulted in decision-making processes that re-inscribed inequitable distribution of educational resources for Students of Color. Through her conversational analysis of classroom discourse, linguistic anthropologist Inmaculada Garcia-Sanchez's (2016) found that a teacher's literacy practices inadvertently tokenized the culture of Moroccan and Roma students in Spain, racially excluding them despite the teacher's intentions to promote multicultural education. In essence, race is a discursive process in which social actors are hierarchically re-ordered and re-sorted according to power relations and access to resources.

In addition to discursive practices that contribute to the production of race in everyday

life, I also draw inspiration from the broader field of Linguistic Anthropology to understand embodiment and the material environment as critical resources that contribute to the organization of social life. Linguistic anthropologist Marjorie Goodwin (2000) argues that “language and embodied actions provide crucial resources for the achievement of social order” in that participants are able to “coordinate behavior with that of coparticipants” and “display to one another what they are doing and how they expect others to align themselves towards the activity of the movement” (p. 177). In other words, meanings of race are not just a discursive process, they are also embodied experiences in social space. Attention to embodiment illuminates the role of both the social actors and social activities; considering how power is differentially distributed across race and other social axes of differentiation such as gender, class, sexuality, and ability (Crenshaw, 1989), the marginalization and disenfranchisement of racialized groups vary at certain times and places. Extensively, power relations impact the social activities enacted by social actors in certain spaces. Thus, a shared lens of race, language, the body, and the material environment to examine social reproduction and social transformation can provide a more holistic window into the social positioning of social actors in situ.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the conditions in which racialization occurs in place are not uniform. Along the same lines, given the uneven manner in which race is experienced in body and in being, the conditions in which social actors recognize inequities and produce racially transformative practices vary. Understanding Teachers of Color as historical and politically conscious social actors whose racialized bodies are linked to their raciolinguistic practices (how they talk about race), I consider how these dual processes position Teachers of Color to challenge hegemonic ideas of race in distinctive ways, a phenomenon that historian and urban studies scholar Natalia Molina (2014) refers to as *racial counterscripts*. According to Molina

(2014), racial counterscripts are the distinctive ways racialized groups recognize and speak back to dominant forces as a means to (re)claim a dignified livelihood for Communities of Color. Due to their socialization as racialized beings, People of Color develop historically rooted, socially organized practices that enable them to resist and reimagine dominant social orders (Hoffman, 2009; Ralph, 2013). They also form antiracist alliances based on the similarity of their stories in the collective experiences of others (Molina, 2014). This coalition is premised upon the understanding that historical and contemporary mechanisms of oppression affect racialized groups, even though the racialization of People of Color are not uniform. Drawing from the concept of racial counterscripts, which was originally conceived through a historical lens, I apply a raciolinguistic approach to understand how justice-oriented Teachers of Color distinctively draw on racial counterscripts to produce racially transformative practices.

Building on my conceptions of schools as racialized places, my understanding of racial counterscripts considers the institutionalized context in which teachers are situated and racialized. In other words, my concept of racially transformative practices considers how linguistic practices are tied to bodily ways of being, knowing, and navigating within local contexts. Take linguistic and cultural anthropologist Jennifer Roth Gordon's (2016) study as an example: through her analysis, she explains how a "dark-skinned male" in Brazil engaged in linguistic practices associated with whiteness in an attempt to avoid being searched by an officer, a phenomenon she calls *racial malleability*. Gordon (2016) claims, "race is daily remade by speakers who must reconcile powerful linguistic ideologies with the social interactions that make up the substance of our everyday lives" (p. 52). Considering the ways in which racialized groups' experiences are marked by their vulnerable positioning within a racially structured society (e.g., Cruz, 2001), my understanding of social activities considers how Teachers of Color

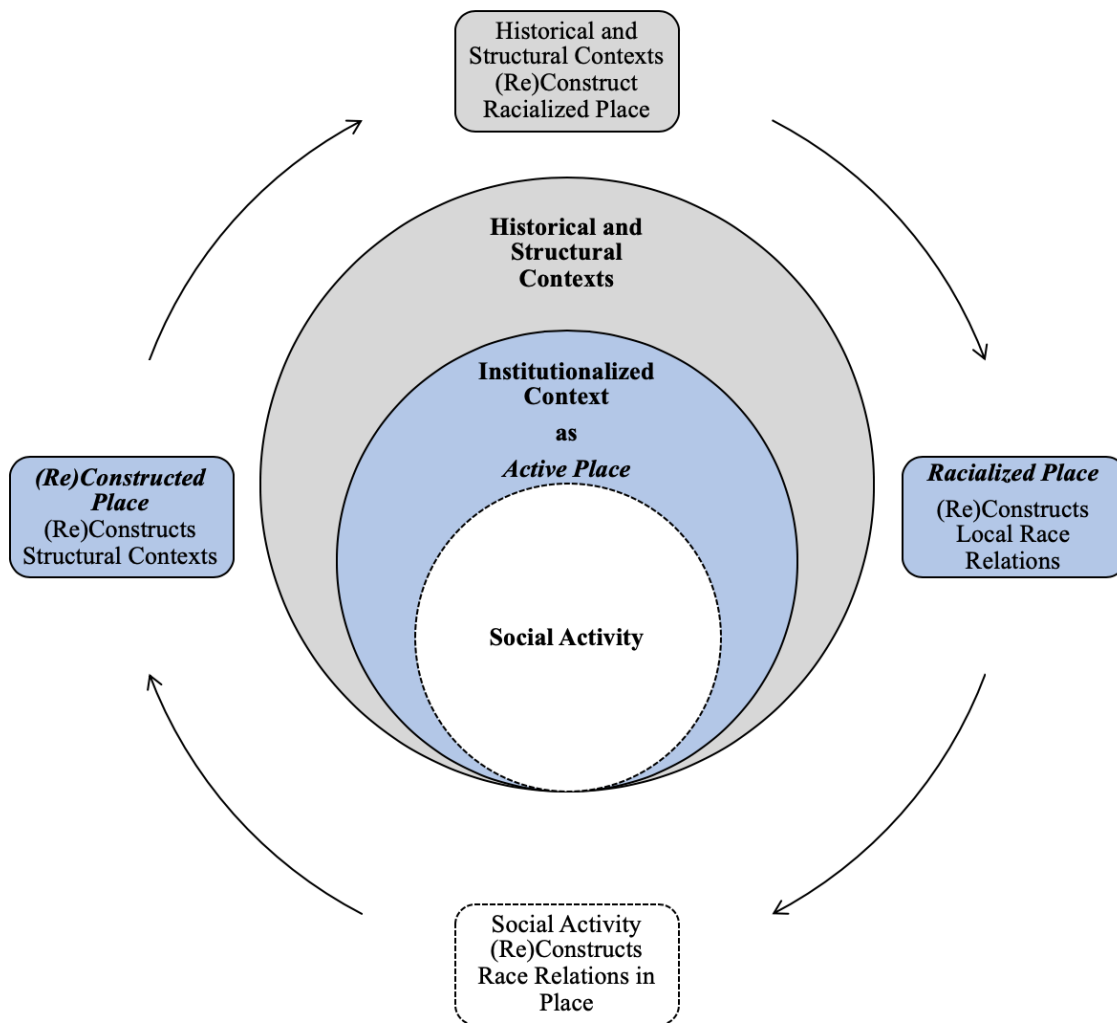
as racialized bodies strategically shift their language in context and in interaction, complicating their enactments of racially transformative practices. Therefore, in my conceptualization of the reconstruction of race through social activities, I argue that racially transformative practices are situated, historical, social, political, and embodied.

Applying a Place-Based Raciolinguistic Framework

Bridging macro-level lenses of race, space, and place, as well as micro-level lenses of race, language, the body, and the material environment, I propose *place-based raciolinguistic framework* as a theoretical and methodological approach to examining mutually constitutive process of everyday activities for social transformation and social change. This framework acknowledges the dialectical relationship between historical and structural forces that construct racialized places, place-based dynamics that reconstruct racial hierarchies, and social activities that reinforce and transform racialized places (See Figure 3.1). A multi-scalar framework that considers both top-down and bottom-up aspects of social processes enables me to explain how hegemonic forces shape and give meaning to urban schools, how racialized places construct the structural positioning and socialization of racialized groups as “embodied subjects emplaced in and moving through the material world” (Delaney, 2002, p. 7), and how racialized actors remake meanings of race in place. The more educational leaders know about the moment-to-moment unfolding of social change and how these processes are linked to place-based dynamics, the more likely they are to understand the skillsets, approaches, and sensibilities needed to form coalitions and enact change in schools, as well as the interconnected dynamics of sustaining change across multiple scales of action. Thus, an emphasis on social activities can offer great insight about the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values in place (Cresswell, 1996). Given my emphasis on Teachers of Color as change agents, I apply my

proposed framework to primarily examine spatial expressions of racial hierarchies. A focus on spatial expression does not necessarily mean that it precludes physical boundaries of inclusion and exclusion; rather, it emphasizes one aspect of a larger interconnected project for liberation. In the next chapter, I describe my methodological approach to examining racially transformative practices through a place-based raciolinguistic framework.

Figure 3.1: Place-Based Raciolinguistic Framework



CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS & METHODOLOGY

With a focus on how social activities (re)construct race relations in place, the research question guiding this dissertation is: *What are the micro-level interactional processes through which racially transformative practices enacted by Teachers of Color emerge?* Before describing my methodological approach to studying this question, I begin by summarizing a yearlong pilot study that was foundational to the design and conceptualization of my dissertation study. Building on the insights from this pilot study, I then describe how I utilized a humanizing research approach to the critical ethnomethodological design of my dissertation. In the descriptions of my data collection, data analysis, and working practices as a researcher, I also consider the possibilities, as well as the limitations, concerns, and contradictions, involved in humanizing research.

Pilot Study

To examine Teachers of Color as change agents, I used snowball sampling through referrals from justice-oriented teachers and teacher educators to recruit participants in Los Angeles who: 1) self-identified as People of Color, 2) worked in a school serving predominantly Student of Color populations for three or more years, and 3) identified as social justice educators. I purposely chose teachers who worked three or more years in order to consider their knowledge and experience within institutionalized contexts, as well as their experience navigating the bureaucracies of the teaching profession. Recruiting seven teachers in total, the participants in the pilot study were heterogeneous with respect to race/ethnicity, gender, subjects taught, and school context. I conducted the pilot study in three phases in order to experiment with various methodological and analytic approaches to studying social change. Each methodological

approach yielded its own possibilities and constraints, which I describe in further detail below.

In the initial stage of the pilot study, I relied on multiple interviews as data to examine teachers' ways of knowing about race, racism, and racial justice work. During the span of January to May 2017, I conducted: a) an initial interview with open-ended questions in order to learn about participants' historical and lived experiences as it relates to social justice; b) a follow-up interview using semi-structured questions to learn how participants' lived experiences related to their racial justice work as Teachers of Color; and, c) a focus group interview with 5 of the 7 participants to understand their shared and distinct experiences. Applying two rounds of open and focused coding to identify themes within and across teachers' interviews (Saldana, 2013), analysis of interview data afforded me insights about the historical and cognitive dimensions of their racial justice work and variations of their work with regard to institutionalized contexts and sociopolitical context in which they entered the teaching profession. However, this data alone offered abstract ideas and post-hoc understandings about their ways of knowing absent from ways of being and acting, glossing over the social dimensions and holistic realities of their racial justice work.

Thus, in the second phase of my pilot study, I conducted participant observation of one teacher's experiences participating in a teacher inquiry group during the months of September through December 2017 in order to further understand moment-to-moment unfolding of racial justice work. Inspired by the teacher's insights from interview data, my participant observations were guided by her identification of interactional spaces that were crucial to her racial justice work. Using jottings and video recordings of naturally occurring interactions as primary data sources, and applying conversational analysis with an emphasis on embodiment as an analytic tool (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004), I found that she employed tone, gestures, and facial

expressions to discursively orchestrate shared experiences and social positioning with Students of Color. Her discursive and embodied practices were critical, as she utilized her constructed social positioning to ideologically and emotionally contest other teachers' deficit ideologies about Communities of Color over the course of meeting in teacher inquiry groups. Building on interview data, this methodological approach offered crucial insights to this teacher's ways of being and acting as it related to ways of knowing about racial justice; at the same time, participant observations were limited to formal participation in decision-making structures and official leadership positions, which produced narrow views of teachers' agency for change.

In the third and last stage of my pilot study, I engaged an ethnographic approach to studying teachers' everyday experiences. In January 2017, I used an exploratory approach to conduct a weeklong observation of three teachers' experiences in three different school contexts; using field notes as primary source of data collection, I observed all the periods they taught, their department meetings, grade level meetings, staff meetings, lunch breaks, conference time, etc. I also informally asked questions about the social context before, during, and after observations. Writing analytic memos to identify themes across my field notes, I found that while teachers' ways of knowing remained constant for the most part, teachers' ways of doing and being shifted across time and space with various social actors. Such an analysis offered a more nuanced understanding of their work that was not necessarily articulated through interviews nor immediately revealed through short-term observations, such as navigating tensions of employing racial justice work as a racialized body within an institutionalized context (e.g., using indirect language to advocate for Black students for fear of being seen as biased) and engagement in social activities that seemingly contradicted their ways of knowing (e.g., teaching mandated scripted curriculum while precariously incorporating critical content). Field notes also offered

insights that were not captured through video or audio recordings of moment-to-moment practices, such as how climate and material conditions of room contributed to embodied experiences.

Reflecting on various methodological tools and analytic possibilities from my pilot study, the following insights influenced my approach to designing research on racially transformative practices:

1. ***Examinations of social change must have ontological emphasis on social realities and social relations.*** An emphasis on micro-level interactional processes not only illuminates moment-to-moment unfolding of racially transformative practices that may otherwise be overlooked post hoc, it also offers more insights as to how they align with, complicate, or challenge macro-level productions of race.
2. ***Examinations of social change must consider how social actors are situated and racialized in a given context.*** Social activities influenced by power relations dictate the social positioning and practices of Teachers of Color in various spaces and times; thus, an understanding of racially transformative practices must consider the historically contingent nature of interactions that are rooted in their ways of knowing and being.
3. ***Examinations of social change must engage recursive processes for data collection and analysis over time.*** Racially transformative practices may not be immediately apparent to researcher or participant given the seemingly mundane nature of everyday social activities. Multiple data sources must be considered and interwoven throughout the course of data collection, and data must be collected over time to better understand how interactional processes are situated within and influenced by an institutional setting and broader structural contexts. This includes multiple and ongoing opportunities for

participants to reflect on their practices throughout the course of the study.

4. ***Examinations of social change demand a political and ethical commitment to center the interests and needs of marginalized social actors.*** Given the politically and emotionally charged nature of racial justice work, I build upon Philip et.al.'s (2014) call to re-envision research in solidarity with teachers, as well as Paris and Winn's (2014) call to engage in humanizing approach to data collection when working with vulnerable communities. This includes attention to political and ethical dimensions of conducting research (e.g., when it may be appropriate to utilize video versus audio recording, when it may be appropriate to turn off technology to be present in the moment) or engaging in what Tuck and Yang (2014) refer to as *pedagogies of refusal* when sharing research (e.g., what information is kept sacred rather than sharing through research in an effort to humanize and protect participants). Given the personalized nature of studying teachers' everyday experiences, it is also important to recognize shifting power dynamics and relationships between researcher and participant over time, which may include revisiting consent of research.

Humanizing Approach to Critical Ethnomethodology

Guided by the insights from my pilot study, I designed a critical ethnomethodological study to examine racially transformative practices enacted by Teachers of Color. In other words, while my data collection is anthropological in nature, I employ a sociological approach to examine how members of racialized groups use language, the body, and the material environment to (re)construct race relations in a society marked by power. Acknowledging that U.S. contemporary racism often operates through systemic processes that are seemingly “colorblind” and “normal and natural” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998), a critical

ethnomethodological approach to examining social activities reveals how everyday interactions are linked to the social (re)production and (re)creation of race relations, informed by hegemonic meanings of race. Clearly, if racism is so “ordinary” and embedded in structures that it permeates everyday livelihood, an examination of language use in everyday talk-in-interaction is crucial to understanding how macro-level structures and policies as ideological and political projects manifest within the organizational contexts of public schooling and through daily interactions of social actors within these organizations. To be sure, my intention is not to study the efficiency and outcomes of teachers’ practices nor to evaluate the quality of work produced by teachers; instead, I present contextual factors in which racially transformative practices emerge by relying on the perspective and everyday experiences of the teachers themselves. In particular, I intentionally engaged a humanizing approach to data collection and analysis, which I describe in further detail later in this section.

Regional Context

Considering the social and political possibilities of a “majority-minority” setting, Los Angeles is an important site to understand the dynamic meanings of race, space, and place as it relates to social life and social activities. Due to socio-demographic, legal, socio-political, and economic reasons, Los Angeles experienced dramatic demographic shifts post-World War II: “Because of the shift from an economic base of durable goods manufacturing to a service-based economy, cities throughout Los Angeles County have been experiencing a decline in high-wage, stable, and unionized manufacturing and industrial jobs and decreases in middle management and White-collar jobs” (Ochoa, 2004, p. 7). Given the political and economic history of this region, including the formerly-Mexican origin land and White flight, Los Angeles has emerged as a predominantly Latina/o/x community: “As of the 2000 U.S. Census, 33 percent of California

residents and 45 percent of Los Angeles County residents identified as Latina/o/x. Mexicans predominated at over 70 percent of all Latinas/os” (Ochoa, 2007, p. 42). As mentioned in the literature review, the teaching demographics in Los Angeles are significantly different than the teaching demographics across the U.S. Clearly, Los Angeles is an important and unique site to study social reproduction and social transformation:

This is a place populated by migrants from all over the national and all over the globe. It is a place that is the home of powerful cultural industries, of mythmakers who magnify both the strengths and weaknesses of the local society to a wider world. This place is a site of struggle and servitude, imagination and affluence, gluttonous greed and punitive property. It is a place where people secure unpredictable pleasures and a place where people endure unbearable plain” (Lipsitz, 2005, p. 14).

Lipsitz (2005) further explains how Los Angeles is an opportune place to “see the part of the future that is already here in the present, the possibilities produced by the very problems that plague us” (p. 15). Given the historical site of Los Angeles as one of urbanization, marginalization, and resistance, examining these processes not only advances understanding of current struggles in urban schooling within the regional context of Los Angeles, it prepares our society to understand the nature of this struggle in an increasingly diverse population.

It is important to note that the historical context in Los Angeles complicates the educational landscape and professional trajectories of teachers in K-12 schools. In a neoliberal era of education with the growing presence of privatizers and rising number of charters (Lipman, 2011), teachers have been displaced in public schools, further complicating the constraints and possibilities in which racial justice work takes place.

School Site & Participants

Having already spent a year developing relationships with them and gaining familiarity of their professional contexts, I purposefully recruited participants from my pilot study for my dissertation. All of the teachers invited to participate in the dissertation study exhibited great

comfort with discussing race and racism, were incredibly introspective and self-reflective about their strengths and areas of growth, and were intentional and strategic about their practices.

Recruiting four participants total, the Teachers of Color selected were heterogeneous with respect to positionality, institutionalized context, geographical context, and racial justice goals at the time of the study.

Lucia was a sixth-year 10th grade Spanish teacher at Earth Charter High School. Situated in a suburban context in southwest Los Angeles, Earth Charter serves a multiracial student population, including 70% Latinx, 10% Black, 5% Asian, and 5% White. Identifying as Central American/El Salvadorian, a teacher organizer, a Woman of Color, and an alumna of the school where she taught, Lucia also served as the Social Justice Coordinator and a teacher inquiry group facilitator at her school site. Given her various roles, I visited her classroom, organizational leadership meetings, family events, teacher inquiry group, and school site planning meetings and actions.

Makario was a tenth-year 11th grade history teacher at Williams Public High School. Situated in an urban community in northern Los Angeles, Williams Public High serves a predominantly low-income Central American student population. Strongly identifying as Filipino and a union organizer, Makario served as a member of the Board of Director of the District-wide teacher union, Southern California Teacher Union (SCTU). He also served as a chapter chair, a liaison between the union and teachers at his school site. While the majority of chapter chairs represented in the union were White male teachers, Teachers of Color made up 65% of the teaching population in the District. Focusing primarily on his union organizing experiences, I visited his steering committee meetings, area meetings, chapter chair meetings, school lunch meetings, and community events, including school site picketing, regional rallies,

and city-wide rallies and strikes.

R. Love was a sixth-year 11th grade English teacher at Malcolm High School. Situated within a historically predominantly Black urban community in south Los Angeles, Malcolm High, a public school that was taken over by a charter organization, now consists of 70% Latinx students and 30% Black students. Identifying as a Black woman who is also Congolese and a Woman of Color, R. Love taught AP Language courses and an Ethnic Studies elective. At the time of the study, she also served as a professional development leader, a lecturer at a local university, and a racial justice conference organizer. Given her roles, I visited her AP and elective courses, lunch breaks, professional development workshops, and conferences.

Ryan was a tenth-year 8th grade history teacher at Warriors Public Middle School. Situated in a segregated community in southeast Los Angeles, Warriors serves a 99% Mexican student population. Identifying as a Vietnamese and Asian American male, Ryan taught honors and grade-level History 8 courses, as well as a student leadership elective, and served as department chair and academic lead. Given his roles, I visited his classroom, department meetings, leadership meetings, lunch and breaks, staff meetings, and union meetings.

It is important to note that given participants' shared ideologies and commitments to racial justice work within a single regional context, my data collection sometimes overlapped as participants shared social spaces at certain times. For example, I was able to observe Lucia and R. Love organize their own respective workshops at the same teacher organizer conference, and Makario and Ryan participate at teacher-led rallies in their own respective roles. For a synoptic view of the sites and participants, see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Sites and Participants

Name	Self-Identification	Years in Profession	Place	Institutionalized Context	Primary Role(s)	Additional Roles
Lucia	El Salvadorian Central American Woman of Color Alumni of ECHS	6 years	Suburban community in Southwest Los Angeles	Earth Charter High School (ECHS) • 70% Latinx • 10% Black • 5% Asian • 5% White *500 students, some from urban communities	Spanish Teacher; Social Justice Coordinator	Teacher Inquiry Group Facilitator; Teacher-Activist Organizer
Makario	Filipino Person of Color Male	10 years	Urban community in Northern Los Angeles	Southern California Teacher Union (SCTU) • 65% People of Color • 25% White *35,000 members, 70% White male teachers in leadership positions	Union Organizer; Board of Director	History Teacher; Chapter Chair
R. Love	Black Woman Congolese Woman of Color	6 years	Historically Black community in South Los Angeles	Malcolm High School (MHS) • 70% Latinx • 30% Black *1600 student, public school taken over by charter organization	English Teacher; Professional Development Leader	Curriculum Development Lead; Adjunct Professor Former; Department Chair
Ryan	Asian American Vietnamese	10 years	Segregated community in Southeast Los Angeles	Warriors Public Middle School (WPMS) • 99% Mexican • 1% Other *1500 students	History Teacher	Department Chair; Academy Lead; Former Union Organizer

Data Collection

For the purposes of saturating data and obtaining a holistic understanding of racially transformative practices over time, I conducted yearlong data collection during the 2017-2018

academic school year. Not including time spent with the teachers during the pilot study, I spent over 40 hours with each teacher throughout the course of the year. Three main data sources were collected during this time frame to examine their ways of knowing, being, and acting as it related to racially transformative practices: video and audio recording, ethnographic data, and recursive teacher interviews.

Video & Audio Recording

Given my ontological emphasis on social realities and social relations, video and audio recording of naturally occurring interactions served as primary data sources. I collected over 110 hours of video and audio recording, with a minimum of 25 hours of video/audio collected for each teacher. Given my humanizing approach to research, these data were collected at various sites and at various times based on invitations from the teachers and the people they worked with. A GoPro was used for video recording and placed in a location as determined by teachers and/or social actors they worked with. In some occasions when mobility was involved, a volunteer student or myself would carry the camera on a selfie stick to record the teacher in-action. While video recording was my primary method for capturing moment-to-moment practices, at certain times and in certain spaces, I switched from video recording to audio recording.

It is important to note that video and audio recording did not begin until October 2017. While I primarily focused on the social activities enacted by Teachers of Color, these activities also occurred in social space with other social actors. In an effort to gain trust and familiarity of social actors who shared social spaces with the teachers, I spent August and September building relationships with students, teachers, and administrators at each teacher's school site, and relied primarily on jottings and pictures as data sources during this time. To protect the confidentiality

of the teachers, as well as social actors in their professional contexts, facial expressions and other identifying images were blurred.

Ethnographic Data

Given my attention to micro-interactional processes across space and time, I conducted ethnography as supplementary data sources to video and audio recordings. These data sources included field notes and analytic memos written and analyzed throughout the course of participant observation, which occurred between the months of October 2017 and May 2018. The timing and scheduling of these visits were based on participants recommendations of how many times I should visit to get a sense of what is “typical.” This included a broad range of interactional spaces with different social actors, including students; social actors who directly work with students (e.g., teachers, family members, administrators); and/or, social actors who indirectly work with their students but have an impact on their schooling experiences (e.g., district board member, teachers from a different school site). To situate these forms of data on social activities within the social context, I also collected artifacts such as public documents to learn more about the school’s history and social standing, and wrote jottings of informal conversations with various social actors in place. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I also relied on field notes and interviews in lieu of video and audio recordings when such modes of data collection were not allowed in certain social spaces.

Recursive Reflective Interviews

To ground teachers’ ways of being and acting with their ways of knowing, I conducted formal interviews with each participant at the beginning, middle, and end of the study. In the initial interview, I asked each participant to self-select an artifact to represent how they came to understand their role as a teacher committed to racial justice. This method is based upon

Spradley and McCurdy's (1972) ethnographic process for interviewing participants, a process designed as an open-ended, unstructured interview to centralize participants' knowledge and honor complex ways in which participants are and continue to become socially conscious actors. To better understand the school as a social space, I also used descriptive questions to ask participants to depict the social life within the school. This method is based on Spradley's (1979) "grand tour" method in which participants introduce the researcher to the space and social actors within the school by walking around and describing what they see and experience. This walk was guided by my asking grand tour questions to learn more about the participants' roles as teachers within the school site, enabling us to collaboratively determine particular interactional spaces to visit throughout the school year and prepare consent forms for my observations and next steps for data collection. Serving as "member checking" and "collaborative reflection," I conducted a "check-in interview" during the months of December 2017 and January 2018 by sharing preliminary findings (Merriam, 2009). To guide and ground the mid-study check in, I selected two to three short snippets from video clips, audio recordings, or ethnographic field notes, as well as themes from the initial interview, to discuss how participants' ways of knowing aligned or conflicted with their ways of being and acting. This check-in also determined shifts in participant observation, as needed, to ensure holistic examination of their interactional processes for the rest of the study. The closing interview, which occurred in late May to early June 2018, was guided by themes from the initial and mid-interview. Recurring themes and moments that emerged from video recordings and ongoing teacher reflections were also utilized as talking points in the closing interview.

Given the fast-paced nature of everyday interactions, I also captured teacher's reflections during and post-observations throughout the course of data collection. Depending on availability

and capacity of teachers, I used reflexive process for obtaining reflections of teachers' practices. At times, I conducted informal interviews immediately following observations and audio recorded them; at other times, I used alternative methods based on teacher's preferences to reflect on social activities (e.g., written reflections, phone calls, text messages). I also collected video recordings of naturally occurring reflections in-the-moment (e.g., a participant discussing how they developed curriculum while leading professional development for other teachers).

Finally, I conducted a focus group interview with all participants to close out my study. Focus group discussions create an important social space for individuals to interact with each other which may help generate data and insights that would not otherwise be accessible to the researcher through individual interviews (Robinson, 2012a). Designed as an opportunity to share their racial justice work with social actors who were not familiar with their contexts, and as an opportunity to learn about each other's racial justice work, this social space was especially crucial for my study to conceptualize their perspectives as a collective group and how their individual enactments of racially transformative practices were linked across different school contexts within the same region. As a token of appreciation, I offered a meal and gift card for these teachers' participation in my study.

Dynamic Practices of and Positionality of Researcher

As a former Teacher of Color with shared political commitments, I consider myself as both an insider and outsider to the participants. My positionality as an insider was crucial in building relationships and developing trust with the participants given the politically charged nature of their work (Milner, 2007). Such a relationship is reflected in the casual language used in interviews (e.g., code-switching, curse words, etc.) and moments where explanation was not needed based on assumed understandings. To decrease biases and assumptions that may emerge

throughout ongoing data analysis and interpretation, I kept a reflection journal throughout the course of data collection to verify and monitor validity of my analysis and interpretation of data (Merriam, 2009). Prior to collecting data, I also wrote a critical self-reflection on what I expected to find, and revisited the reflection at the end of data collection to confirm or reject my assumptions.

Much like my conceptualization of race as a dynamic construct in my place-based raciolinguistic framework, my positionality also shifted across social spaces with various social actors. In other words, my social identity was often reconstructed in relation to social actors in place. For instance, in Ryan's segregated context, given our shared identities as Southeast Asian American, students and teachers often asked if I was related to him. In some occasions, given my own ways of being and acting in that context, I was socially positioned as a substitute teacher or graduate student. In Lucia's and R. Love's context, given our shared identities as Women of Color in our early 30s, I was often referred to as their "friend" and socially positioned as a teacher-scholar. In Makario's multiracial context in teacher union events, I was often socially positioned as a teacher, teacher educator, and ally. Documenting my own embodied experiences as a Vietnamese American woman in various contexts within a personal journal, I utilized these reflections about shifting power dynamics to meaningfully maintain access to school spaces, while acknowledging my own privileges and struggles navigating political and ethical dimensions as an Ethnographer of Color in various social spaces.

Applying a humanizing approach to research, my data collection considered teachers' mental, emotional, and physical well-being. For instance, (in)formal interviews often occurred over a meal and included off-the-record time to connect as people or share reflections post-events. Inspired by Kinloch and San Pedro's (2014) argument that research is a humanistic and

relational endeavor, and participants as co-constructors of knowledge, I also engaged in research as listener, learner, advocate, and participant with deep attention to reciprocity and value of community-engaged scholarship. Examples of reciprocity included but are not limited to bringing coffee or snacks to teachers during observations, supporting with grading, holding space as an empathetic and reflective listener during moments of fatigue and trauma, volunteering for career day, presenting my findings with them or other members at the school site, contributing to classroom pot lucks, and playing with a participant’s toddler while he was running a staff meeting (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Humanizing Approach to Data Collection



While some scholars may argue that a humanizing approach to research conflicts with validity and reliability of research (Riley, 2007), I argue that a “neutral” approach to researching social reproduction and social transformation in a society where racism is normalized can re-

inscribe systemic processes of oppression. In fact, a humanizing approach to research not only enhances studies of social change, given the humanistic and relational nature of ethnography, but positively contributes to the participants' experiences being studied. As stated by Lucia at the end of the study:

You humanize us, the people that you observe and it's very *in lak'ech*⁴ of you because I think you see us as you, which makes it feel like you're not a bother or you're not this random outsider, but you are me and you are my community. That was really unexpected from a researcher, so that was cool. I think it was a good model for me, too, that we can challenge and push the traditional ways of research.

For a synoptic view of the overall research design, I have summarized my methods and methodologies as shown in Table 4.2, including annotations to note how my data collection accounted for teachers' ways of knowing (K), being (B), and acting (A) across data sources and time.

⁴ "In lak'ech" is a Mayan precept (*Tú eres mi otro yo/You are my other me*) that understands the value of humanity and liberation of people as tied to oneself.

Table 4.2: Synoptic View of Data Collection

	DATA SOURCES	K	B	A	PURPOSE	DETAILS
8/2017 - 6/2018	Critical Self-Reflection				Address potential issues of reliability	Before and after data collection
	Researcher's Journal				To verify and monitor issues of validity throughout data collection	Ongoing throughout data collection
8/2017 - 9/2017	Initial Interview	X			Examine lived experiences of participants as it relates to racial justice work	Open-ended interview guided by participant-selected artifact
	Informal Visits		X	X	Collaboratively develop protocol for participant observation; develop familiarity with social contexts, build relationship with social actors	Jottings, artifacts, pictures
10/2017 - 5/2018	Participant Observation		X	X	Examine interactional processes in place over time	Field notes, audio recording, and/or video recording
	Teacher Reflections	X	X		Centers participants' sensemaking & unveils phenomenon not known or immediately transparent to researcher (naturally occurring or post-observation reflections)	Ongoing throughout data collection; video/audio recordings or jottings
	Analytic Memos	X	X	X	Preliminary data analysis of practices over time; triangulate data sources	Ongoing throughout data collection
12/2017 01/2018	Mid-Study Check-In	X	X	X	Serves as member checking, opportunity to revisit protocols for participant observation, as necessary	Semi-structured questions guided by analytic memos and video/audio recordings
5/2018 - 6/2018	Post-Study Interview	X	X	X	Center participant sensemaking over time; serves as member checking, triangulation of data	Semi-structured questions guided by themes from interviews and analytic memos
	Focus Group Interview	X			Examine shared and distinctive experiences as racialized actors in social contexts; triangulate data sources	Participant-generated dialogue

Data Analysis

Given my multidisciplinary and multi-scalar examination of racially transformative practices, I approach data collection in three phases in an effort to capture a more accurate portrayal of the full experience and understanding of social activities reconstructing meanings of race and race relations in place.

In the first phase of data analysis, I developed a list of racially transformative practices through preliminary analysis of social activities (Charmaz, 2006). Treating data sources for each Teacher of Color as a single case study, I analyzed social activities by conducting open coding of written analytic memos from field notes and video/audio recordings. My understanding of social activities are intertwined with epistemological ways of knowing and ontological ways of being as racialized groups; thus, I also conducted open coding of teachers' formal interviews, both individual and within focus groups, to account for the synchronization between cognition and action. The dialectical relationship between these data sources served as the basis for understanding how the "who" is connected to the "how," which I identify through a second round of focused coding across analytic memos and interview data. Then, I used a cross-case analysis to build abstraction across single cases to better understand the shared and distinct qualities of racially transformative practices enacted by Teachers of Color. The codes developed from the single case studies were sorted into relational categories, and reorganized by patterns and themes while noting commonalities and differences across all case studies (Bazeley, 2013).

Considering the social, emergent nature of ongoing social activities, it is impossible to understand and analyze agency for change as an individual, isolated act: "To locate the agentic act inside the individual is not only to lose bringing out joint acts with others, but it is also to lose the essentially joint character of social reality" (Farnell, 2000, p. 405). Thus, in the second phase,

I considered how contextual factors, situational dynamics, individuals, and artifacts influence one another to produce social activity (Bolden, 2011). In particular, I revisited my larger corpus of video and audio data to contextualize these practices by situating them in the social context in which they occur. Guided by my place-based raciolinguistic framework, I re-watched all the videos and listened to all of the audio recordings while taking note of a) how Teachers of Color talked to and about students, teachers, families and other social actors within and across social spaces; b) how their talk compared to other social actors; c) how teachers talked about themselves within and across social spaces; and, d) when teachers talked about race and racism and when they did not talk about race and racism in certain spaces and at certain times. Codes developed from my notes were then sorted into common categories to confirm, revise, or add to my preliminary list of racially transformative practices from Phase 1. As a result of this layered analytic process, three main themes emerged: 1) place-based constructions of racial counterscripts, 2) place-based approaches to coalition building, and 3) place-based constructions of leadership.

In the third phase, I purposefully selected a series of moments across each case study to further analyze micro-interactional processes through which racially transformative practices emerged. To be sure, a wide range of ethnomethodological analytic tools offer many possibilities for examining social activities (e.g., conversational analysis, participation framework, etc.), and each approach offers a unique lens through which to further understand how social actors construct a common-sense view of the world. Given my critical approach to ethnomethodology, one that considers how social relations and social activities are marked by larger forces of power, I purposefully represent each theme by selecting pivotal moments that illuminate possibilities and constraints of social change over time, rather than detail the moment-

to-moment unfolding of these social processes. These purposeful selections were guided by teacher reflections as well as my own analytic memos of how race was experienced in body and in context. Using cross-cutting analytic lens between raciolinguistics (e.g., Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016) and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Goodwin & Ceikate, 2018), I re-watched and re-listened to selected videos and audio recordings to conduct an *embodied raciolinguistic analysis*. Specifically, I examined how trajectories of action in the interests of Communities of Color were achieved through talk-in-interaction in the expression of solidarity and critiques of systemic oppression. To attend to holistic production of social activities, my analysis included attention to bodily positioning, tone, facial expressions, gestures, and material environment when talk was produced, as well as attention to turn taking and how social actors responded in particular moments. Gail Jefferson's (2004) transcription conventions are utilized to represent discourse as talk-in-interaction (see Appendix A). Furthermore, Goodwin (2000) and Goodwin and Cekaite's (2018) visual representations of embodied choreography inspire my portrayal of these selected moments (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Visual Representation of Embodied Raciolinguistic Analysis

1 Lucia: I don't want to confuse my young people

2 and say like oh don't be *racist* because I

3 don't believe in reverse racism right? I

4 don't believe people of color can be racist.

5 What I D::O believe is my young people can be

6 anti-BLACK and they can be full of self-HATE

7 and s::o right? [My WHITE kids can be racist though?

8 (): [Mmhmm

9 Lucia: [but for the majority that I'm teaching,

10 about anti-Blackness right that you—what IS anti-

11 Blackness and also about the self-hate we've been taught.

Annotations:

- discourse; description of expression (tone, facial, sounds, etc.)
- bodily positioning; gestures
- material environment
- series of activity

Humanizing Representation of Case Studies

For the purposes of highlighting the subtle, contextual, and diverse ways Teachers of Color enact racially transformative practices, I purposefully represent three case studies for each theme, which includes a series of recurring and pivotal moments to represent each finding. The case studies for each chapter are arranged by scale of action, from micro scales of change to macro scales of change. Given the multitude of data sources available to represent my analysis, I approach my representation of case studies with deep attention to political and ethical dimensions of humanizing research.⁵ My process included attention to existing power relations and structural positioning of Teachers of Color and various social actors as a means to consider the benefits and impacts of sharing the findings in particular ways. If the sharing of the data elevates the research at the expense of social actors' voices and vulnerabilities, or if sharing of the data has potential risk of reproducing systems of oppression or promoting pathologizing

⁵ My process for negotiating humanizing representations of research was inspired by conversations with Darlene Lee when discussing tensions of creating teacher education programs for and by Teacher Candidates of Color.

understandings of Communities of Color, I sought to represent these findings that relay main ideas without disclosing personal details (e.g., choosing to summarize overall impact on Students of Color rather than revealing details about their trauma). If the sharing of the data illuminates the research while amplifying the agency and humanity of racialized social actors, I sought to represent these case studies with as much detail as possible (e.g., choosing to share the moment-to-moment unfolding of teacher creating a Black sense of place). In moments where contradictions emerged, I chose to share these forms of data with the intentions of understanding and learning from the tension and struggles of racial justice work in an effort to understand complexities of interactional processes related to social change; thus, by no means is my analysis used to condemn or critique social actors involved.

CHAPTER FIVE: PLACE-BASED CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACIAL COUNTERSCRIPTS

Overview of Chapter

While literature has recognized how Teachers of Color draw on their racialized experiences to expand educational opportunities for students who share similar racial, cultural, and/or linguistic backgrounds, they do not adequately account for the ways place-based dynamics influence teachers' approaches to radically reimagining meanings of race. Through the case studies of R. Love, Lucia, and Makario⁶, I detail how they draw on collective understandings of racialized experiences to respond to spatial reproductions of racialized inequities. As a response to displacement of historically predominant Black communities and deficit ideologies of Black students, R. Love drew on Black feminism to re-articulate Black students as "freedom scholars." In response to resurging xenophobic attacks against Latinx communities, Lucia drew on her El Salvadorian roots to develop a Spanish curriculum in an attempt to re-articulate the value of immigrants and history of cross-racial migration. To challenge the rise in privatization and renewed attacks on public schools, Makario drew on community-oriented and people-centered organizing experiences to mobilize teachers, families, and community members to collectively advocate for quality public education.

Case 1: R. Love

"...We belong in this world. We are the revolution. We are persistent freedom scholars. Persistent scholars are we."

On the morning of April 2017, a group of 46 Latinx and Black students chanted this

⁶ As mentioned in Chapter 4, I purposefully selected three of the four case studies to highlight the diverse ways Teachers of Color enact racially transformative practices. While Ryan is not discussed in this particular chapter, place-based constructions of racial counterscripts still apply to his case.

creed in unison for what must have felt like the hundredth time that school year before heading out to their assigned classrooms to take their AP English test. They had gathered in the room of their homeroom teacher, R. Love, who had made scrambled eggs and packed them healthy snacks in Ziploc bags to take with them. You can feel the angst, banter, camaraderie, and laughter in the air as some read their notes on how to effectively respond to prompts and how to structure their essays, while others stood outside the classroom door with their friends, telling each other “We got this!”(Field Notes).

In her sixth year teaching at a transformative charter high school with high teacher turnover, R. Love was well-respected and seen as an effective teacher amongst her administrators and colleagues. While this form of respect was attributed to her students scoring highly on standardized tests as compared to other teachers’ students at the school, R. Love attributed her effectiveness as a teacher to the co-creation of a classroom environment of “freedom scholars.”⁷ In a school community marked by segregation, unemployment, and racial tension, the once predominantly Black community now made up 30% of the student population, while Latinx community constituted 70%:

The crack and cocaine epidemic that happened in South Los Angeles is what led to the community suffering, which means the school suffered because people from the community went to the schools. A lot of my students have grandparents raising them because their parents were on drugs during that time. During the ‘90s there was the Rodney King riots so then the school was by then already one of the worst performing schools. The population in the community had shifted to be more Latino. The demographics of the school, Black students were going to other schools that their parents feel better serve them as Black people... If they didn’t have positive experiences, they weren’t going to send their kids to my school at all for that reason (Interview).

Given the historical suffering that Black people faced in South Los Angeles, R. Love intentionally approached teaching with the intention of “loving Black students and affirming

⁷ R. Love honors and builds on the work of a former teacher at her school site, who coined the term “freedom scholars.”

their brilliance and identities,” and teaching all students to love themselves and their communities as freedom scholars:

For me, it's different as a Black teacher, as a Black woman, because students identify physically with me and see a different image for themselves. There's a pressure for me to make sure that I'm a positive reference in teaching what they can be. It's also difficult because Black students are still marginalized, so whenever [teachers and administrators] send an email talking about our most disruptive students, it's always still the Black kids. They're targeting them too. When people say things in meetings about our Black students, they're talking about me. That's what I feel. They're talking about me. Those could be my physical children, and for some of those students, they are my children. I feed them, I get them backpacks, I talk to them, and that kind of labor is harder because you know what's at stake. There are a few Black teachers and I that are starting to support each other. We have to look out for our Black students even more so because they end getting accused of things, counselors don't always help them apply for the right colleges or take the right class. We have to advocate for them to make sure the counselors are not denying them an opportunity to go to a college or take a class that is necessary (Interview).

As a response to the historical and contemporary ways Black students were socially positioned as “disruptive” and “incapable,” R. Love’s racial counterscripts through pedagogies of love and care (Villenas, 2019) were conveyed in various ways. For one, she cultivated a social space that attended to human needs of her students through the physical classroom environment. For example, she had blankets in the class that students often used when going outside for silent sustained reading. She also used varying scented oils to express the season, including cinnamon apple during the winter, and floral and vanilla notes during the spring. R. Love was known for always having extra forks and plates in her cabinets. These material objects conjured a sense of home, as students often visited throughout the day for various reasons, to grab a fork to eat their lunch or just say “hi.” (Field Notes). In fact, her most common visitors, a Black male student named Jody and a Black female student name Jayla, called her “Mom” and even “asked [her] to make them an extra sandwich when [she] makes [her] lunch” (Interview). Adopting these “children” as her own, she also invested in additional labor beyond her roles as a teacher, including preparing them for job interviews and assisting them with financial resources

to attend prom (Artifacts; Field Notes). It was typical for students who did not have her as their teacher to come in and out of her class as well; some of these included former students stopping by on their way home from community college, or students who were on the way to the bathrooms or kicked out of other classes (Field Notes). These kinds of interactions happened so often that it was a normalized part of the classroom environment: students in her current period often treated outside students as visitors, and rarely did classroom teaching become disrupted. While present, visitors were often coaxed by R. Love to engage in the work that her students were doing. For example, when Victor, a Latino male student, stopped by her class having been kicked out of his own class, she gave him a packet that the class was reading and said, “Here! If you’re going to be here you’re going to read with us. Top of page 2 please” (Video Recording). Most notably, her “son” Jody and “daughter” Jayla came by at least once a day, and sometimes every class period; they would ask for food, tell her about their day (e.g., “I’m saaaaad,” “Miss, I got the job you helped me with!”), ask to charge their phone, etc. Sometimes Jayla would request that she complete independent student work in R. Love’s class. In another moment, her “daughter” and “son” visited the class at the same time, and Jody stayed behind longer per usual to help Jayla with her assignment. In other words, R. Love transformed racialized dimensions of schooling by cultivating an environment of freedom scholars wherein students not only felt at home, but were expected to engage as learners with and for one another.

The entanglement of her own social identity as a Black woman also influenced her pedagogies of care, healing, and love (McArthur & Lane, 2019). For example, she utilized particular artifacts in her class to co-create a *Black sense of place* (McKittrick, 2004); R. Love kept a bottle of baby oil near the door, and Black students often stopped by before the start of first period to apply some on their skin (she noted: “The Latinx students figured out it was better

than lotion too, so sometimes they come in, some I don't even know, to use my baby oil!"). She also had a mirror hanging behind one of her classroom doors, and a few Black girls would often stop by during breaks to use it. Such a common interaction within this physical environment created opportunities for personalized interactions related to school or beyond (e.g., giving each other advice about hair; critiquing pants as "racist" because they don't fit their curvy bodies; sharing updates about their families, teachers, schoolwork, and peers). R. Love often kept at least two different kinds of Caribbean hot sauce in class – for her own lunch – and students, and even teachers, would stop by in between classes or during lunch to borrow them, because, as one student said, "The food they give at school is mad bland!" (Field Notes).

She also engaged in pedagogies of bodymindspirit – the use of meditation, dialogue, and vulnerability – as a politicized commitment to tend to the holistic needs of Black students (Cariaga, 2019). For instance, in a typical 90-minute class, she often began with a 5-10 minute affirmation meditation, an activity designed to teach students self-care as a priority, especially in an environment where they may be "already agitated with the world" (Interview). In fact, a student who was put in in-school suspension even joined her classroom at the beginning to participate in meditation before returning to the office to complete his time (Field Notes). Furthermore, she wore a dashiki every first Thursday of the month with other Black teachers, and every day for the month of February in honor of Black History month. Students often asked her about her dashikis, inviting conversations about her African roots and pride for her culture (Field Notes). In fact, her "daughter" and "niece" insisted that she buy them one as well, to celebrate Dashiki Thursday in lieu of their everyday uniforms (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Co-Constructed Cultural Pride



Additionally, the content of her lessons often drew from critical theory as supplemental texts to literature, with an emphasis on racial and political identities. The content tended to be delivered through short lectures and instructions written in color-coded texts, with ample time for independent student thinking and writing. These independent work times were often paired with sentence frames and writing structures, as well as peer dialogue. R. Love often incorporated 15-minute breaks, and allowed usage of phones despite school rules. Essentially, cultivating an environment for freedom scholars meant support in the navigation or removal of barriers that have kept and continue to keep students from existing authentically:

As a teacher, I feel and believe that if there's anything I'm supposed to do, it's to get my students to reflect on who they are, who they're becoming, who they want to be, and feel confident in who that person is. It's really hard to not feel confident in who that person is or feel like an imposter, or feel like you don't belong. I think that's really my only role, help them figure out who they want to be even if it's ever-changing. Help them identify what kind of education they want for themselves. Be void of what we tell them that they should want, and be confident in their decisions and not feel like they need to change for anything. Then, for them to think about what they can do to help their community. Community where they live in proximity, but then also community in however they identify racially or culturally. ...A lot of the text[s] connect to student's identity, build on

their identity, affirm their identity, or have them come to critical understandings or questions about the world around them. They should not just accept that because I'm a teacher, I'm telling them the truth. Because I'm a teacher, I'm giving them all the correct information. I want them to question what I'm doing, the education that they receive, who their receiving it from, which is really important, and feel empowered to do so even when they feel like they're not allowed to.

To be clear, R. Love's intentions to celebrate Blackness in body and being does not mean she precludes celebration of other cultures. In fact, a Latina student who was designated as a newcomer to the U.S. based on measures of her English language proficiency expressed to R. Love in a written letter that the positive ways she talked about and represented her Black culture made her feel more comfortable about celebrating her own culture (Interview; Artifact).

It is important to note that R. Love's pedagogies of love and bodymindspirit were also grounded in attention to accountability given students' shared realities as Black and Brown people in a broader context. For example, after her students were caught cheating on a test while a substitute was proctoring, R. Love reprimanded their actions through a lens of racialized constructions of crime and urgency of collective care (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Constructing Collective Responsibility as Black and Brown People

1	R. Love:	All of you, look around the room. You are reflections of each
2		other. Who you hang out with is a REFLECTION of who you are.
3		Committing a crime (0.3) If you did it or you were with people
4		who did it, you still arrested. My brother was with people who
5		broke into a house. He spent two years in jail. There are <i>real</i>
6		consequences. I really couldn't care less the fact that you cheated
7		holistically because that is your education. I already have my
8		degrees. What's disappointing is that the majority of you lack so
9		much respect for yourselves and for me and that you actually don't
10		care about me, and I've always cared and loved all of you from

11 the day that I hugged you. And that you guys have not reciprocated
12 that, that you've taken advantage of that. That you think that class
13 is which your teachers curse at you and yell at you are “real”
14 classes. “Real” honors classes, AP classes, whatever it is
15 ((*sarcasm*)). So I treated you like human beings, and in fact I
16 treated you like **ADULTS**. The energy in this room, being able to
17 drink and do all of these things, that’s what you’re able to do in
18 college. There's a lot of freedom. No one’s gonna tell you anything
19 they're just gonna give you an F. And just when I think maybe I'm
20 just being dramatic and I'm gonna get over it, I get even more
21 angry thinking about it. If you guys understand by now that as
22 People of Color and a Community of Color and a country that has
23 *systematic racism* ingrained in the formation of this country, you
24 don't understand that we are all accountable to each other and
25 should be supporting each other and lifting each other up.

Constructing shared accountability through their collective identities as People of Color (lines 1-2; 21-25), R. Love created urgency about the distinctive consequences in a racist society wherein individual actions of People of Color are often generalized to the broader group. Socially positioning herself within this shared identity by drawing on her own brother’s experiences (lines 4-6), she pointed out the ways students took advantage of the humanizing approaches of her classroom (lines 8-19) to reinforce the values of freedom scholars.

Among the everyday ways she enacted racially transformative practices to sustain a Black sense of space and learning environment of freedom scholars, her responses to racialized inequities at her particular school site most notably took place in her AP Language class. In an effort to increase the number of Black students who have access to AP courses, she agreed to enroll 46 students in her AP Language class despite being 11 students over her contracted capacity. In fact, she personally recruited Black students since they had been in the 10th grade,

referring to them as “future AP freedom scholars” in the hallways during break or stopping by the 10th grade English teacher’s class during her own conference period. She also had them recruit their own friends to join the class (Field Notes; Interview). As a result, in this particular school year, she recruited 8 Black students, the highest number of Black students to have enrolled in an AP English class in the history of the school’s existence (Interview). Her reasons for recruitment and enrollment were political on her part:

Forty-six AP students; we have about 28 to 30% of Black students on this campus, that means my AP class should represent the same racial dynamic and it doesn't. And I was trying to figure out what is it that got my students to stay together and it's because we do things in groups. They are a community and they feel safe to ask each other for help and they don't feel stupid in the class and they're not worried that I'm judging their intelligence so then they ask me questions. Then they ask me for help. Then they ask their peers for help. And those are all the barriers that stop Black students from being successful, particularly outside of high school because they don't want to seem stupid, they don't wanna ask people for help because they're worried that that's gonna be indicative of their intelligence (Video recording).

Undoubtedly, R. Love’s decision to take on more students as a means to accommodate a learning space that combatted structural and societal constructions of Black students as “failing” meant more labor, more attention to each student body in a single class period, more grading responsibilities, more invested time in student relationships. Furthermore, there was an added dimension of physical labor demanded. In fact, given the number of students’ bodies that took up space in her AP class, she only had one chair in the class that was usually unoccupied (Figure 5.3). This is the same chair she occasionally used to rest her feet, and the same chair she used to participate in meditation with the students at the beginning of class.

Figure 5.3: Reconstructed Meanings of Material Environment



With these dynamics in mind, I particularly hone in on a pivotal moment where racialized constructions of Black students as “incapable” in the broader schooling context were reconstructed in her AP classroom through this culture of freedom scholars. While the classroom activities were typical, what was atypical was a visitation by June, a White woman and school administrator, who came to observe and evaluate R. Love’s teaching. In my analysis of this pivotal moment, I also consider how June is co-constructed as an outsider, rather than a visitor, who disrupted social meanings of home and collective identities as freedom scholars.

It was 50 degrees and the last day of February; R. Love wore a bright yellow dashiki in honor of Black History month and stood out amongst students in black and gray hoodies and polo shirts and khaki pants. Just like any other day, students walked into class to see a projected slide of the day’s agenda and countdown until the AP exam: 77 days. Upon walking in, they caught a whiff of cinnamon apple and felt the heat at the bottom of their feet (there were no heating units in bungalows so R. Love brought in her personal heater). R. Love greeted students




informally as they walked in, and changed the slide to an image of Audre Lorde with a quote about self-care; then she read a list of intentions students could use for meditation, and played a ten-minute YouTube clip of ocean sounds and a soothing woman's voice as late students continued to trail in for first period.

The objective written on the board was: "Given various types of texts, students will be able to: analyze and draw connections among multiple types of sources and evaluate peers' thoughts by actively participating in class dialogue and completing dialogue reflections. In this particular lesson, students were to select a quote from a text titled "Know Thyself," and explain how it related to the theory of "mis-education." R. Love offered graphic organizers, sentence frames, and online resources to write an analytic response (Field Notes). While her approaches to teaching utilized critical theory and pedagogy, the language she used to describe the objectives was notably aligned with Common Core State Standards.

About 45 minutes into the class period in the midst of simultaneous activity, R. Love gave students directions to type their responses into Google Classroom. She sat down for the first time during the class period in the unoccupied chair for about thirty seconds, right before Angel, a Latinx gender-non-conforming student, and Jamal, a Black male student, raised their hands to ask a question, at which time June walked in for classroom observations (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Managing Multiple Activities

1 ((Angel raises hand & R. Love raises eyebrows))
 2 Angel: Um, do we just send it, like the questions,
 3 because I can't sign into my account.°
 4 R. Love: Oh really? Why? What's wrong with it?
 5 Angel: Like, you know how Google asks you for your password, and they ask
 6 you where you're signing in from or something like that? And the city,
 7 and I always put it, but it doesn't let me sign in.°
 8 R. Love: Oh because you--
 9 ((Knocking on door))
 10 R. Love: (((walks towards door and whispers to June))
 11 (((door creaks (0.7) and slams loudly)))

12 June ((looks at chair, walks towards it, backs up, and sits next to student near door))
 13 R. Love: ((to Angel)) Um, can you try to sign in right now? I can email it to you
 14 right now.
 15 ((Jamal raises hand from across classroom))
 16 R. Love: Yes, Jamal?

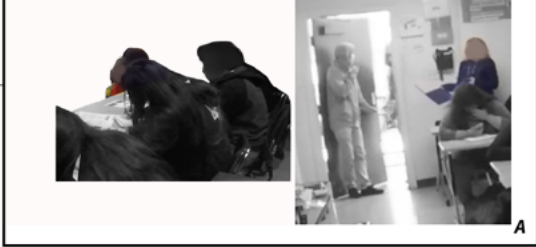
In this particular instance, R. Love's embodied use of the chair simultaneously enabled her to scan the room to answer student questions and served as a space for recharging (Image A). As with other visitors who often came to her class, R. Love and her students resumed activity per usual when June walked in (lines 13-16). R. Love pointed to the single chair in offering it to June (Image B), and as she moved on to answer Jamal's question, she cocked her head toward June when she sees that June ultimately choose to take a student's seat instead of the seat that R. Love offered (line 12; Image C). June's actions disrupted the natural flow of social activities typically seen in the classroom, socially positioning her as an outsider who did not know that each seat in the classroom held significant meanings in R. Love's efforts to transform AP classes

as racialized places.



Immediately following this incident, R. Love walked over to Angel to help them⁸ sign into their Google account, at which time another knock on the door occurs (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Protecting Student Space

1 ((R. Love whispering to Angel))
2 ((Knocking on door))
3 R.Love: Can someone open the door for Edwin?
4 ((Buzzer rings))
5 ((Students start talking))
6 R.Love: **Scholars**, I need you, when you, once you're done with your quotes, type
7 up your responses on a Google classroom.



8 R. Love: All of you--
9 ((male voices **talking** from June's walkie talkie))
10 R. Love: ((whispers to June; answers Jamal's & Cassie's questions while June moves back))



As the student came into the door, June stood up and walked toward the chair R. Love first pointed out to her (Image A). In this same moment, the timer went off to signal the next activity, for which R. Love gave instructions to the whole class while still crouching down at eye-level to

⁸ Because Angel is non-gender conforming, I use the terms “they,” “them,” and “their” when relaying Angel’s actions.

talk to Angel (Image A). Lovingly and firmly referring to students as “scholars” while giving instructions (lines 6-8), she was interrupted by June whose movement of the chair and walkie talkie created dissonance and disruption in typical classroom events (line 9). Furthermore, when June set her laptop on top of a Latina student’s food (Image B), R. Love stopped her instructions midsentence to tell June that “the students don’t feel comfortable with you sitting next to her [indicating the Latina student]” (Interview); R. Love resumed her teaching activity and attending to three Black students asking questions about their quotes, while June moved her seat back to its original placement (Image C).

Some teachers have referred to R. Love’s actions toward other adults as “abrasive” and “domineering” when those adults interact with her students (Interview). In another context, R. Love’s actions can be seen as “Othermothering” (e.g. Collins, 1994) in which Black women engage in efforts to humanize, invisibilize, and protect “Children” of Color when someone interrupts their sense of comfort and home. June’s embodied presence (e.g., light skin, walkie talkie, sunglasses, dark clothing, taking up student space) – in stark contrast to R. Love’s embodied presence (e.g., what she lovingly calls her “dark caramel” skin, bright clothing, being in shared space with students) – disrupted the Black and Brown sense of space R. Love and her students have collectively co-created.

Following this interaction, R. Love instructed students to share their written responses in three rounds of pair shares. In the 15 minutes during which 23 pair shares simultaneously occurred, many other events happened too. For one, campus security stopped by to check in with R. Love about another student, her “niece” Brittany, who was requesting to see her from another class, to which R. Love said “okay.” (Field Notes; Interview). As campus security left the classroom, her “son” Jody walked in with a Post-It note from a teacher (and friend)

reminding R. Love to complete her FAFSA that night if she intended to apply for graduate school (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: Racial Microaffirmations with “Son”

- 1 ((Campus security fist bumps Jody as he enters))



- 2 ((R. Love reaches hand out towards Jody))



- 3 ((Jody hands Post-It note to R. Love))

- 4 ((R. Love reads note from colleague while Jody does hand shake with peer))



- 5 ((R. Love writes response on back of Post-It note and hands to Jody to return to colleague))

- 6 Jody: I got you, Miss!!




In this 40-second instance, Jody, who has had a history of negative interactions in school, received three positive interactions (a fist bump from the security guard on the way in, a welcoming acknowledgement from R. Love with her arm out, as if expecting him, and another

fist bump from one of his Black male peers in the class). R. Love's classroom space enables interactions that take the form of racial microaffirmations, the subtle ways in which People of Color are humanized through acknowledgement and shared cultural intimacy (Solórzano, Perez Huber, & Huber-Verjan, in press). R. Love thanked Jody, asked him how his day was going, and sent him off with another Post-It in response to her teacher friend (Interview).

As Jody left, R. Love stepped outside for two-and-half minutes to check in with Brittany who was standing outside her door, clearly distraught (Field Notes). During this simultaneous activity, June documented the student talk in pair shares, one with two Latina students and one with a Black female and Black male student in the front corner of the classroom (Artifact; Field Notes). It was unclear if she had noticed these other interactions that sustain a humanizing sense of belonging for Black students in schools. Clearly, the intricacies of racially transformative practices may not be immediately available through observable dimensions of practice as they are situated within a larger sociopolitical context. Without a clear understanding of what racially responsive and just evaluations of practices look like, and by utilizing an ahistorical and apolitical view of teaching and learning, educational leaders may fail to recognize multi-faceted dimensions of racially transformative practices that are crucial to the expansion of educational opportunities for marginalized students.

At the close of pair share activity, R. Love asked students to share their responses before moving on to the next step of affirming and asking questions about another's freedom scholar's post on Google classrooms (Figure 5.7)

Figure 5.7: Co-Constructed Social Positioning of Black Girl Student as “Freedom Scholar”


1	R. Love:	So before I have you guys post online, could I get a couple volunteers to share their quotes and analysis? Just a couple people. Brave souls.
2		
3	Jessi:	Evan°
4	Evan:	Why does it always have to--°
5		((Naomi raises hand))
		
6	R. Love:	Naomi. Remember when our classmates are speaking, please be facing her. You should be not distracted. ((looks around class)) Thank you.
7		
8	Naomi:	Okay. My quote was, “We must use our inner resources ((clears throat)) in order to take from the environment those resources that ensure our advancement as human beings. Power then has to do with the relative effectiveness that we have in getting from the environment those things that are in our self-interest.” In other words, [?] rates must [?] resources in order to take those of the environment that we’re trying to [?]. The evidence suggests that you can’t use environment resources unless you know what resources [?]. This quote is significant because it states how one [?] without knowing your own [?] to the environment. This quote represents the connection between [?] and [?] of power because [?]
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16		
17		
18		((Class snaps fingers))

This was a pivotal moment for many reasons: for one, Naomi was one of three Black girls in the class and one of many students who checked in with R. Love about her written response prior to pair share. In a schooling context that has historically and discursively deemed Black students as “incapable,” Naomi engaged in academic discourse drawing from critical theory, language stems, and college-level informational texts to state a claim (in fact, she was one of six students who passed the AP exam later that spring). R. Love’s embodied teaching practices as a Black woman likely repositioned Naomi’s engagement as a freedom scholar. Nonetheless, June’s notes and feedback to R. Love post-observation focused on student talk, absent of the racial and spatial dimensions in which teaching and learning occurred.

Not only did Naomi volunteer to share, but another Black student, Cassie, volunteered to

share after Ronaldo, a Latino student, pointed her out, having heard her response during pair share (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: Peer Construction of Black Girl Student as “Freedom Scholar”

1	R. Love:	Can I get another volunteer?	
2		((Ronaldo points at Cassie))	
3	R. Love:	Why don't you go ahead?	
4	Ronaldo:	Come o:::n ((laughing))	
5	Cassie:	((laughs, half hand raised)) I'll read it.	
6	R. Love:	Thank you ((smiling))	
7	Cassie:	My quote is, "The effect of greed and the drive for domination is that it drives certain people to gain more and more influence so that they can limit the access of other people to these resources in the environment, while maximizing their own access." In other words, the effect of bringing the [?] to say to people to try to take over most of the environment resources even [?]. This evidence suggests that one uses power to impact the environments [?] This [?] is solution because it explains that the drive for power [?] people to [?] only themselves instead [?] for everybody. This quote represents the connection between the theory of miseducation and education as power because miseducation was used to control [?] people and education as power explains how [?] transmission education as being controlled over environmental resources.	
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In terms of classroom culture, not only was Naomi co-constructed as a freedom scholar by her teacher, students also co-constructed one another as freedom scholars. This was a pivotal moment as Ronaldo pointed out Cassie's response as "worthy" of sharing to whole class.

By considering observable dimensions of practice without considering the larger sociopolitical context in which interactions take place, educational leaders may overlook practices that sustain diverse forms of learning (e.g., how her embodiment as a Black woman and attention to human needs contributed to two Black girls engaging in public academic discourse, how R. Love's creation and protection of home contributes to social emotional safety).

Furthermore, a narrow lens on practice also overlooks the relational aspect involved in curating a

Black sense of place, one that may not be seen through interaction by itself:

Feeding our children, going home knowing that you have to wake up a little bit earlier to feed them, hearing their stories, crying with them, or sometimes having those adult parent conversations like, "You need to stop doing this or else you're going to hurt yourself." That is a labor of love because you could choose not to do that. You could just teach the lesson, and that's it. When students come to you with their concerns, they open up to you, and it can be very emotionally taxing to hear some of their stories. It's hard.... When you hear that many stories and you're feeling that much energy, whatever the energy is that many with a personalities have 160 students total every day. It's emotionally draining... That's the emotional labor that can be really draining in terms of supporting our students, but being a teacher that wants to do that kind of work with their students. That's extra work. That's after we've counseled the students. That's after we've been who we are as people, how we dress, what we say in order to get our students to see different reflections of others who reflect them. Then we have to make sure that no one's under serving them. That's really, really hard. Then on top of all of that, our administrators then think that the work that we're doing is just something that comes easy to us like it's second nature. We're not recognized for that labor simply because we are Black (Interview).

Case 2: Lucia

Working in a multiracial charter high school with divergent ideologies of social justice, social actors within Earth Charter High School yielded mixed responses following the election of Donald Trump, marking a different political moment in Lucia's work as a teacher:

After the election, we got told that we needed to be careful about what we were saying in terms of political stuff, political critiques, that we didn't know what our parents were or our students, what their political beliefs were, and we needed to not offend people and present both sides. That shit had never been told to me. Right? I'd never been told that before, and so having the head of the schools, the three schools come into our meeting in the morning to tell us that, that felt like something. That was a new moment. To have a teacher crying because she was saying that we were making a young person who was a Trump supporter feel unsafe, right, and defend that kid versus not feeling for the other hundreds who were crying because they were afraid their parents were going to get deported or their family members, that felt like a shift. That felt like a really telling moment of, like, "Oh, this is who I'm surrounded by," right, "in trying to do whatever work I'm trying to do. I'm surrounded by people whose idea of equity and justice is presenting both sides, even if one is bigoted, racist, homophobic," right, "and all those other things." That, I think, that had never been explicitly said.

Despite this "new" moment, Lucia drew connections from this Trump-induced climate to her own mother's and aunt's experiences as political refugees seeking asylum in the U.S many years

before:

I think it's so obvious immigrant communities are being targeted which is the community that I'm a part of even though I was born here, so I'm technically a citizen but a lot of my family and just the experience that I grew up with is this immigrant experience, right? Those are the ones that are being targeted heavily, particularly immigrants from Latin America. In that way, it feels scary. I also feel like the way that [Trump] articulates our communities, which is like urban communities need law and order and shit like that. That's hella scary because it just means more policing and militarization. My aunt, she was like, "What makes me really sad is that I picked up the paper and I read it and it feels like what it felt like in El Salvador. The headlines looked similar to what they looked like during the war." For me, that's when I was like, "Fuck." This is a person who has lived through the shift of their country into one where there was civil war, there was persecution, there was torturing, and there was a very real targeting of leftist people and indigenous communities. So if that's what my aunt is expressing she's seeing again, then I have to take that seriously and understand what that means for me and what that means for people in my community that I love who are mostly all people of color, all *Mujeres for the Majority*, and who are leftist, right? What does that mean for us? That means that something is going to happen soon and we're going to have to know how to protect ourselves or flee. That feels really scary for me. That's really scary when I think about my young people (Lucia Interview).

Despite the organizational stance to proceed politics with caution, knowing that she did “not get observed often” in her classroom, and so could “say adversarial things against current administration” and still be able to link “units on anarchism and connect them to Common Core Standards for Spanish content,” Lucia felt safe to channel her political work in the classroom context. Most notably, she developed an interdisciplinary unit with the English and history teachers, with an emphasis on what role migration plays on ethnic enclaves in the development of Los Angeles, how ethnic enclaves help communities survive and reproduce culture, and what role the groups might play in the future. When teaching the unit, Lucia often referred to her own family history, such as in connection to the migrant wave of Central Americans in the 2000s in the context of gang violence (Figure 5.9)

Figure 5.9: Placing Self in History

- 1 Lucia: Now when we're talking about gang violence, we are not just
- 2 talking about the way that we have experienced them here in Los

3 Angeles. A lot of you all are kinda' young to even remember what
4 L.A. was like in the 90s. But we have the creation of this group
5 called Mara Salvatrucha, or it's also referred to as MS-13. Now
6 people who've studied gangs and migrations and stuff, their theory
7 is that you had a lot of young immigrants coming from war-torn
8 places in Central America that saw a lot of violence, come to L.A.
9 and they're living in neighborhoods where you have gangs. Like 10
10 the Rolling 666, you have 18th Street all these other smaller gangs
11 around. And so as a way to protect themselves, they create their
12 own gang and it's MS-13. But because they've seen such intense
13 violence and war, the kind of violence that they engage in is
14 multiplied times ten. And what we see these gangs engaging in is
15 like full-on violence that's reminiscent of a war. Where they are
16 decapitating people, they are burning people. That kind of stuff.
17 And these folks end up getting deported. They take gangs back
18 into these home countries. These countries don't have the infra-
19 structure to address gangs. And they also don't hold any economic
20 promise for these young people. And so a lot of these countries are
21 experiencing violence that's really unprecedented. And so folks are
22 having to flee like they did back in the 80s. My own family, my
23 own cousins have had to come in the past five years because they
24 have been threatened by gang members or their businesses have
25 been threatened or their houses. So it's a really scary situation that
26 people don't really how to address. Can I move on?

These small moments integrated throughout her lesson were intentional and opened up new doors for invitations for new conversations (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: Co-Constructing Relational Ties with Students

1 Lucia: So the majority of our Central American population is going to be
2 concentrated in El Salvadorian, Guatemalan and Honduran people.

3 Nicaraguan folks usually go to Costa Rica first. And you even have
4 a lot Guatemalans who are travelling to Belize before they even
5 travel to the United States. Can you raise your hand if you know
6 somebody who's from either El Salvador or Guatemala or
7 Honduras or Belize.
8 (*Half students raise hand*)
9 Okay. Cool. So just because we live in L.A., now we know so
10 many of those folks.

These insertions in Lucia's lectures reveal vulnerability and relational dimensions of teaching. For instance, students often opened up in informal conversations with Lucia about a range of topics inspired from what she shared, such as relationships, family struggles, economic hardship, and identity issues (Field Notes; Interview).

Such a learning experience interconnected to place and students' community positively impacted their learning, as demonstrated through Liza, an Asian American female student, and Bianca, a Latina student; they shared their learning experiences in a workshop co-led by Lucia:

So, when I think about writing about ethnic enclaves, I do remember it being really stressful. We had to work with groups, and so that was pretty hard for me. Obviously it's tough working with people. But besides that, I think this topic was really valuable because we were actually learning about my own community and my own people. It made me think about my own family, and her mom, and her mom's mom, and so it was really crazy that I was learning about myself during this. I wrote that narrative and it was really hard for me. I was second guessing my writing. I just wasn't sure about it. But I realized it was really hard because it was really meaningful to me because during the whole process I was asking myself questions like, "What am I doing for my community? What does my community need?" So that narrative was really valuable. I'm really proud of it because I learned more about myself and what I should be doing for my own community (Liza).

I really can agree with what you said about the group thing because my group... honestly, they were not good [laughs]. But I got through it alone because they weren't even helping. But it's okay. I think that this year was interesting because it was about my own community, and I learned a lot of new things about it that I didn't even know. Like, I didn't even know what ethnic enclaves were, a year ago. And I think one of the most

important things I learned [was] how we ignore certain communities because we might not see them as important as other ones. Like, rich communities like Beverly Hills and stuff. And I think that it's really important to learn about that. Yeah, I learned a lot. And my writing was great (Bianca).

As a follow up to the workshop to Liza's and Bianca's insights, one of the teachers asked for advice about teaching the unit (Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11: Articulating Classroom Practices

1	Ben:	Any specific discussion strategies, that you know, or ...
2	Lucia:	Um ... ((<i>looks at students</i>)) do you all want to talk about
3		specifically the facilitation style that you really liked?
4	Bianca:	I think, for discussions, as a student I really liked when the
5		teachers put us in a group all together and opens the floor, like not
6		necessarily to start off the discussion, but let us as students start the
7		discussion and that way we feel more comfortable with sharing our
8		ideas. That's really helpful.
9	Ben:	So you like open-ended questions?
10	Bianca:	Yes.
11	Liza:	One of our teachers showed us a bunch of new art and he would
12		put it up on the board and gave us some time to reflect on it and
13		write what we observe, and after we observed on the art, then he
14		would ask us questions and we could read and say how we
15		perceived it.
16	Lucia:	I think that it comes down to good questions too, and I think that
17		that's one thing that [that teacher] is really good at crafting is the
18		questions. I oftentimes go to him to help me develop the questions.
19		Because I think that it's a craft. So I think that's really why he's
20		able to get out good answers. Anybody else?

Interestingly, the responses to the teacher's question did not holistically describe the types of relations and conversations that often occurred throughout the teaching of this unit (Field Notes).

When, in the final interview, I asked about how to prepare other teachers to connect with students, Lucia made it clear that her relationships are embodied connections developed through shared cultural intimacy between People of Color:

That's the hard part and I feel like that's what... I don't know how people can articulate it. I watch the way my sister talks to students or I watch the way that Max is with students it's this really... It's recognizable to young people. It reminds them of "Oh, that's like how my aunt talks or that's how my uncle is or my brother or my cousin." There's recognition in the way that we share. So, when I share, I think a lot of times I'm either mimicking my mom and when she talks, shares a story, or I'm mimicking my pastor. The hand motions, the gesturing, all that stuff, I feel like it's a real combination of those things that have made me, which in our communities are recognizable. There's a reason why when I get really into what I'm saying, my young people are like, "Damn, I feel like I'm in a church." Because that's who I'm mimicking. I don't think that everyone has access to that (Interview).

Not only is it embodied, it's also cultural:

There's a very particular way in which communities share their stories or share *chisme* or whatever, right? Even in, "You all want to hear some ..." There's these physical ways in which we move our bodies and in which we change our voice or intonation that we know that that's how you get people to listen to you at the table. We use those things to be able to communicate with each other and I think that's what lets us do those kinds of things (Interview).

I argue that these embodied ways of connecting and relating to students about content are often overlooked, even by Teachers of Color themselves, signifying the methodological and pedagogical significance of seeing the everyday unfolding of culturally responsive and culturally sustaining student learning. As Lucia described:

I feel like my job has been to "how do I just get you interested? not even change your mind or make you have some sort of opinion yet, just get you interested in talking about justice and what that means?" Because I feel like I was 18, 19 when I started thinking about the world, and if I think about my 16, 15-year old self, I wasn't there yet. I think at that moment, I was like, "I got to mobilize these kids," but I also need to let them be them, right? I need to let them worry about not wearing the right sweater on the right day. I think my only hope was if I get you interested, if you're down and talk about those things or maybe even wonder about some of those things, then I did my job. It's unfortunate that I'm not going to be around to be in dialogue with some of those young people as they continue to develop. I hope I find a way to do that but I'm hoping that there's enough of us that they'll find somebody (Interview).

Case 3: Makario

In the last couple years, the #RedforEd movement led by teacher unions across the nation, spanning from West Virginia, Oklahoma, etc., organized teachers, families, and

community members to reclaim public schools. At the time of this study, Southern California Teacher Union (SCTU) was engaging in escalating actions to build towards what would eventually lead to the largest teacher-led strike the District had seen in almost thirty years. As a tenth-year history teacher with over fifteen years' of union organizing experience, Makario recognized the urgency of organizing in Los Angeles in particular in order to address issues of public funding being diverted to charter schools and private entities following the appointment of U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos:

I feel like LA is where everybody's looking at because it's the second-largest teachers' union. I also feel like LA is being looked at by other unions because charter schools have grown, I think, 180% in the past however many years. I also think that other unions are looking at SCTU because the leadership of the union has changed, and people want to see how a leadership change can impact what happens broadly. A lot of folks feel like whatever happens here is going to happen everywhere else, because they're not as big as SCTU. I feel like some of the smaller unions are like, "Fuck, if LA can't win with the resources it has, what are we going to do in Seattle, which has way less funding?" This is where all the charter schools are going... It's unregulated. Whoever wants to build a school, just gets approval from the board and pretty much you get it. The only other place I think that's happened is Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina, and then all these charter schools came in (Interview).

Makario recognized this movement as not just a regionally specific issue, but one that had important implications for the future of public education nationally and internationally. The importance of union organizing, specifically through organizing teachers, became even more clear to him after attending a leadership conference in which the president of the Youth of Puerto Rico offered important insights about learning from other organizers (e.g., Louisiana organizers) and relying on other networks (e.g., New York City schools and teachers) to strategically prevent privatizers and corporate charters from taking over schools post-hurricane. Makario stated that not only should change be created through the legal system by “by passing laws, but then also [by] trying to creating connections with other progressive unions across the nation to have more of a united progressive teacher fight.” He continued:

When we think of change, that's like a crazy 'nother level of [teachers] creating changes or being transformers of communities or students' families outside of just the classroom. And I felt like when I was talking to the folks from Puerto Rico is that the teachers did all of this on their own because the government wasn't gonna help them. Families camped out in front of the schools to make sure that they're open as public schools and then to keep the charter schools out. It was just amazing to see hundreds of teachers helping out the community and then that they were the ones to try to create or fix things that they were expecting the U.S. government to do for them... They did these supply drives where kids in New York classrooms would sponsor another classroom in Puerto Rico and send the kids backpacks full of food and clothing and shoes and supplies. So then there becomes this idea of more of an international solidarity between teachers that are trying to create a better world for the communities. That these teachers are not only trying to do it within the classroom but also in the community level (Interview).

Makario's motivation to engage in this work beyond that of his classroom stemmed from his own political identity as a Person of Color, and understanding that a fight for public education is a matter of racial justice:

I think at this moment in time as a Person of Color, as a teacher in a school that everybody is on free and reduced lunch, that the majority of my students are Students of Color, that in order to preserve the institution that provides free education to all, I have to do something. I think with the appointment of Betsy DeVos that there will be a slow erosion of public schools and the funneling of that money into spaces that may not provide a public education to everybody... I can't sit back and let it happen, because then I become complicit in the fucked-up-ness. That's like sitting back and watching the police beat somebody or shoot somebody. I don't want to just sit back and let it happen. I have to do something to stop it or else I become like the people that are doing the fucked-up shit. Yeah, which is crazy. I didn't think it was going to be like this. I thought I was just going to be teaching in the classroom, but I feel like it's important so that also students see that change doesn't just happen or what teachers do isn't just here [in the class] (Interview).

While his goals were lofty, he recognized this work as “long-term” and that which he had to engage in strategically through shared decision-making and shared understanding of issues, given his social positioning as “the new guy.” For instance, he took on more of a listener role and “follow[ed] whatever system [the current leadership team is] doing” as a form of respect, and to decrease interactions of “mansplaining” while working with three other women. In fact, out of the five steering committee meetings I observed, he would speak an average of 5 minutes during

the two-hour meetings. When he did speak, it was often to advocate for collective voice. For example, during a meeting in May to strategize when teachers should participate in another escalating action across schools, Makario reminded members about the people’s voice when discussing possibilities of delaying dates of actions and voting for new chapter chairs (Figures 5.12 and 5.13).

Figure 5.12: Centering the Voice of the People for Decision-Making

1	Maria:	So I just think because faculty meetings are so wacky, like my
2		school doesn't even have them, and when we do on occasion,
3		they're on Wednesdays. Right? Like everybody's schedule is so
4		wacky and different, but I think that's where the cluster falls, and
5		what Julie's saying about the cap teams comes in so important. It's
6		like, "Okay, if we want everybody to do stuff on the same day,
7		then we gotta tell it." So I think if we hear back that everyone's
8		like, "I didn't tell anybody, now I'm freaking out." Well that's
9		where our communication with each other is essential, right? If we
10		start to hear back, it's not going to work in our area for May 1st,
11		then we shift to May 8th. It's not going to hurt people either way.
12		That's my understanding, right? My understanding is it's a policy
13		of the union that we all go out on May 1st.
14	Brenda:	Okay.
15	Cheralen:	Doesn't it make sense if somebody has a faculty meeting on
16		Wednesday, on Monday, but the same week?
17	Maria:	I'm just saying, we don't have any.
18	Makario:	I was just going to say if it's what the House of Reps voted on,
19		that's what we should follow. May 1st is also International
20		Workers Day. I think that would be important for us to boycott
21		those faculty meetings.

Figure 5.13: Advocating for Transparent Process for Voting

1	Brenda:	Because our other housekeeping end of year issue is that we need
2		to start thinking about cluster leaders for next year. Because we do
3		have some vacancies in the cluster leader department. We have
4		some people who have good intentions but, just for whatever

5 reason, haven't really been on it. So.

6 Makario: I remember when I first started, people got voted in. So we should
7 just have another, just for folks that still want to do it, for folks that
8 want to do it, and so we can see what the vacancies are. We should
9 just have a big election for each cluster.

10 Maria: I think we need to kind of put it in people's ear, though, to self
11 nominate.

12 Makario: Yes, yes. I agree too. Just so that we can figure out who's from
13 each space, also who's planning on stepping down or not doing it,
14 and also so that it can be quote/unquote "transparent." So
15 everybody knows that this is the day that we're going to vote.

In typical actions post-planning meetings, people tended to divvy up responsibilities and individual upload their assigned parts in a shared online form (Interview). As a result, the actual presentation delivered to chapter chairs in preparation for organizing escalating actions for the strike often went over the two hours they had, and rarely did they “get to the meat of what they were there for” (Interview). Of the twelve meetings I attended, each often seemed like an info session run by board of directors with no less than five forms to pick up, and questions and answers that were asked throughout each person’s presentation (Field Notes). Such an approach to running meetings conflicted with Makario’s experiences with organizing, in which meetings were structured to develop systematic, scientific way of organizing, one that valued collective interest over individual needs. In the SCTU’s historical model of organizing, more time was spent on an individualistic approach, often leading to inequitable division of labor and people in social positionings of power to “take up space.” Makario explained:

I feel like sometimes in meetings they're too nice and want everybody to have a chance to talk and may be afraid of repercussions if they cut people off. I think part of it is that maybe they have preexisting relationships with some of those folks that allows those folks to take up more space than they should. I think people let people talk more than

they should partly because they're afraid of conflict and they're maybe afraid of what that person may think or say. I also think that when people open it up to letting whoever talk, in their minds may seem democratic because it's "open," but without any structure what that does is let people who want to monopolize space monopolize space. Because you opened it up. Like you said, "Is that really democratic?" Then you have White boys just saying whatever the fuck they want. Right? They're used to that open space and taking up that space. If you structure things and give space to people or structured space, it may seem like you're too controlling, you're not letting things be organic, but then that also cuts out the bullshit from people that want to take up space and then cuts out space for people that may not feel comfortable with cutting someone off (Interview).

As a result of this lack of focus, certain activities envisioned as collective goals were often taken out of the union's forward-looking plan, specifically organizing skill to practice. Thus, when it finally came time for him to run his first meeting in April of 2018, Makario made sure to draw from his fifteen years of organizing experience in order to intentionally structure the meeting with facilitation and activities. His intentions were also marked by his embodied presence; on usual school days, he often wore a suit and tie. For this particular meeting, he wore matching "America Deserves Public Schools" shirt with his son (Figure 5.14). Throughout the meeting, his son could be seen eating on the floor, playing Legos, running around in between presenters, and helping to pass out papers to union members (Field Notes). His shirt and the presence of a child re-envisioned his role as not just the Director of the Board, but also as a public school teacher and father.

Figure 5.14: Socially Positioning Self as Community Member and Father



Makario began his meeting with an icebreaker activity of having small groups discuss their upcoming spring break. He also connected an update about a Supreme Court case to create urgency for signing up members (Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15: Creating Shared Understanding and Urgency

- 1 Makario: Who here was at March at Park? ((raises hand))
- 2 Jackie: For what?
- 3 Makario: March at Park? How many folks were here for March at Park? Yes?
- 4 ((7 people raise their hands))
- 5 Makario: It was a while ago. After March at Park, and whenever SCTU does a big action,
- 6 the District always folds. So for us, one of the main things that we need to work
- 7 on, if you forget everything about the meeting today, the main thing that I want
- 8 everyone to remember, is this paper right **here**. ((holds paper up)) This is our
- 9 priority from now until May. These are all of our escalating actions. So what we
- 10 are asking everyone to do, is once you've signed everybody up, we want our
- 11 members to commit to taking action for our contract. 'Cause signing up is not
- 12 enough. That's just like saying showing up is enough. We need to fight. So this,
- 13 this we are committed to take action for, is a way for us to sign up everybody to
- 14 escalate our actions eventually to a strike. And we have the April 19th action,
- 15 faculty boycotts made city-wide, and a September strike. These are all the things
- 16 we are asking our members to be ready, and committed to do. 'Cause if we are
- 17 not ready and committed to do this, we will not win. So if you forget everything,
- 18 you lost stuff, **this** is the one paper that we want everyone to do in the next few
- 19 weeks. Commit everybody to taking some kind of action for our union, for our
- 20 students, for our schools. Okay?

By interactively connecting a historical moment to personal experiences (lines 1-9), Makario

offered urgency to sustain action (lines 11-12) while constructing a sense of hope and clear deliverables to reach another historic moment (lines 15-20). Such a conversation, per usual, opened up questions (Figure 5.16).

Figure 5.16: Managing Teacher Talk

- 1 Melissa: Are we just checking off? What if they're already committed to striking?
2 Juanita: Yeah, cause they've been coming up, "When are we going to strike? When are we going to strike?"
3 Melissa: But they're not doing the other stuff.
4 Cheralen: They've **got** to do the other stuff ((*laughs*)
5 Makario: I'm really excited that folks want to strike, but we have to look at it strategically,
6 and we have to push where we can before we get to a strike. Just like with March
7 at Park, there was talks about strike then, too, but once we did March at Park,
8 District wanted to talk.
9 Juanita: But I think that with the veteran teachers, I think they've done it all, they're so
10 upset they just want to strike now.
11 Makario: Yes.
12 Juanita: Every day I have a couple of teachers, "When are we going to strike? Why are we
13 still"-
14 Makario: So I feel like if that conversation comes up, we should talk to them about each
15 one, try to push folks out to it, and then if by summer there's no movement, then
16 we go to impasse and we can have a vote to strike.

Unlike in others' meetings, Makario addressed the question without having it take over the main goals of the session. When asked about the effectiveness of this tactic, Makario considered that it might have been due to "people's implicit bias with male and female bodies," or how he operated like a teacher, one who didn't stand in front at a podium and talk at students, but moved around the space while talking instead. "I think that's important, too, so that the other teachers and chapter chairs feel like you're part of them rather than their separate elected official entity that doesn't fucking work and just tells them what to do, which it shouldn't be like that."

Makario also repeated the main priorities of the meeting at its beginning, in between each presenter's updates, and at the end:

One of them was, "This is our priority," and I said it three times. I showed them... I had the handout, the certain color. I showed the picture of the handouts. There was an agenda at the beginning. I pointed to the agenda. We had those three priorities. After every time we talked about a component of that plan, I referred back to the plan. I think it's important for me or the north area to do that because we're inundated with all these flyers. Everything is color coded. You've got to get 50 billion of them. Which one do you focus on? Like what we do with our kids in classes, this is your culminating project, these are the steps to get the project. If they hit all these steps... It's the same thing with organizing. There's an end goal that we want to get to. There's a short-, middle-, and long-term goals. This is our plan to get these goals. It's really simple.

He continued to use the same language related to the union's three-prong strategy as a transition point between each lead organizer's presentation. Reiterating how Cheralen, Trudy, and Minerva's individual presentations related to one of the three-prong strategies, Makario ended with a reminder to the group about the overall plan:

- The first thing that Cheralen brought up in our three prong strategy is the signing people up for the union. Is everybody cool? Everybody got this? Yes?
- So the first part of our campaign was our "All In" campaign, and the second part of our campaign is our contract demands. And we have Trudy who will be giving us an update on our bargaining.
- That was our All In campaign, we have our contract campaign, and the third part of our plan to win is the School and Communities First Funding App, and that is... Minerva has this part.
- Thank you, Minerva. That was our third part in our plan to win. One is All In, two is our contract campaign, and three is to raise the funding for all of our schools. So to end this, these are all the important dates.

As a result of this consistent messaging, Makario ensured that the core takeaways were targeted as a means to maximize critical mass prior to the next escalating action (Figure 5.17).

Figure 5.17: Outlining Agenda

1 Makario: So does anybody have any quick questions about this calendar of important dates?
2 ((*Song raises hand*))
3 Makario: Yes?
4 Song: I'm sorry. So is the Stand In Grand definite, or is it contingent upon-
5 Makario: I think it's definite.
6 Cheralen: ***We're doing it!***
7 Makario: We're doing it.
8 Cheralen: It's part of showing our power and our strength. That we're behind contract now.
9 Makario: Alright. So folks, before we leave, as we end, I was asked that if you do not have
10 one of these strike handbooks, we have some extras in the back. So if you don't
11 have one of these, pick them up in the back. But as we-- ((*hand raised*)) Yes?
12 Maria: Can I add something?
13 Makario: Yes.
14 Maria: Sean and I both went to the Equity and Human Rights Convention last month, and
15 I just wanted to say how amazing it was, there were a lot of workshops on the
16 [??] , like looking at some of the choices we are making for different lenses. If
17 you get a chance, it'd be lovely, there were 500+ educators and social workers, nice
18 to have a thousand there, it'd be definitely worth the time. We have it every year,
19 down in Florence. Equity and Human Rights Convention.
20 Makario: Thank you. Do we have any other announcements?
21 Cameron: The march on Saturday, you guys are all welcomed to park at my school, a group of
22 us will meet at 8:45 in the morning, and we're gonna walk over from the school.
23 That'll be about a half mile or a quarter mile walk.
24 Makario: And what's your school?
25 Cameron: School is 1450 North Grand, where the old building used to be. 1450 North Grand,
26 lots of parking, feel free to park there. 8:45, the march starts at I think 9:30, I think.
27 Wear your red shirts please.
28 Makario: And then Barbara.
29 Barbara: Yes, Lambert left these petitions. If you're interested in circulating the petitions
30 call [politician] to resign, I have them right here. Pick one up
31 Makario: Alright. As we leave, the two ***MOST*** important papers are this one ((*holds up*
32 *handout in right hand*)), and this yellow sheet ((*holds up handout in left hand*)).
33 These are the two most important papers. If you forget everything, make sure you
33 get these two papers. Alright folks, have a good spring break, thank you!

Not only did he offer space for people to offer related ideas, but he reinforced the main objective of his agenda by referring to specific handouts as visual artifacts (line 31-32).

Furthermore, he incorporated an interactive activity, often cut out of other meetings due to lack of time, that he deemed to be one of the most important skills to build for chapter chairs:

That's what we did all the time as a union organizer. I role-played all day before we could talk to the workers. That's what you do. Someone practices it. Usually what happened, when I worked for the union, is you have your lead person here, you're here, and then you have somebody acting out as a worker, and then you have the conversation in front of

your lead. Afterwards, you debrief with the lead and that person, he or she tries to ask questions about, "Why did you say this? Maybe you could have said this," so that you can take things or frame things and conversations so that it'll be easier when it happens in real life. I don't think any of the directors have worked in a capacity where they have done that... I think it was important for me to do it like that so people feel comfortable with having the conversation and seeing the end goal, rather than just, "Let's do it. Okay. That's good." You know what I mean? Because then there's no real, "Okay, what the fuck was the point of that?" I think it's important for us to practice those skills. Just talking to other folks in a space where we feel comfortable, because it's not going to be comfortable with them when you have the hard conversation outside of that room.

Strategically, Makario asked Chivos, who had experience as a union organizer that was similar to his own, to lead the role-play (Figure 5.18).

Figure 5.18: Framing Role-Play

1 Makario: So, while that's happening, for the folks that still are having a hard time also
2 getting folks to sign, what we're gonna do is this. Chivos,^o can you please come
3 up?
4 ((Chivo walks to front))
5 Makario: Our plan after this was this: there's gonna be a little movement, again, these are
6 our realities right now. 1.7 billion dollars LAUSD has, 287% more charter schools,
7 and [board member] wants to fire displaced teachers. So our goal is we are
8 going to have a quick role play. What we wanted to do is for folks to see what it's
9 like to have that hard conversation. 'Cause for some folks, having that two
10 minute conversation during passing period, or when people are signing in, or on
11 their way out, is **really really** hard. So today, we have some wonderful volunteers
12 that are going to practice and show you all what it's like to try to have a hard
13 conversation with someone who doesn't want to sign. Okay? Alright. Ladies and
14 gentlemen, can we all stop the side conversation so we can hear our wonderful
15 role play coming up right here?

Unlike a majority of meetings, Makario created space for different forms of interactions through the role-play. This particular role-play illustrated how important the 2018 U. S. Supreme Court decision *Janus v. AFSCME* was to the union in that its implementation at the state level could possibly allow non-dues-paying citizens to benefit from the union (Artifact). Viewing this decision as “an attack on unions and an attack on working class people who don't have the right to organize,” Makario integrated role-play to develop the skillsets needed to gain a critical mass against *Janus* (Figure 5.19).

Figure 5.19: Role-Play

1 Chivos: Sully, **WHAT'S UP brother!** How you doing man, haven't seen you! Hey, how's your lunch?
2 Hate to bug you during lunch, man, but can I eat with you and talk about this real quick?
3 Sully: Yeah, pull up a seat.
4 Chivos: So yeah, hey thanks Sully. Hey man, as you know, now I wanna keep this short 'cause I know
5 your time is limited. As you know, we're under attack, right? We as the union, this public
6 sector, we are under **ATTACK**. And which ways is it that you feel under attack?
7 Sully: We're just working more and not getting paid more, everything.
8 Chivos: Right? And then we have **Donald Trump and DeVos** that wanna take money **away** from the
9 public sector.
10 Sully: And then that [board director] guy.
11 Chivos: That guy! Do you believe what he said? Do you believe that he wants to fire people
12 because they got displaced? That's not even a disciplinary thing, right?
13 Sully: Right.
14 Chivos: But that's because we have a majority of school board members that are against us. So right
15 now, on top of that, you've heard of the Janus case, the whole Supreme Court?
16 Sully: Yeah, this June?
17 Chivos: In June, we're expecting a case in June to go against us. So on top of having Trump and
18 DeVos, on top of having a school board that goes against us and supports charter schools,
19 now we have the Supreme Court. We have the Supreme Court that has a majority against
20 us and they wanna take away the right for all public sector units. Not the right, **necessarily**,
21 but the ability for us to fight for our members. Right? What do you think about that?
22 Sully: I don't agree with it.
23 Chivos: What do you think about what happened in West Virginia?
24 Sully: That was pretty awesome.
25 Chivos: Pretty awesome, right? And they don't even have the right to collect the bargaining
26 agreement. And they mobilized their **BUTT** off. Pretty soon, if this Supreme Court case
27 compromises us, what's gonna happen is it's gonna undermine our budget. It's gonna
28 undermine and weaken our union and every public sector union in the country, right? What
29 do you think about that?
30 Sully: Not good, obviously. But, do you expect me to pay more?
31 Chivos: No, so this is what we're trying to do: we're~trying~to~protect~our~union. So what
32 we're trying to do is we're trying to get folks, we're in the middle of bargaining, and
33 we're trying to convince the district that hey, we're all in, we're all in to fight for
34 members rights. We're all in to fight to protect public education. We are all in to support
35 our union and our bargaining team. So what we developed is another application, a
36 membership app. So it's pretty much the same, it does not change at all your
37 contribution, but we worked with our legal team an they have said that this application
38 will protect us in case the charter school association, Eli Broad, or any other billionaires
39 come after our union to try and challenge our membership structure.
40 Sully: Do I have to sign all three times?
41 Chivos: My question for you brother is, "Do you mind?" We're trying to get everybody at every
42 single school to recommit to their union by signing sections one and two. Sections one
43 says, "I wanna be a union member," and section two basically says, "I'm willing to pay to
44 be a union member." Okay? And section three, and we would definitely encourage since
45 we are under attack politically, is a voluntary political contribution for PACE, because we
46 don't use your dues dollars for politics. And how much money you want to spend for the
47 school board race. How many, like 14 million dollars. So that is one way to fight these
48 folks and protect our union. Are you with me?
49 Sully: Yep.

This role-play offered multiple strategies for teachers to consider, including an emotional appeal to connect with social actors (lines 4-6), building on the prior knowledge of other social actors to offer updates on current events (lines 11-21), referencing successful actions in similar contexts to construct a sense of hope (lines 23-29), and ending with a specific call to action (lines 31-39).

Following this role-play, Makario invited the teachers to practice their own role-play for two minutes: “roughly the time you have during passing period, when people sign in, or after school” (Video Recording). As a result of this interaction, people came up with a list of strategies that included personalizing the message to the individual, listening to people’s problems, referencing an issue that someone they cared about experienced, offering facts about the District’s use of money, collaborating with the principal to allow time to share updates during a faculty meeting, shifting rhetoric about Trump depending on the audience, use of incentives such as stickers and donuts to encourage sign-ups, etc. (Field Notes; Video Recording). Many members of the union expressed how helpful it was to see multiple examples of and talking points as resources for recruiting sign ups against *Janus*.

Summary

While marginalized students were collectively impacted by macro-level forces, these injustices took on different forms across institutionalized contexts. In other words, racial hierarchies were constructed by historically-rooted dominant ideologies that took on “new” meanings in place. Thus, teachers’ approaches to racial justice work in the same political moment were taken up in diverse ways across space (and necessarily so). Specifically, they enacted racial counterscripts as embodied knowledge drawn from the familiarity of historical and ancestral experiences marked by race and other intersecting identities, revealing the strength and possibilities of Teachers of Color who have the potential to recognize, feel, and reimagine

meanings of race, even if they were not yet able to name their practices.

Still, place-based racial counterscripts enacted by Teachers of Color were often unrecognized or misunderstood, which contributed to teachers feeling discouraged and emotionally and mentally drained, even when they were promoting social change. A lack of understanding about how to support embodied ways of producing racial counterscripts may be linked to issues of retention of Teachers of Color. While not enough is still known about how to do this, these case studies are a starting point to track its impact on teachers.

CHAPTER SIX: FOSTERING PLACE-BASED COALITION BUILDING

Overview of Chapter

There is general agreement that teachers must engage in democratic efforts in classrooms and in schools to catalyze change towards a more just, equitable, and humane education, although the situational dynamics in which coalitions are formed are unclear. As evident across all case studies, place-based dynamics influence how Teachers of Color strategically use adaptive language and embodied practices as significant resources for coalition building; they strategically foreground particular aspects of their social identities to mobilize students, families, teachers, and community members towards social change in the interests of marginalized communities.

For each case study below, I begin with a description of the racial hierarchies in place before discussing how Teachers of Color enacted social activities to reconfigure race relations in the interests of marginalized groups. In the first case, I describe how Lucia co-constructed a coalition within a multi-racial leadership team by socially positioning herself as a member of marginalized groups, galvanizing collective efforts to address retention issues of Black families across the charter organization and co-create social space to learn from and with Black students and families at her school site. In the second case, I discuss how Ryan co-constructed solidarity with Latinx students through their historical experiences as (children of) immigrants and refugees in the U.S., and how he leveraged their shared cultural identities to incite students' participation in a student-led walkout within a restrictive public school. In the third case, I detail how Makario co-constructed a coalition with public school teachers, students, and community

members to engage in school picketing, and how he rallied their shared commitments to strategically reposition Women of Color and Youth of Color as leaders advocating for structural change in public schools.

Case 1: Lucia

Situated within a sociopolitical context wherein neoliberal urban and education policies promote school choice to purportedly remedy historical and current racialized inequities in education (Lipman, 2011), Earth High School was one of many rising charter schools of the past decade that aimed to prepare low-income Communities of Color for college. Recognizing the cultural mismatch between a predominantly White staff and the multiracial student population they were serving from surrounding urban neighborhoods, organizational leaders sought to diversify staff in the hopes of better meeting students' academic needs. Based on Lucia's perspective, institutionalized efforts to diversify the staff without an explicit and mutually defined approach and ideology only further exacerbated racialized inequities at Earth High School:

I was a guinea pig at charter schools, and now I teach there. When I was a student there, our school site was really split between African American and Latino students, and I was really shocked when I came back to teach that most of our Black students had left, so now we're down to 8% and about 80% Latino. When you visit other schools though, you'll see higher Black demographics there so it's hard to say it's a reflection of the community. In the past three years they've talked about "let's diversify our staff," but it's been framed as a social justice move and it hasn't necessarily been intentional or well thought out; so, if the idea is that you're trying to get to social justice, then you gotta have people where that's a part of their pedagogical framework, but that's not what they're looking for. They're just looking for Black, Brown, Yellow bodies right? So we've had more diversity on our campus, but it hasn't resulted in anything palpable (Interview).

Inherent in her critique of the school was a critique of the foundations of the charter organization itself, one that was complicit with a neoliberal agenda wherein emphasis on individual responsibility and diversity overlooked the need to address systemic and structural conditions

that negatively impact students' living and schooling experiences (Anyon, 2014). Although it was not uncommon for social actors to talk about “social justice,” “diversity,” and “equity,” most staff members rarely mentioned “race” when discussing educational inequities. For those that did engage in race talk, they often talked through the lens of individual racism (e.g., “To address racial microaggressions, we should give consequences to students for using the ‘N’ word”), or personal experience alone (e.g., “As a Person of Color, I can relate to what students are going through.”). A handful of staff members, including Lucia, talked about race through a structural lens (e.g., using words such as “whiteness” and “power” to describe racially inequitable outcomes) (Field Notes). These co-existing ideologies of “social justice” were apparent in the material environment and practices at Earth High School. As shown in Figure 6.1, in the classroom where Lucia shared space with a White teacher, the colleague’s side of the wall consisted of colorful college banners and a calendar with deadlines for SAT sign-ups (Image A), while Lucia’s side of the wall consisted of posters of politicized statements such as “*No mas violencia*” and Spanish proverbs (Image B).

Figure 6.1: Racial Ideologies in Material Environment



These co-existing ideologies of “social justice” in practice and material often led to tensions in which “more burden [was] placed on Teachers of Color, specifically Black women, to speak out on racially inequitable outcomes” (Interview). According to Lucia, this unspoken tension coupled with divergent racial ideologies have impacted retention of Staff of Color and Families of Color alike:

Our school is centered around environmentalism, which when we’re talking about Black and Brown communities, we’re at the forefront of this work. People are doing hella beautiful things and we have to talk about environmental justice if we’re going to talk racial justice, but we’re moving at the pace of White people, right? So they’re trying to talk about environment that is very separate from us, they take our young people to these outdoor educational trips, which is cool but then there’s no conversation how this is Native people’s land. There’s no conversation about, “You have ancestral knowledge, you’ve been dispossessed from your land, so let’s recover some of that.” And so for me as someone who has come up in this school, and I got some nice things out of it, but coming back as a teacher I see the same things that happened to me happen to my young people, which is really sad and frustrating (Interview).

Lucia’s insights as a member of a racialized group, combined with her commitments as an anti-colonial teacher organizer and unique positioning as former student at Earth High School, shaped her strategic practices in an effort to reposition Black students and families at the forefront of social change:

[The organizational leaders] have a soft spot for me because I’m an alum. It’s interesting because anytime I do something they think is good or cool, they’ll always be like, “See, *this* is what we’re doing right. *These* are the kinds of students your teachers or leaders are producing at your school.” So I play on that, you feel I’m an extension of what you do, so I’m a play those feelings of validation that you need for my own endgame (Interview).

When Lucia is referred to as “these kind of students” that Earth High is “producing,” the organizational leaders imply that she is proof that, contrary to anecdotes and school data, Students of Color can succeed at Earth High (Field Notes). Thus, while race was not specifically articulated by organizational leaders’ perception of Lucia, it was still highly visible and present. Highly aware of the ways in which she may be used as a wedge to deny racial inequities at Earth

High, Lucia strategically utilized her unique positioning to shape decision-making at an organizational level, and actions at the school site level, particularly through her leadership role as Social Justice Coordinator. It is through this role that I detail the ways in which she co-created social change in the educational interests of Black students and families by: 1) influencing organization-wide decision-making processes towards racially conscious actions, and 2) repositioning Black students, families, and faculty as leaders of social change.


As the representative for Earth High School, Lucia was one of four teachers who served as Social Justice Coordinator for the charter organization. Through monthly meetings, the coordinators came together with their administrators and board members to plan, reflect, and engage in actions that could address organization-wide equity issues. With the exception of one man, all of the members were women. Three were Black (Dawn, Maya, and Tanya), three were Latina (Lucia, Mae, and Carina), two were White (Alicia and Bill), one was mixed race (Kate), and one was Asian American (Ely). It is worthwhile to note that within this social space, Lucia had personal relationships with her administrator, Kate, and the facilitator, Dawn. They were all colleagues before Kate and Dawn transitioned to out-of-classroom roles. Given these social dynamics and relationships, Lucia was in an optimal position to build coalition towards race-based action.

In the first planning meeting of the year, the organizational leaders met to determine the focus of their organization-wide action. Dawn had just posed a controversial idea by a prominent Black male scholar in urban education to lead their collective inquiry: affluent schools are more successful because they are accountable to parents, while low-income schools continue to fail because they are accountable to test scores. She then asked the group to discuss in pairs how this idea might shape their planning for addressing issues of equity across the organization

and at their school sites. Overhearing Lucia’s critique in her pair conversation with Ely, an Asian American instructional coach, Dawn called on them to share out to the whole group (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Leveraging Social Positioning to Challenge Structural Inequities

1	Dawn:	Okay. So, Ely brought up the point that parents in affluent communities
2		have more capital, and so that that’s part of why the schools might feel
3		accountable to them. Am I repeating that correctly?
4	Ely:	Yeah. The parents feel accountable, and are accountable, because they have
5		resources and capital. They know that they carry that resource to the school.
6		They fuel that confidence.
7	Lucia:	And then my (0.2) My critique was I don’t necessarily like aspiring to
8		replicating what already exists, [in terms of schools and the outcomes of that.
9	Kate:	[Mmm
10	Ely:	You’re aspiring to an affluent community.
11	Lucia:	EXACTLY. You’re aspiring to an affluent community, ‘cause then what we’re
12		talking about is aspiring to wealth and whiteness , right? Instead, how do we
13		subvert that and use our institutions, use our school, to be different? To still be
14		accountable to parents, but to achieve something radically different. So, that’s
15		the only thing that I feel like is a little problematic, is when we try to replicate
16		systems that were not built for us in the first place, that were built for other
17		other communities.



In this interaction, Lucia shifted a relational lens of addressing inequities through “accountability to parents” to a structural lens of addressing “wealth and whiteness” (line 12). Her ideological contestation begins with pointing out the flawed logic that “replicating what already exists” could lead to transformation of current conditions of schools (line 7-8). In essence, she implies that schools as they currently exist are inherently inequitable, so replicating what already exists will only reproduce current outcomes. Considering that she is critiquing a prominent Black scholar’s analysis, she makes this critique subtly by pausing and utilizing qualifying words such as “don’t *necessarily* like” and “*little* problematic” with a softer tone (lines 7, 15). Then, her affirmation following Ely’s response (line 10) constructs a sense of shared critique about

choosing to aspire to be an affluent community. No longer seen as alone in her critique, Lucia then renegotiated potential action that reproduces “wealth and whiteness” (line 12) to a structural action of subverting schools to “achieve something radically different” (line 14). Her linguistic practices are also strategically used to enact emotional contestation.

I choose to use that language, and I think part of it is me being like, "I don't want to make you feel comfortable and I'm going to use words that very clearly make you acknowledge what we're talking about." I'm not talking about racism. I knew there was a White person in the room, and I don't care about making you feel uncomfortable. You chose to be in this space, and I'm going to fucking call out Whiteness. I want everyone in here to hear it. Yeah. I feel like a lot of times I want to push the school to feel uncomfortable and I'm going to critique the fact that we're a charter school (Interview).

Given her social awareness of the racial dynamics and co-existing ideologies at play within the social space, Lucia intentionally created feelings of discomfort and pressure to acknowledge whiteness and call for actions that transform structural racism in their shared decision-making processes. In particular, she urged collective action by strategically foregrounding multiple social identities. Drawing on her social identity as a member of the charter organization, she used the words “we” and “our” to construct a sense of solidarity with her colleagues working to “achieve something radically different” in their collective work as site coordinators (line 12-13). At the same time that she positioned herself as equal status to the whole group in her social identity as an organizational leader, she also complicated this positioning by drawing on her social identity as a member of marginalized communities. While the “we” and “our” words in the dotted boxes referred to their shared identities as organizational leaders (lines 12-15), the word “us” in the wavy box (line 16), combined with the hand gesture on her chest, refers to her shared identity with Communities of Color as a member of a racialized group. By pointing out that “affluent communities,” “wealth,” and “whiteness” were not built for “us” but for “other communities” (line 16-17), Lucia constructed a need for collective action that necessarily

addresses and considers race, while simultaneously positioning herself as someone who seems more knowledgeable and intimately connected to Communities of Color. As a result, this particular interaction initiated by Lucia influenced the discussion and trajectory of decision-making processes for their yearlong action; by the end of the meeting, the organizational leaders had decided to organize site level actions to address issues of Black student recruitment and retention.

This action reveals a phenomenon often unsaid about supporting teachers with coalition building: Lucia's abilities to re-center critiques of whiteness in a conversation driven by critiques of class were tied to her own racialization. Thus, teachers must be deliberate about how they draw on their racialization for the purposes of questioning, challenging, and transforming meanings of race, even when race is not talked about. As Lucia demonstrated, these moves can be subtle and must consider the social dynamics at play. This interaction also revealed the necessary yet invisibilized nature of Lucia's intervention; while the outcome of this shared decision is seen as an organization-wide endeavor for social change, outsiders may never know that Lucia's insights and interactional processes initiated their collective action to begin with. Arguably, such decisions may not have occurred the way they had if it had not been for Lucia's intellectual and emotional labor.

Given divergent ideologies of social justice within the charter organization, Lucia also engaged in practices to strengthen and make explicit a shared ideological approach to improving Black student recruitment and retention across school sites. For example, after deciding to focus on Black students as the yearlong inquiry project, Lucia asked about the process by which the team would choose representatives for the school site team (Figure 6.3):

Figure 6.3: Co-Constructing Shared Identities as Antiracist Allies

1 Lucia: When we're talking about having parent representatives, and even
 2 teacher representatives and stuff like that, do we want to be
 3 **strategi::::c** in who (0.3)
 4 Dawn: I think so, yes.
 5 Lucia: Right ((*nods head*))
 6 ((*cross talk between leaders*))
 7 Lucia: You know what I mean?
 8 Maya: Say what you're **NOT** saying, for those who may not know what
 9 you're meaning.
 10 Lucia: Well, if our focus is retention, recruitment and achievement of
 11 African American students, we need to pick reps from those
 12 constituent groups that are interested in pursuing a project that
 13 serves those kids. I think that's what we mean, [right? And so
 14 *(((leaders whispering))*)]
 15 Lucia: Well, we don't want to have people elected to the committee who
 16 are not supporting this work. That will get in the way of it, that will
 17 prevent action, that will prevent working towards that field goal
 18 that Maya wants us to get clear of. I can just hear people being
 19 like, "**Why not A::::LL students, not just BLACK students?**"
 20 ((*Leaders laughing*))

Lucia poses her idea to select representatives who are Black and committed to the educational interests of Black students indirectly; these linguistic moves were strategic on Lucia's part:

The person who's giving us direction here is Dawn. In my mind, I feel like expectations or whatever need to come from her so that they are legitimate. Because while people might respect what I say, they're not going to do what I say because I don't really hold that position of power. I do feel some sort of responsibility as a non-Black person to be like, "It's okay for it to be by Black people, for Black people," and for that this initiative to be led by Black folks, majority Black folks, considering that about half of us in here are not Black. We need to understand that when we're forming this committee and taking up this initiative, it needs to be Black people at the forefront. I'm not going to say it that way. I'm going to say it in this different way, like, "Let's be strategic," so that it sounds acceptable and political enough and so that it doesn't have to be brought up by a Black person. Black people shouldn't have to be like, "Hey, it makes sense for us to lead our own shit." We should have enough some sort of consciousness to be like, "Oh, yeah, let's make sure that our groups are made up of Black folk so that this is done right." Or at least people who can empathize and politically understand why Black folks should be at the table when this is happening.

For the idea to be "acceptable and political enough," Lucia leveraged tone, voice, and indirect language without actually coming forthright to explicitly say "It needs to be led by Black folks." For one, she posed her ideas as a question rather than a directive (lines 1-3, 10-13). She

also used a high-pitched mocking voice in emphasizing the word “all” in her utterance of “Why not all students, not just Black students” (line 19) to draw on the co-opted narrative of #AllLivesMatter to criticize the #BlackLivesMatter movement. An exaggerated mocking voice was a common practice Lucia often used to juxtapose her ideas as distinctively different from whiteness. In a different context, for example, when leading professional development with new teachers interested in teaching Ethnic Studies, Lucia used an exaggerated mocking voice to discuss the apolitical State Standards that prevent her from teaching culturally responsive content to her students, a feeling new teachers themselves knew too well having just finished their teaching credential and starting their first year as teachers (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4: Use of Tone to Critique Whiteness

- 1 Lucia: Let’s talk about migration. The way I got to get away with it was in
- 2 Spanish you have to teach culture, cultural aspects so I was like,
- 3 “**I::I’M ((hand to chest)) *assessing learning target SIX, cultural awa::::reness.*”**
- 4 ((Teachers snicker))

As evident by the reactions from other social actors (laughter in Figure 1.3 and snicker in Figure 1.4), Lucia tended to interact with her audience’s emotional and ethical response in order to achieve a shared understanding for the task at hand. Considering the organizational leader’s reaction following Lucia’s exaggerated mocking tone, there was an implied agreement that the audience needed to be strategic about garnering support to enact a race-based plan of action.

I think I intervened in this specific way because... I use, "Are we going to be strategic?" Let me make people laugh at some point, and then I don't have to be the person who says, "Let's make sure that those people don't have a problem with Black folks being our focus." I know just what to say and enough of what I can say so that somebody else can pick it up, and that's it. At this point, it's Dawn who's the one who lays out what I'm saying. Maya was also like, "Say what you want to say for people who don't know what you mean," because she knew exactly what I was talking about, but wasn't going to be the person to say it. I feel like here I know enough of the people that I'm surrounded by

where I know I'm going to bring this up, I'm going to say, and they know exactly what I'm talking about and what I mean. We're going to laugh a little bit, so it's taken lightly, but it's clear what the expectation is.

By not stating the idea directly, her linguistic moves create the conditions that engage collective inquiry wherein Dawn, as the person in a position of power, directly affirms Lucia's idea as a whole group initiative (line 4) and, following this interaction, the group co-constructs a need to select Black parent representatives by engaging in a longer discussion about how to do so.

Clearly, supporting teachers to contextualize and adapt their message to an audience in different social spaces, without compromising their goals, is a necessary dimension of coalition building.

Lucia also planned and facilitated site meetings to support the organization-wide goal of increasing and supporting Black student recruitment and retention. She strategically co-constructed a site team of elected student, teacher, and staff based on racial make-up and shared racial ideology: 1) a tenth-grade Latina student named Amy, who was a well-known prison abolitionist by her teachers and peers, 2) a tenth-grade English teacher named Max, an Afro-Latino man with whom Lucia organized with as an undergrad, and 3) a school counselor named Kelli, a Black woman who had positive relationships with Black families and supported the Black Student Union. As a team, they decided to enact an action plan whereby they would bring Black students and their families together in a series of school-family events to celebrate Blackness within a racial affinity group, and develop a partnership with the school to collaborate on Black educational interests and needs (Field Notes).

Given the unique make-up of this social space, members within the site team meeting often discussed issues of race and racism comfortably and openly, as well as the possibilities of reimagining schools beyond existing constraints (Field Notes). For instance, during a check-in at one of their meetings, Lucia comfortably related to group members a racialized experience she

had had with her dentist (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Open Race Talk with Racialized Groups

- 1 Lucia: I think my trip to the dentist this morning put me in a bad mood. I
- 2 have to get a root canal, but the **white** people and their microaggressions
- 3 set me up for a bad day.

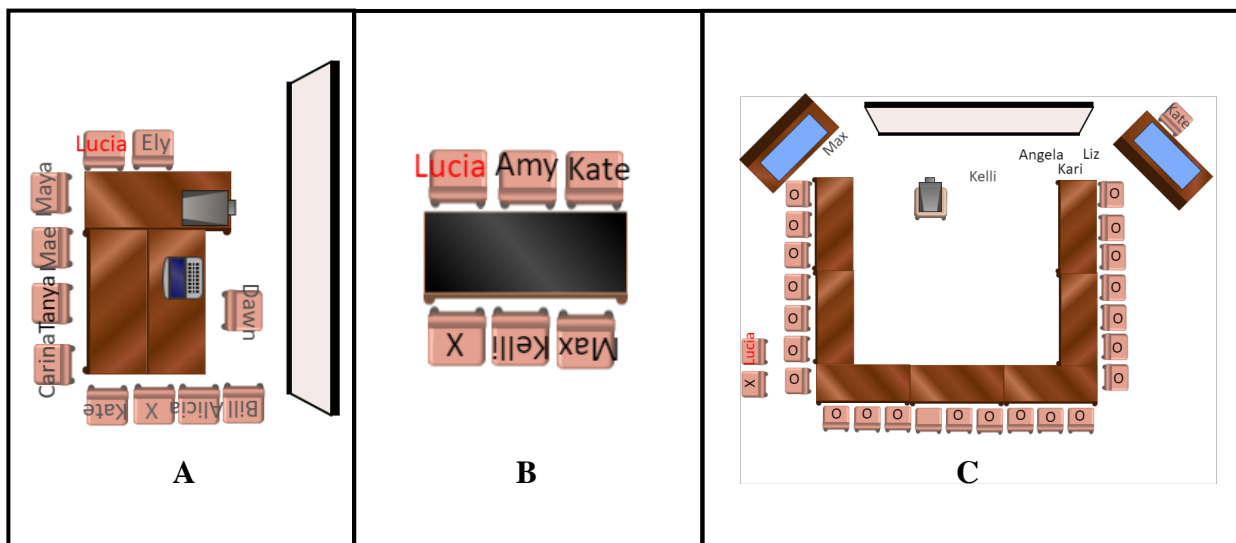
This social space in which she was able to share so liberatingly, compared to other social spaces in her school, stemmed from years of building relationships and developing critical mass of allies. Through ongoing reflections about her practices through this research process, Lucia was able to identify the results of her ongoing work.

Maybe I didn't know it, but I was able to build for myself a really nice community where I don't feel alone here, where I feel supported, where I feel loved, where I can, even if I can't do what I had imagined myself doing when I was 26 or 25, but I'm still here. I'm still doing work. I'm still pushing, motherfuckers. I'm doing work. And so, and it's thanks to the group of folks that I've been able to build with, share with, and are part of my community. And I'm grateful that I brought in my sister and Max and also my friend, people that I really share an affinity with, that I have the same political understandings with, we think the same, they are with me here. And it is hard to say, "No," to me or, "No," to some of the things that I'm asking for or pushing for when I have six people behind me. So, I think in those ways... I've done some shit, and, yeah, it took me years. And maybe it didn't look like a lot, but it's enough. And it's enough to keep me hopeful. Enough to keep me still strategizing for how we're gonna get our own school, our own space, our own spaces of learning. So I think I wouldn't have been able to reflect on that without this. (Interview).

Lucia's reflections point out the ongoing nature of engaging in racially transformative work that is often overlooked in education research, specifically long-term labor that may be difficult to trace in terms of outcomes, even by Lucia herself. In other words, developing a critical mass of allies was foundational to developing the conditions needed to co-create a Black space within Earth High School.

On the day of the first Black family event, Lucia’s adapted her embodied practices to position herself as lower status to Black students and families. Compared to her embodied practices in other social settings (Figure 6.6) in which she positioned herself as equal to her colleagues during organizational meetings by sitting at eye-level to them (Image A), as well as to her peers during site planning meetings (Image B), at the Black family event she strategically sat in the back corner of the classroom while Kelli and three senior Black girls led activities in the front and Black parents and students sat in a half circle.

Figure 6.6: Bodily and Spatial Positioning in Various Social Spaces



Her embodied practices were intentional on her part:

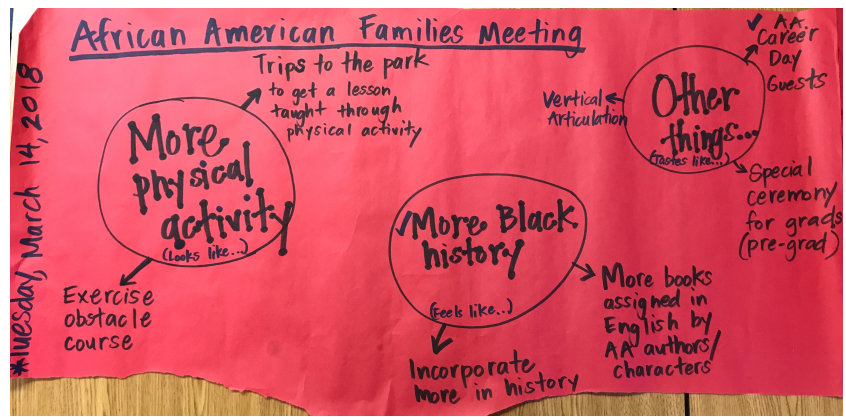
That's a political choice. That's a very intentional ‘I should not be at the front, blah, blah, blah.’ I know where I'm from and I know that's not my fucking place. I'm not going to do that. That's not where I belong. The community has taught me that and not in these negative ways but as it's those things that you know without having to be told those things. (Interview).

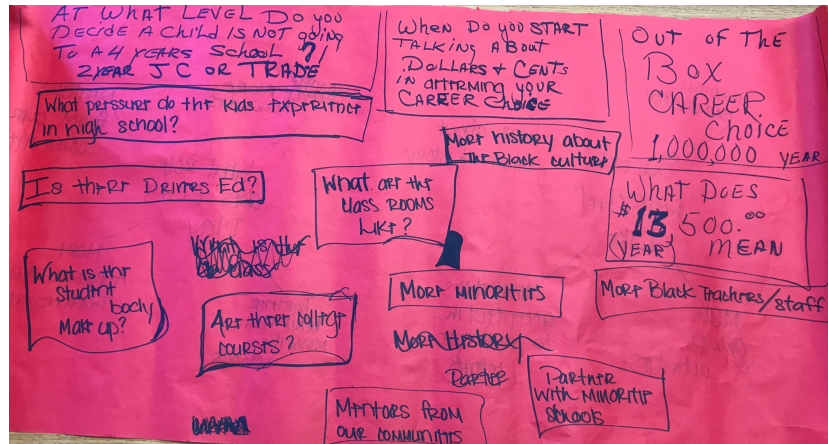
Given the seating arrangement and conversations, Lucia was de-centered as the official “leader” and offered space for Black families, students, and staff to be the focus and formal lead of

conversations.

Kelli recruited three Black students, Angela, Kari, and Liz, to facilitate community building exercises and dialogue about what it meant to be a Black student at Earth High School. During one of the activities, one Black mother exclaimed, “Wow, I didn’t even know that many Black families come here,” and another Black grandfather stated, “I’ve had two grandchildren come through this school and this is the first time I’ve seen this school bring us together” (Field Notes; Audio Recording). As a result of their ongoing inquiry, Black families and their students offered suggestions and insights to recreate Earth High School in the interests of Black people, including a demand for more Black history, alternative career pathways beyond college, and outside-of-classroom learning. Examples of their inquiry are included in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7: Black Students and Family Inquiry





By repositioning herself as a listener and engaging in labor to create the necessary conditions for such collaborative inquiry to take place, Lucia was able to catalyze racially transformative practices that re-center Black families as key stakeholders who seek to recreate Earth High School in their educational interests and wants. Through her ongoing efforts to maintain a co-created space for Black families, they were able to build coalition around community-oriented forms of academic support for one another (e.g., “Come over to my house! If they have enough courage or awareness to know that their classmates are struggling, you know, well, hey, come over here and study with me and see if I can help you.”), as well as social networking tools among other actions (e.g., “I wanted to encourage the parents that are here. Maybe if you're not necessarily sharing your phone number, possibly sharing a email or something like that because that's one of the thing that brought community for me”).

Of course, Lucia’s role requires constant adaptive practices in order to ensure the space continues to maintain shared ideologies and commitment to Black student recruitment, retention, and academic achievement. For instance, the only time she was centered during the actual event was when she delivered a five-minute pitch for recruiting a Black parent representative to join the team. Based on collaborative suggestions from the site planning team, she framed this

recruitment around racially inequitable student outcomes (Figure 6.8)

Figure 6.8: Messaging to Black Families

1 Lucia: This year our goal is to look at academic performance,
2 retention, and recruitment and particularly of our African
3 American students. And the reason why is because, when
4 looking at our data ((points to board)) This is the data for the
5 state test that students take every year. And then, here's the
6 overall as a school and here are sub groups ((points to Student
7 Group column)). And if you take a look here ((points to row
8 with red circle)) we have our African American sub group,
9 we have 33% and then all of a sudden we drop in 2016-2017 by
10 38%.

Baseline Math Data
Data in blue indicates fewer than 10 students

CAASPP	Student Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
% Proficient / Advanced	Overall	36%	33%	31%
	SWD	11%	14%	18%
	EL	0%	0%	0%
	SED	36%	26%	30%
	Hispanic	33%	28%	34%
	African-American	33%	38%	0%
	Asian	50%	75%	25%
	White	50%	25%	50%

Drawing from the data, Lucia explained the importance of the site team's plan to address Black students' academic needs. While she offered this explanation as a way to address structural inequities based on race, Jo, a Black parent, misinterprets her explanation (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9: Miscommunication with a Black Parent

11 Jo: But **why** is that?
12 Lucia: Yeah. And that's what we want to find out. Right, because we don't
13 understand how this could have happened, right? In the span of a
14 year. And why are we going down at all?
15 Jo: I don't think it's of a culture issue. So, we don't appear to kind of
16 grasp the concept of whatever we're studying. So you are saying
17 nothing has one thing to do about **race** and **culture**. It's just you
18 know everyone that passes through this school has to look at the
19 same thing. This is about **race**?
20 Lucia: **Ab-solutely**. And if you take a look at our other sub groups, it's also
21 **NOT** where we would want it to be, right? But I feel like that kind of
22 a drop needs particular attention for sure. And I think if we would
23 try to look at all of the groups, it could be overwhelming and I
24 think particular attention to our Black students, for sure.

In this interaction Lucia discussed the data with the lens of racial inequities as a systemic issue (lines 20-24), while Jo conflated race with culture, assuming that Lucia was suggesting that low

academic scores are associated with a cultural deficit in Black students (lines 15-19). During the site team meeting following this family event, Jay, a Black mother, volunteered to join their team. Lucia then offered her reflection with the team about strengths and struggles of the first family event, specifically as it pertained to the interaction with Jo (Figure 6.10)

Figure 6.10: Reflecting on Tensions Being Non-Black Body in Black Space

1 Lucia: I think I'm gonna put for weaknesses, I think we should have thought
2 a little bit more about how to introduce the data and then to--who
3 was gonna do it, because I think it doesn't matter if I know what the
4 fuck I'm talkin=sorry. **I'm sorry.** ((Reaches hand out towards Jay))
5 Jay: PLEASE.
6 Lucia: It doesn't matter if (0.3)
7 Jay: ((Laughing)) It's okay.
8 Max: Come on now!! ((Encouraging tone))
9 Lucia: It doesn't matter if I know what I'm talking about, right? I think like
10 we need to be very clear or really take seriously identity of people and
11 the perceptions that we have, and if we're, you know, a lot of folks were
12 like, the majority of people in here are **Latino**. Then I'm the one who's
13 giving stats on student performance and like academic performance, like
14 that's ((puts both hands on head)) **STRATEGICALLY**, that doesn't **make**
15 **sense**. In terms of how people are gonna **perceive** it.

Lucia demonstrated awareness that the person who delivers the message was just as important as how the message is delivered (lines 9-15). Lucia's reflection reveals an important dimension of coalition building: who we talk to and how we are perceived matters. What this may mean for teacher education and educational leaders is this tactic should be considered when aiming to support Teachers of Color through shifting talk and embodied practices in different social spaces. Given the shared understandings in organizational and site planning meetings, Lucia was able to communicate her meanings through mutually defined approaches and shared ideological

approach. However, the family-school event revealed the consequences of assuming shared ideologies, which may implicate a serious miscommunication and delay in building coalition.

Case 2: Ryan

Working within a restrictive school environment, Ryan approached coalition building in the interests of his students precariously. Designated as a program improvement school, with pressures on teachers to raise student performance and implement standards-based curricula, Ryan's school was often described by other teachers as "top-down" and "anti-union" in an environment where they were "trying to keep [their] jobs and not necessarily create waves." According to Ryan, teachers have either lost their jobs or been reprimanded due to administrators who deemed their practices as "non-compliant with state mandates."

It's a very top-down approach, teachers have been singled out, teachers have lost their jobs and been reprimanded formally for very minor things that I think most other schools won't look at? And so because of that the environment can feel quite unsafe for teachers to stand up and voice what they think is best for them and their students if it goes against what the leadership of the school thinks is best for the students. And so with that type of environment there's a fear environment so that affects a lot of the things we do here (Interview).

Given the high-stakes environment in which he was situated and racialized, Ryan developed a systematic classroom routine that maximized every second of the fifty minutes he had with students: 100% of his 25 to 40 students in each class period engaged with academic content aligned with State Standards through talk and written work every single day (Field Notes). Deemed a "strict teacher: by his students and himself, and known for his classroom management by his peers, Ryan was often described by teachers and students as a teacher who "actually makes you work!" His practices influenced by place-based dynamics were also evident in the material environment: classroom walls were decorated with posters of school policies,

discipline policies, academic sentence stems for writing, and academic models of “student excellence.” Upon closer inspection, this environment was also sprinkled with critical subversions of standardized content and cheeky humor: next to his daily agenda and learning objectives tied to Standards, Ryan compiled and made visible a list of Black lives taken by state-sanctioned violence. These materials were contrasted by art created by leadership students, and memes with puns reminding students to complete their homework (Field Notes).

Considering local racial ideologies, Ryan strategically sought to make race relations visible through his teaching as a means to develop students’ solidarity with other Communities of Color. In order to do this, he indirectly critiqued his own position of power, and affirmed students’ cultural identities in an attempt to make himself approachable despite his strict mannerisms. For example, Ryan often used Spanish language to express his close ties with his students’ community in everyday language. Consider this example during a chorale reading exercise:

“Please take out your reading packets and turn to page 2.”

As the rustling sound of papers cut through the previously silent room, Ryan explains why he is the most suitable person to read out loud to the class, with a smug smile, “I don’t know if you noticed but I’m not Latino. I grew up in a community with a lot of Latinos, and they call me *Angelito* because I sound like I’m from heaven.”

As a response the students both laugh and groan in unison (Field Notes)

Using the word “Angelito” to construct a sense of familiarity with students’ sociocultural practices, Ryan simultaneously positioned himself as higher status by deeming himself “the most suitable person to read out loud,” while critiquing this positioning through his sarcastic tone. Similarly, he utilized these practices to reconstruct his social identity as familial and of equal status to non-certified staff who tended to be seen and treated as lower ranking than certified teachers (Field Notes). For example, Ryan referred to Mr. Romo, a Latino soccer coach and non-certified staff member, as his *primo* when Mr. Romo visited his classroom (Figure 6.11).

Figure 6.11: Co-Constructing Relational Ties Cross-Racial Groups

- 1 Ryan: Can everyone say good morning to my **good** cousin, Mr. Romo?
- 2 Students: Good mo::rning! ((*in unison*))
- 3 Mr. Romo: Long **lost** cousins ((*sarcasm*)).
- 4 Ryan: (h) You all didn't know we were cousins?
- 5 Lauren: N...no?
- 6 Ryan: **¡Los primos!**
- 7 Mr. Romo: He found me on Facebook two years ago ((*sarcasm*)).

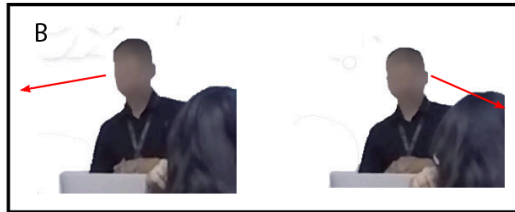


Thus, students simultaneously viewed Ryan as strict and a teacher who “thinks he is so funny,” paying particular attention to his tone and voice for underlying messages beyond his words. Such a contrasting dynamic between his strict persona and his humorous, sarcastic tone enabled the classroom space to shift from an overall serious tone to occasional bantering and laughter between Ryan and students, as well as student to student. Students even created weekly memes of him and posted them on his classroom door, as well as their own hashtag to express relational ties to him on their Instagram accounts: The #Ryanators.

Building on his simultaneous equal and higher status positioning as students’ ally and strict teacher, Ryan intentionally focused on the collective experiences of racialized groups in his teaching to draw connections between individual ethnic groups. For example, when teaching eighth grade U.S. history, Ryan often connected the content to social issues that were culturally relevant to the students’ community (e.g., DACA, immigration laws). In the midst of teaching about immigration laws, for instance, Ryan shared a personal story of his experience as a child of immigrants (Figure 6.12)

Figure 6.12: Socially Positioning Self as Child of Refugees

1 Ryan: When I got in trouble one thing I remember is they would sit me down.
 2 **“DO YOU KNOW WHAT I HAD TO DO TO GET HERE?!** I came here with
 3 nothing but clothes on my back. Your dad escaped and got caught and
 4 thrown in jail, and he tried to escape again from the country, and his
 5 dad got thrown in jail because your dad escaped. He came here and he
 6 did not know English, and he went to college.” And my mom would say,
 7 “I went to college and I didn’t know English very well.” She would have a
 8 **college biology book** and the **Vietnamese English translating dictionary**
 9 and translate every single word from English in a college textbook into
 10 Vietnamese and try to figure that out, let alone raise me which is
 11 probably the easiest part. (3.0) ((scans room))

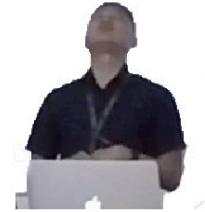


12 Students: ((laughing))
 13 Ryan: (h) Which is maybe the most difficult I don’t know.

Drawing on his social identity as a child of Vietnamese refugees, Ryan described both the hardships of displacement (lines 3-4) and the perseverance of immigrants (lines 3-10). He emphasized the heaviness of immigrant struggles (lines 8-10), using hand gestures to create contrast between navigating two languages and artistically bringing both languages together to survive and thrive in a foreign country (Image A). Pausing with narrowed eyes, Ryan scanned the room after comparing his parents’ struggles and perseverance as immigrants to their struggles raising him (line 10-11, Image B). Such a contrast following his description of immigrant struggles created a dramatic effect; as evidenced by student laughter, they recognized the familiarity of the immigrant experience and child of immigrant experience.

Figure 6.13: Co-Constructing Shared Identities as (Children of) Immigrants

- 1 Ryan: By this time I'm like, "**COME ON**, this story again *wh:::::y?!"*
- 2 Raise your hand if you've heard this story?
- 3 ((Half the students in the class raise hand))
- 4 Jess: The whole sha-bam!



While this narrative was specific to his own ethnic identity as a child of Vietnamese refugees, the use of dramatic retelling and bodily expressions constructed a collective experience of immigrants and children of immigrants, enabling him to build interracial linkage between his students' understandings of immigrant experiences and his own (line 4). These kinds of stories also made Ryan seem more human and personable to students; they continued to be interested in his family's immigration story weeks after this story was shared (Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.14: Sustained Identity as (Children of) Immigrants

- 1 Elias: Mr. were your parents here a couple years before they had you?
- 2 Ryan: My mom came here in 1965, my dad came here in 1966, I was
- 3 born in 1992. (h)
- 4 Students: ((laughing))

Through shared connections with his Asian American experience, Ryan cultivated students' solidarity with other Communities of Color.

I think is important for students to see you as a human being and not just as a teacher. I remember a teacher said, this White male teacher that taught English at my other school, who had been arguably been very prejudiced said, "Students don't see skin color. They just see one race. They see you as a teacher." And I said, "Okay." That kinda made sense, certain sense. But, to say that they don't see race at all is not true. And so, here you gotta connect with students. So one, I tell them a little bit about myself. But two, I'm sure that immigrant story connects to them as well. So I think it's a twofold process of why I'm sharing that. Opportunity to share about myself, and then sharing about my background. Obviously, they had questions. And it probably connects with them, 'cause I'm sure every single one of them has someone in their family that's an immigrant, if they're not themselves... Solidarity between different groups, whether it be through my stories and

myself, or through the African American experience, the Latino experience. I think I'm constantly intertwining those three groups.

Ryan's approach to coalition building across social identities as (children of) immigrants revealed an important aspect of preparing Teachers of Color as cultural brokers. Considering the heterogeneity of experiences of People of Color, teacher educators must consider the intersectionality of teachers' positionalities in order to enrich their approaches to building coalition. To be sure, an abundance of scholarship has also discussed the importance of cultivating transformative spaces to develop students' critical consciousness as agents of change (e.g., Cabrera et.al., 2013). However, scholars may overlook the daily interactions within classroom settings, even in restrictive contexts, as racially transformative spaces that could support and sustain their political development. Despite institutionalized constraints, Ryan and his students creatively co-constructed shared identities as children of immigrants, a foundational factor towards galvanizing interests for coalition building that may otherwise be overlooked.

Relying on ongoing efforts to cultivate students' solidarity with other Communities of Color, and aligned with his use of humor and jokes to convey an underlying message to students without outwardly saying so, Ryan strategically relied on other forms of communication, such as facial expression and tone, to cultivate students' critical consciousness and actions. Considering the restrictive context in which he worked, the emphasis on what he did say, as well as what he did *not* say (and maybe could not say), became foundational in his efforts to implicitly develop students' critical consciousness:

I don't usually explicitly say how I stand on issues. I think today one student asked something about, "What's more important, state rights or federal government rights?" And I didn't really answer her question. I was like, "What do you think?" And they wanted my opinion. Some of those things, I try my best not to share my opinion all the time. But I think you could figure it out if you listen carefully... I mention throughout the year all the time, "In four years you can vote if you can. And if you can vote, your vote's even more important, because you're gonna be voting for people who can't vote in this

room." And I try to push for those things (Interview).

This approach in which students could “figure out” his underlying message by listening “carefully” was especially crucial during the day of a nationwide call to demand action against gun violence following the Parkland, Florida school shooting, specifically by participating in a student-led walkout at 10:00 a.m. on March 14, 2018. Families received letters home from administrators warning them about how students might participate in the walkout, and school announcements were made throughout the morning of the walkout to ensure teachers who had a free conference during the time frame of the walkout could surveil school grounds. At the beginning of second period, Ryan approached his class with an indirect statement despite administrator dissent (Figure 6.15):

Figure 6.15: Navigating Tensions of Conveying Student Support within Restrictive Context

1 Ryan: And again I am an employee of the district. Um, my
2 job is to teach and I'm responsible for you during
3 this time. Everyone got that? If you think need to
4 do something that is important to you, it's your
5 action. Um, my job is to make sure you're safe when
6 you're here. My job is to make sure you're in this
7 classroom. When you make the decision that is best
8 for you, right? (0.3) Right? I'll support you in any
9 way no matter what decision you make as long as
10 it's a smart decision and you have a reason to make
11 your decisions, I will support you. (0.4) Some of you
12 are confused.
13 Student: Mmhmm
14 Ryan: Yes? (0.4) If you look at the things that I teach you
15 might see some **themes** on how I think it's
16 important for you, for what you think you need to
17 do to make a change. Everyone with me? —
18 And I think that's the most important thing. All
19 right, any questions? (0.4) Again, you do what you
20 think best and I will support you in anything you do
21 as long as it's for something positive, okay?



Figure A



Figure B

While Ryan usually began class by sitting in the front to take attendance during warm-ups, he shifted his embodied practices by standing up, signifying there was something different about this particular day (Image A). He began his statement by expressing a “politically acceptable” response in his official role as an employee of the District (lines 1-4). Yet, through his embodied practices, serious facial expression, and softer tone, Ryan communicated to his students to “listen carefully” for an underlying message. Picking up on his students’ confusion by the look on their faces (lines 6-8), Ryan reminded students about themes from their course learning (lines 9-11) and repeated his message about supporting students for emphatic effect (lines 11-12).

Met with silence by students and resuming their normal routine soon after his statement, it was unclear in the moment what message students received in the absence of Ryan explicitly addressing the walkout in itself. At the strike of 10:00 a.m. however, his student Jasmine proved otherwise when she made an announcement directed at Ryan across the classroom (Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.16: Co-Constructing Classroom as Space for Student-Led Walkout

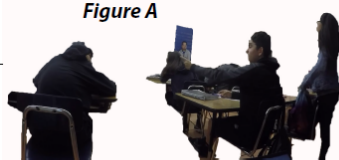
((soft music playing))

1 Jasmine: Mr. you said you supported us right?°

2 Ryan: I'll support you in anything you need
 ((Jasmine packs up & pushes in chair)) (0.28)

3 Eddie: You go.°

Figure A



4 Ryan: I support whichever decision you make.
 ((Jasmine exits door)) (0.3)

5 Eddie: I'll go if you go.

6 Abel: **Damn bro!**

7 Eddie: I'll give you ten bucks.

8 Abel: **You go.**

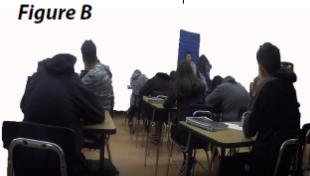
9 Eddie: I'll give you ten bucks.

10 ((Eddie & student whispering°))

11 Student: I'll go if you go.

12 Eddie: You go.
 ((Second student walks out))

Figure B



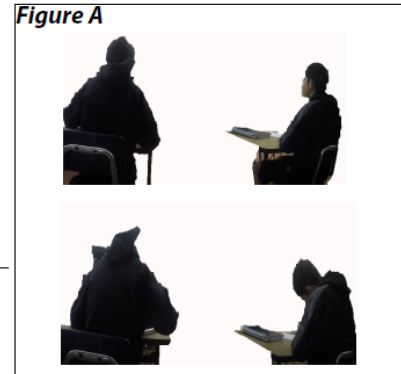
Jasmine's action, influenced by Ryan's indirect display of support, marked a significant moment of students exercising their agency for social change. First, she utilized the same framing Ryan used in the beginning of class to reconfirm her teacher's support of her actions before doing so (line 1). While there is insufficient evidence to make conclusive claims about the cognitive dimensions of her actions, her use of direct eye contact and choosing to walk straight toward Ryan before making an exit (Images A and C) conveyed both a deliberate and an indignant choice to participate in the walkout and a sense of safety and mutual trust with her teacher. Her public display of agency, coupled with Ryan's affirmation of her decision as she walked by (line 4, Image C) led to ten additional students walking out in support of the call to end gun violence (Image B).

While Ryan co-created the conditions needed to stand in solidarity with Jasmine and her peers' action, at initial glance, it may seem as though he was upholding organizational policies instead. Upon closer inspection through attention to his facial expressions, tone, and embodied practices, within the broader context in which teaching and learning occurred, he was able to encourage collective action despite institutional vulnerability (Ryan & Armstrong, 2016).

Students continued to renegotiate what it meant to walk out in the midst of the timeframe (Figure 6.17)

Figure 6.17: Fostering Social Space for Student Negotiation

- 1 Student: You go Abel!
- 2 Abel: Then you go... (?).. go with Bethany.
- 3 Student: Fool, I ain't goin'°
(0.7)
- 4 Eddie: Ten bucks if you go
(0.6)
- 5 Ryan: No one is in trouble with me



((students chanting outside))



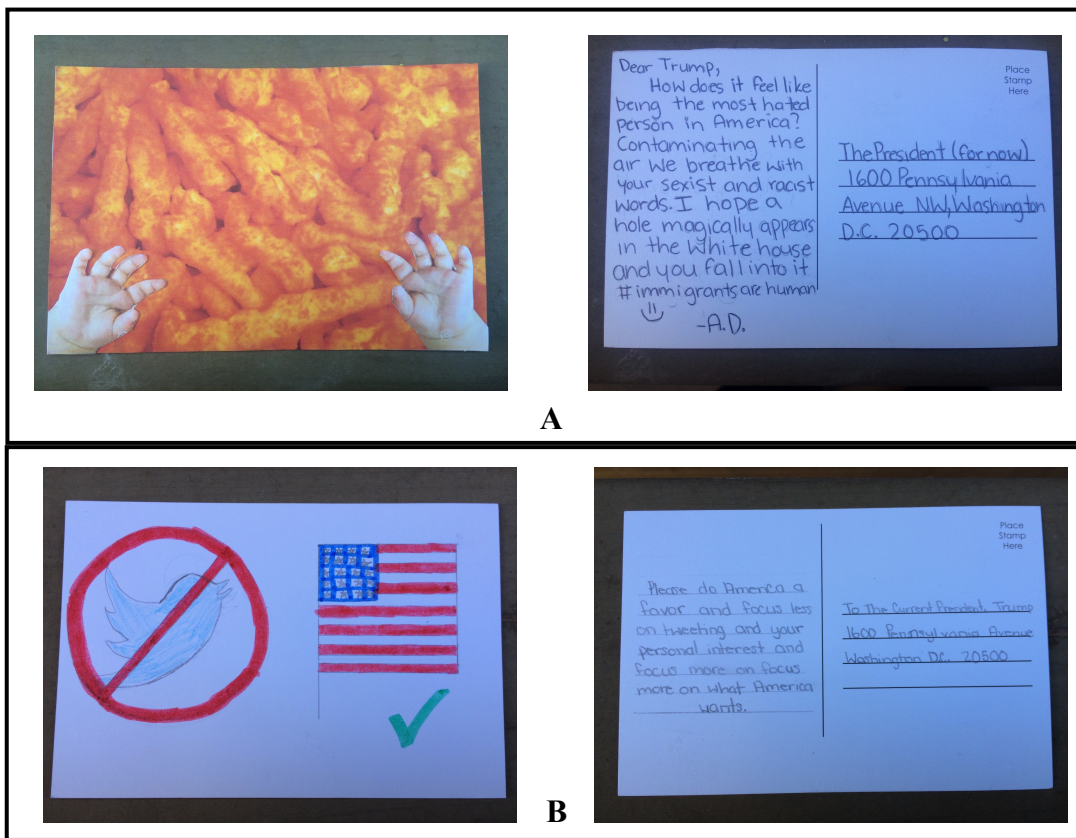
- 6 Eddie: Dang° (0.5) It's gonna be crowded out there.
((Eddie & Student talking to each other))
- 7 Abel: I ain't tryna get in trouble.



Figure C

Furthermore, Ryan intentionally created a free-flowing lesson wherein students were given independent work time to write postcards to Trump about their political beliefs (Interview). He designed the structure of his lesson to enable students to participate in the walkout without disrupting class in-session, and to support students with exercising their agency in alternative ways should they decide not to participate in the walkout (Figure 6.18). Examples of their postcards included creative expressions of their critiques of oppression in defense of immigrant rights (Image A), as well as diplomatic critiques of Trump's approach to governance given his important platform (Image B).

Figure 6.18: Multiple Opportunities for Student Expression on Social Issues



In an attempt to better understand students' experiences and critical consciousness, Ryan engaged in an open reflection with his third period class following the walkout. Students discussed a range of reasons for their choices not to participate, including fear of consequences by their teachers and administrators (particularly for students who were already labeled as “bad”), fear of disappointing their parents, and choosing to engage in alternative forms of resistance, such as a silent protest, given the unknown nature of the organization of the student-led walkout (Field Notes). In an effort to push students on their thinking, Ryan returned to their co-constructed solidarity as children of/immigrants (Figure 6.19).

Figure 6.19: Reinforcing Shared Commitments through Immigrant Experience

- 1 Student: I wanted to walk out but I wasn't sure what my teacher would
2 think.
3 Ryan: Should the teacher matter? So I think maybe it does, or it doesn't,
4 but it's the issue that drives it. What do you think should be more
5 important, the teacher or the issue?
6 Students: **The issue** ((in unison))
7 Ryan: What if the teacher were me?
8 Brianna: I would walk out!
9 Ryan: What if the issue were immigration?
10 Students: [Oh yeah for **sure**!!
11 [Me definitely
12 Ryan: (2.0) So you think gun violence isn't a *big* enough of an issue for you?

Encouraging collective action for social change, pulling the lens back on the issue specific to gun violence, and asking instead about immigration (line 9), Ryan drew on the students' social identities as immigrants and children of immigrants to push them on their stance for other social and racialized issues.

This particular event suggests that social context plays a crucial role in cultivating young people's capacity to take formal action. Given the restrictive conditions within the school, a place-based lens unveils the racialized nature of who gets deemed an agent of change and who has the privilege to enact agency, considering that certain Students of Color are more likely to inhabit places that are heavily surveilled. Such an emphasis on the marginalized actors within urban schools, rather than the racialized dimensions impacted by unjust geographies, obscures the underlying root causes that maintain unequal relations of power and access to resources for social change (Lipsitz, 2011; Molina, 2014). Still, the way teachers and administrators communicate and implement policies and practices can still create the conditions needed to expand students' capacities to enact agency for change.

While Ryan's ongoing practices can be deemed racially transformative in that he created conditions for students to develop and enact agency within a restrictive context, he lamented that

he was still working within the confines of the system rather than dismantling systems of power, and struggling with reimagining new forms of teaching and learning:

I constantly think student voice-wise, I don't create enough voice. I want to create a classroom where I teach and then students can pick what they want to dive in on in a very inquiry-based thing in a very inquiry-based classroom. But I'm not comfortable letting that go. And because of that, I constantly think that I don't give students enough voice. They don't let you choose what parts of history I skip, or which parts I go deeper into. They don't get to pick what I assess and how I assess it. So when I think of it in those terms, I know I'm not giving them voice and not letting go of a lot of trust. And for me as a teacher, I know that's constantly something on my mind that I'm feeling that I'm not willing to let go. But that's in terms of a balance of things that make that decision. One, myself, and two, what am I trying to get out of them, and what the District and administration wants. So I feel that as I move towards giving students more voice in the classroom, I am letting go more. But it's hard. So I always feel like I'm failing in that sense.

His sentiment reflects an issue of sustaining justice-oriented work within highly-surveilled environments as a result of low resources and support, aligning with literature about issues of retention of Teachers of Color in high-needs schools despite their desire to work with particular communities (Achinstein et.al, 2010).

Case 3: Makario

As a former union organizer with over ten years of organizing experience prior to becoming a teacher, Makario was recruited and elected as one of many members of the SCTU Board of Directors. While reluctantly taking the position given his concerns of sustainability as a father of a toddler, Makario's appointed role was an urgent move on his part to organize a larger social movement that could influence the macro-level policies and structures that impacted the everyday schooling experiences of his students as well as for his son. Makario's appointed role was part of the Union's strategic move to push the leadership team to "be more progressive." (Interview). Historically led by predominantly White, conservative men, the

Union leadership team experienced drastic demographic shifts over the past few years due to the appointment of a new Union president whose goal was to recreate a union that was more “social justice oriented” and inclusive of People of Color. These racial dynamics created internal conflict in particular regional territories throughout Los Angeles:

When I look at the areas, there's certain areas that are more younger teachers; there's more areas where people that are involved are more Women of Color, and there's other areas that folks that are in leadership are all old White men that were from that time when we got screwed over by the Union. Then there's all this internal beef between those two groups, which is predominantly social justice educators who are People of Color and these old, White men. (Interview).

In the particular region where he was assigned, Makario worked with a multiracial female leadership team, most of whom had years of experience within the Union. They tended to engage in individualistic forms of organizing, which conflicted with SCTU’s pending vision to engage in collectivistic forms of organizing. Such a racial and gender dynamic created tensions for Makario’s approach to co-organizing as a new member of the team:

I feel like I'm in this weird space because the SCTU leadership wants me to do. They want me to take more control of meetings, take more control of the area, and just start taking more of the leadership role and telling people what to do. In my head, that's just going to look fucked up. It's going to look fucked up if I just fucking go in there, start telling everybody, "This is what it should look like. This is what you should do because this is what's going to work. Because it's not working right now." That shit is going to make everybody feel fucked up. On the outside, it's going to look like there's this dude that's just going to fucking tell all the women what to do. That's not going to look good (Interview).

Aware of his racialization as a male of color in this particular context, Makario was intentional about how he exercised his vision of collective action to address racialized inequities without reproducing patriarchal forms of leadership. Aligned with the Union’s broader vision to engage in escalating actions throughout bargain negotiations with the District to demand quality public education, Makario intentionally engaged in practices to: 1) galvanize community-oriented

protests during strategic times of the school year, and 2) challenge individualistic forms of leadership by centering the people at the forefront of social change.

To create pressure on the District to give in to its demands, SCTU planned actions right before contract negotiation meetings with the School District. Designed as escalating actions to build the momentum for galvanizing collective interest, these actions included a televised campaign launch of their collective demands in September (described in the beginning of Chapter 1), school site-organized picketing before school starts in mid-October, regional rallies in November, and city-wide rallies by the end of the school year.

To describe the importance of these escalating actions leading up to a potential strike, I present an example of how Makario led collective action for the school picketing at School of Harmony. Given his role as teacher and union member liaison, Makario gathered a group of about fifteen teachers in his classroom for a lunch meeting to offer Union updates. He began the meeting with a picture from the most recent action they took as a group: wearing red to show support for the teacher union (Figure 6.20).

Figure 6.20: Fostering Significance of Everyday Actions

- 1 Makario: All right, here's our agenda. I'm going to go over what happened
2 on Big Red Tuesday, bargaining for the common good, and then
3 two important rallies that are coming up. **This** was our picture that
4 we took from Big Red Tuesday. Almost everybody wore red. It got
5 shown at the area meeting. We were one of the **few** schools that
6 had almost 100% of people wearing red.
7 Sandy: Yay!



By naming the importance of their seemingly small action as an important part of a larger escalating cause (lines 4-6), Makario demonstrated how their small actions were crucial to building momentum towards a larger rally and city-wide strike. The visual in itself contributed to a sense of connection to the larger union and affirmed teachers' efforts (line 7).

Makario strategically framed the Union’s call for action by connecting the demands to their personal interests before advocating for the larger common good. He claimed, “You have to figure out what are people motivated by or else what's their reason to work, what's their reason to fight? And then you have to connect it to a broader idea or else what are you fighting for.” By focusing first on the “bread and butter issues,” he could then transition to macro-level issues beyond individual concerns about salary, such as changing the landscape of public education (Interview). For example, knowing that many of the teachers have families and are concerned about health benefits, Makario began with bargaining updates related to healthcare (Figure 6.21):

Figure 6.21: Developing Personalized Connections

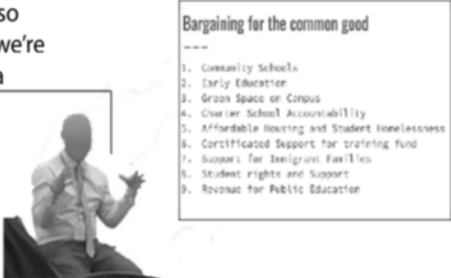
- 1 Makario: This is what the district has offered us. One is to provide
- 2 healthcare for only the employee or the retiree, so it would take
- 3 away a dependent from people that can be part of your benefits.
- 4 Two is to take away retiree healthcare benefit, one member and
- 5 one dependent. So if you have multiple kids, only one of them will
- 6 be covered. You have to pay extra=
- 7 Amber: **=uh uh!**
- 8 Makario: Other would be take away free healthcare, and it would cost ...
- 9 They would have us pay a certain amount. And the third is to
- 10 provide full healthcare coverage for the lowest common plan

By utilizing cause-effect arguments (lines 1-6), Makario built on the teachers’ dissent (line 7) in order to build collective interest for action against the District. In fact, following this meeting, Amber, a Black woman and special education teacher, volunteered as the teacher representative for school picketing to advocate for maintaining health benefits for teachers.

From there, Makario then detailed the Union’s demands for a larger cause beyond teachers’ individual interests (Figure 6.22).

Figure 6.22: Connecting Personalized Connections to Larger Causes

1 Makario: The union wants to fight not just for health benefits, not just for (0.3) pay increases, but we
2 but we want to improve education in general (0.2). So we have been bargaining. This nine steps or
3 nine asks that we're bargaining for that are outside of the usual contract negotiations. These are
4 things like expanding community schools ((*points to board*)), giving the community schools
5 \$500,000 to implement things that we would want to implement in community schools, ((*looks at*
6 *board*))expanding early education, having charter school accountability, providing affordable
7 housing. We are pushing that the district sell land that they have that is not being used and use it
8 to create affordable housing for teachers and students ((*referring to point 3*)) Also a certificate and
9 support program to get folks that are TAs, give them funding so that they can go back to school to
10 become teachers. ((*one teacher nodding*)) Starting a support fund for immigrant families
11 that have to file against deportation or whatever for them so
12 we're bargaining for a fund for that. Then with all this stuff we're
13 fighting for, the message, the **big** thing that is pulling this a
14 funding for the public schools to a state level to increase
15 \$20,000 per pupil spending.



Bargaining for the common good

1. Community Schools
2. Early Education
3. Green Space on Campus
4. Charter School Accountability
5. Affordable Housing and Student Homelessness
6. Certificated Support for striking fund
7. Support for Immigrant Families
8. Student rights and support
9. Revenue for Public Education

Makario strategically framed these demands as part of the teachers' collective interest, using words such as “implement things that **we** want to implement” (line 5), as well as racialized social issues that pertain to their particular student population (line 10-12). Using gestures to emphatically convey how these escalating actions are strategically placed throughout the school year in order to lead to the “big” actions (line 13), he outlined an argument that demonstrates how teachers' struggles are interconnected to the struggles of laborers within the community (Figure 6.23).

Figure 6.23: Constructing Comprehensive Movement

1 Makario: So we're trying to frame this so that it benefits **everybody**, not just
2 the teachers. And one of those things, including that, is that we're
3 working with hotel and restaurant union. They have figured out
4 there's private equity companies that are taking money from our
5 retirement fund. That private equity fund is using that money from
6 teachers' retirements to buy things like property to buy things like
7 grocery stores, to buy things like schools, to buy things like hotels.

Makario then outlined the call to action in the first escalating action that would set the tone for the rest of the school year: the school picketing event (Figure 6.24). Considering the central location of the school, and the potential for a larger turnout given that School of Harmony shared a campus with two other schools, Union leaders decided to make picketing outside the school the main media-gathering event and invited laborers to join the school picketing.

Figure 6.24: Call for Collective Action

1 Makario: So this is what we're fighting for, and now we're going to go into the **HOW**. So what the
2 Union wants to do is these escalating actions. Remember when we did the Red Rally, there
3 was about 15,000 people? That's when we got our pay increase, which was ten percent? But
4 before that they were offering us **two percent**.
5 Sandy: Mmmm
6 Makario: ((*clears throat*)) So what we're trying to do is strategically place these actions **right** before
7 (0.2) right before bargaining because it shows the District that the teachers are ready ((*clears*
8 *throat*)). So the first one is with school site picketing on October 11th and then there's
9 bargaining October 12, so the teacher union wants every school to picket in front of their
10 campus and hand out flyers to parents, students, and to take pictures.

By conjuring the example of a successful historical action (lines 2-4), including the emphasis on the school's picketing as the main media event, Makario created a sense of urgency for shared action (lines 7-10). Thus, he discussed a plan for disseminating information and connecting with nearby partner schools (Figure 6.25).

Figure 6.25: Co-Constructing Collective Action

- 1 Makario: Between now and then, there's certain folks that made phone calls and texted you
2 before Big Red Tuesday (*laughs*) which are the group of folks that emailed and
3 texted you about Big Red Tuesday they will also email and text you all before
4 October 11th. Does anyone have questions?
5 Kel: Are we making picket signs?
6 Makario: Yes, so I have picket signs, I have check sheets. I have to figure out where the other
7 schools... like how they want to do it, the chanting, because I don't want us to take
8 all the chanting away from others.
9 Bret: Why? Can't we chant together?
10 Jackie: Can't we chant together?
11 Makario: Yeah we can chant together but if they want to be the leaders of the chant, the
12 chant leaders for a little.
-

By delegating roles and tasks in preparation for the event (lines 1-4) Makario encouraged a shared sense of commitment and collective sense of responsibility as reflected in the teachers' desire to chant with other schools, given their small size in nature (lines 9-12).

While positioned as a leader in his role as Board member and Union liaison, Makario was sure to convey his solidarity with his peers in their shared struggles as members of the Union. For instance, he addressed their interconnected risks of potentially going on strike (Figure 6.26)

Figure 6.26: Reconstructing Social Position as Equal Status

1 Bret: The timeline for striking?
2 Makario: The earliest we can strike will be March.
3 Bret: Okay so, that's soon. We're not looking for other...
4 Makario: The timeline for a strike: we would have to gather (0.2) put everything out as far as
5 negotiation. Then it will have to go into impasse, and once we go into impasse and
6 nobody wants to move, there's an abritrator that comes in they figure out what
7 happens and they suggest a plan. After that person comes in and there's still no
8 movement, then we can strike.
9 Bret: Yeah then we vote.
10 Makario: For the Union, we will have to have a strike vote, and once that happens we will
11 strike. The Union won't strike if we don't have an overwhelming majority who votes
12 for it.
13 Bret: So it could be as early as March.
14 Makario: So if folks are worried about strike, during those days when we go on strike, we don't
15 get paid. So what I have been doing is putting away money just in case. **It could be**
16 that we say we are going to strike and the District gets scared and they give us what
17 we want.

By giving advice about saving money in preparation for a strike (lines 12-13), by which he himself will be impacted, teachers were moved to action as part of the interconnected and long-term action of the Union demands.

On the day of the school picketing, Makario shifted his talk and embodied practices from the meeting to intentionally center Students of Color, Women of Color, and community members. Along with Julissa, his partner, and Santiago, his friend, who were also part of the union leadership team, Makario was one of the first people to show up at 6:45 a.m. with donuts, water, and student-made posters (Figure 6.27).

Figure 6.27: Material Environment for School Picketing



The physical presence of these materials served as a focal point for students, teachers, hotel workers, community leaders, and parents who, maybe not being familiar with the site, slowly joined the corner to prepare for the school picketing event. This constructed space was where social actors gathered to eat donuts, sign petitions, and connect with a wide range of people who shared their reasons for participating. For example, a Latina hotel worker took the day off in hopes that the teacher union would impact her working conditions, a Latina mother came to support her daughter speaking at the podium, and Black community organizer came to make sure Black student interests were considered (Field Notes). Without Makario's labor of co-creating this designated space, such interactions and community building across social actors may not have unfolded in the ways that they did.

At about 7:30 a.m., Julissa began to organize people in a circle to march from the corner of the street to the front of the podium. During this time, Makario was engaged in several actions (Figure 6.28): he joined the march alongside the people (Image A), he reminded people of the responses to Julissa's calls (Image B), and he served as the line marker at the end of the block so people knew when to start circling back again (Image C).

Figure 6.28: Embodied Practices during School Picketing



These varying forms of subtle and overt participation, which emerged based on the needs of a given time, supported the functioning of an organized collective march. Given that a handful of participants were not in any way involved in the planning meetings or may have been new to social protests, Makario's coordinated actions enabled people to adapt to the group's flow and directions, as well as created a sense of unity.

In an effort to construct a comprehensive strike, in his role as teacher and club advisor, Makario strategically recruited three students to co-lead the school picketing (Interview). At around 7:40 a.m., Makario checked in with Jon, Socorro, and Cassandra in order to prepare them for their roles as chant leader, emcee, and student speaker for the media (Figure 6.29)

Figure 6.29: Preparing Leaders to Take Forefront of Action



By smiling and putting his hand on Jon’s shoulder, Makario constructed warm gestures of support and encouragement for Jon to help Julissa lead the chant (Image A). He also pointed out how and where Cassandra would see the cameras, preparing her for public speaking (Image B).

Taking the second megaphone from Makario, Jon started his own chant at one end of the circle while Julissa simultaneously led another chant at the other (6.30).

Figure 6.30: Co-Constructing Collective Identity through Chorale Chants

1 Julissa: **[The teachers are under attack, what do we do?]**
 2 Jon: **[The unions are under attack, what do we do?]**
 3 Matt: *[[((beating drums to rhythm of chant))]*
 4 Crowd: **Stand up fight back!** *((in unison))*

5 Jon: **Privatizers take a hike**
 6 Matt: *[[((beating drums to rhythm of chant))]*
 7 Crowd: **Education is our right!** *((in unison))*

STUPIDS WANT ETHNIC STUDENTS SCHOOL FUNDING JUSTICE

The combination of Julissa’s voice with group responses (Image A), Jon’s voice with group’s responses (Image B), and the beat of the drums created a sense of unity amongst the crowd

because a Student of Color and a Woman of Color were leading these acts of resistance against privatization.

By 7:45 a.m., the march subsided and the crowd gathered around the podium to listen to speakers discuss their support of the Union. Makario reiterated his conscious choices to center certain people at the forefront of the Union’s messaging.

Traditionally folks think of SCTU as an old White men's union. And I feel like with teaching being super feminized, the majority of the workforce is women. And to have a Union put the face of a White guy as a face to speak, doesn't really represent the majority of workers here. I think it was important for this media center to have a Woman of Color speak to the issues of healthcare, for example (Interview).

While Makario continued to deal with logistics in the “background,” such as checking in with other Union leaders, Socorro took the stand. A Latina student, she began the presentation to the media by introducing the Union president (Figure 6.31).

Figure 6.31: Co-Constructing Latina Student as Leader

- 1 Socorro: Hello, my name is Socorro and I’m a student here at
- 2 Cesar Chavez from the School of Harmony. And I’m
- 3 here to support my teachers.
- 4 Crowd: **WHOOO::OOOOOO!** ((clapping, whistling))
- 5 Socorro: Welcome to Cesar. Our first speaker is Gavin, the teacher
- 6 union president.
- 7 Crowd: ((drums beating, people cheering, grite sound))




Having Socorro speak before an adult spoke, specifically the president himself, constructed young people as important stakeholders and created an inclusive atmosphere wherein students, teachers, community members, and union organizers could freely celebrate their actions and one another in various forms (line 7).

Among the many speakers, including the president of the teacher union and a Black community organizer, Makario arranged for his student, Cassandra, to speak about her support

for teachers, as a child of immigrants (Figure 6.32).

Figure 6.32: Co-Constructed Coalition between Students, Teachers, and Families

- 1 Socorro: Up next we have Cassandra, Cesar Chavez student and
2 president of the Awareness Club.
- 3 Cassandra: Good morning my name is Cassandra and I am a senior
4 at School of Harmony of Cesar Chavez Complex. I was born
5 and raised in Los Angeles [and my beautiful mother
- 6 Crowd: [Who!] 
- 7 Cassandra: immigrated from Mexico to California for a better future. My mother always told me, "Cassandra, I
8 want you to have a better future I don't want you to have a life like mine These word have always
9 inspired me to work hard to become a student at Columbia University, but I can only do better if the
10 education system provides me more support. Many teachers have had a great impact in my life
11 that they encouraged me to reach my goals... My teachers are my second family because we could
12 trust them to give us advice on what college to go to and moral support. If they don't have justice
13 we don't have justice. They fight for us, so I'm here to fight for them. Thank you.
- 14 Crowd: ((drums beating, clapping, cheering))
-

By challenging dominant narratives of teachers and public schools being the problem, Cassandra's narrative of her experiences as a Latina student and child of a Mexican immigrant reminded listeners of the role teachers play in students' lives and the importance of having more resources and systemic support.

Finally, Amber, the Black woman, mother, and special education teacher who had volunteered to speak, took the stand to discuss the importance of protecting teacher's health benefits (Figure 6.33):

Figure 6.33: Co-Constructed Cross-Racial Coalition

- 1 Amber: I work primarily with students with learning differences. In my
2 role as an inclusion teacher, I serve as an educator **and** an advocate
3 for my students. These same students have inspired me to speak
4 here today to advocate for retaining our current healthcare benefits
5 with the school district. In my second year of teaching I learned
6 that I was expecting my first child. My pregnancy was very difficult
7 and, as a result, my daughter was born two months premature and
8 spent a total of six weeks in the prenatal intensive care unit gaining
9 the strength she needed to come home. The school District wants to cut
10 the dependent health care coverage that has enabled my daughter to
11 become the thriving one-year-old that she is today ((voice cracks, flips hair)).
12 **The cost of my daughter's stay would be the equivalent to what I earn in one**
13 **year.** Had she not been covered, the cost of her stay in the hospital, combined
14 with the cost of specialty doctors visits and therapy, would have been financially
15 devastating to my family. This, compounded with the cost of sky-high rent and
16 student loan repayment, would have made my wage nearly unlivable. As a
17 mother I would have been unable to provide my daughter with the quality of life
18 that **all** of our children deserve. I'm a teacher because I want to improve the
19 quality of life for all students, their families, and the community. Taking away
20 teachers' health benefits will affect more than teachers. It will affect our schools
21 and the communities they serve. Thank you.
22 Crowd: ((drum rolling, cheering, clapping))



Amber's vulnerability (lines 10-12) as a mother, contrasted with the realities of her teaching salary, reinforced the complex issues of teachers' livelihoods as interconnected to the well-being of the community. Through her participation, and trust in Makario as a colleague and union leader, a cross-racial coalition was co-constructed.

At the end of picketing the school and with five minutes left to spare before he had to run off and teach first period by 8:15 a.m., Makario thanked Amber, Jon, Socorro, and Cassandra, as well as other social actors, for coming.

While subtle in some ways and obvious in others, Makario's embodied practices were crucial for coalition building across different social actors. For one, he wore a red shirt on the day of the picketing compared to his usual work attire (see Figure 3.1 compared to Figure 3.9). This attire was one way of performing identity that was connected to the larger group. As a male

of Color, Makario also transformed patriarchal constructions of leadership by intentionally honoring the voices of young Students of Color and Women of Color and staying in the background:

I've been taught in my organizing model and the way I've been taught to organize is that you're never the one in the front. And you're not the one to be in the spotlight. You're getting other people to do that. I think as an organizer you're not the mouthpiece, you're the one that's placing the pieces for it to be successful. You're not the one at the center, you're the one trying to make everything... it's kind of like that analogy of the duck. Like on the top it's all peaceful but on the bottom it's all crazy. For me how I've been raised as an organizer [is that] you're the one on the bottom trying to make everything that's crazy look good so that on the top everything looks peaceful. So my idea of organizer, my idea of creating change, is to be that one in the background, not the mouthpiece. That's just how I have been taught in my years before (Interview).

Makario's racially transformative practices offer insights into how teachers can examine their own intersectional identities with respect to the context in which they are racialized, and how that might impact their positioning for coalition building with members of the community.

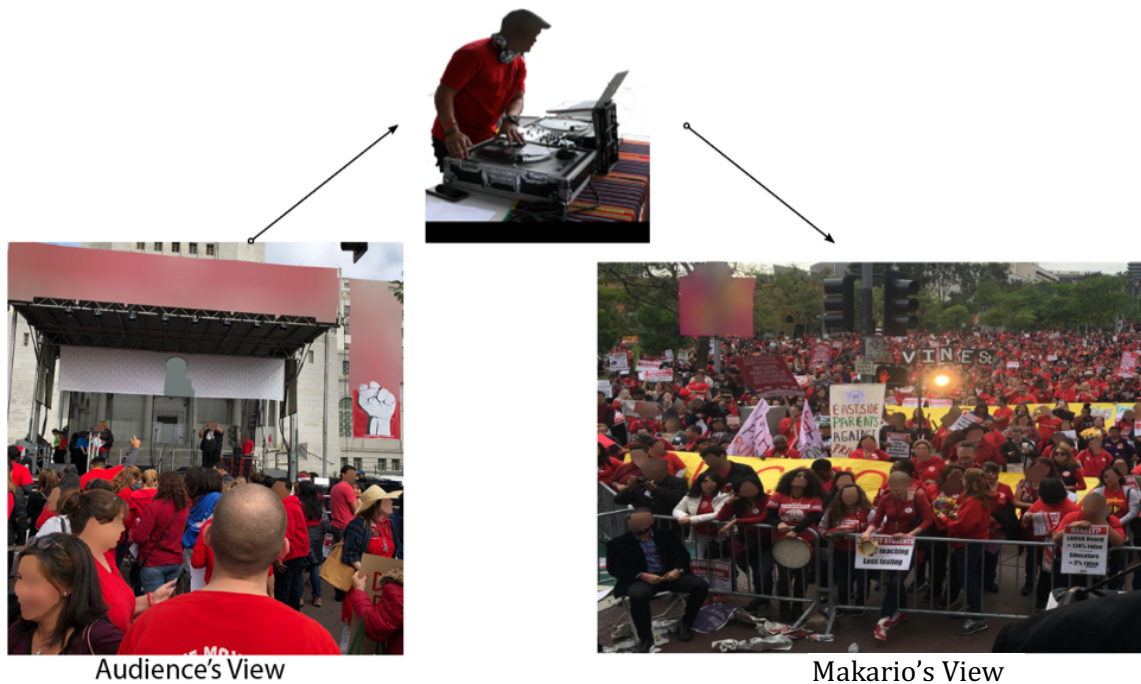
In addition, Makario also used music as a critical resource for building coalition. He was often called on to DJ multiple rallies across escalating actions leading to the strike. His choices for music, often drawing from hip hop and old school rap, relied on a deep awareness of embodiment and ethnic ways of being:

Depends on how people are moving. 'Cause I can't really see people's faces. Or even when I'm DJing in the club, I don't really pick up my head too much. Also I dance when I DJ so whatever makes me feel like dancing that's what I'll play and I'll base it on how much people are moving. Because somebody asked me how did it feel to DJ for 15,000 people or 5,000 people. I was like, whatever. Because I couldn't really see people, but when I DJed a club for... Jeff Chang came out with a book about Filipino American DJs and I DJ'ed the release party in LA, and I had a private spot and I lifted up my head and everybody was dancing and I was like, "Fuck this is why [inaudible 01:19:10] does this shit." Then put my head down and just kept DJing... I just go with what people are giving or what people are showing or how I want to make people feel. I think you're gonna move when there's music or you're gonna feel a certain way when a certain song comes on.

As seen in Figure 6.35, the bodily positioning of Makario constructed a different view for both

the audience and himself, ultimately creating a different embodied experience for Makario.

Figure 6.34: Facilitating Shared Experience through Music



It was cool, I felt so separated from people because I'm up on stage, I'm in the back; I can't really see people's faces. I can only see quasi movement; I can't really hear how loud it is where you're at, I can only hear through my monitor. So there's kind of a disconnection and there's only like this peripheral thing that I can see, And then, like in big spaces like that, you have people in your ear like, "oh I wanna hear this song, I want you to play this song right before I come in," or "I want you to do this when what's his name gets off the stage." I'm like, man y'all should have told me this yesterday.

While the music Makario made played a significant role in the social organization and sustenance of energy throughout rallies and strikes, the invisibilized labor of preparing and packing up his equipment often meant he was the first one to show up and the last one to leave (Figure 6.35).

Figure 6.35: Physical Labor of DJing



I think that happens a lot with that type of work, with DJing. I think that people don't really appreciate when it's there but are upset when it's not there. I mean it's also kind of like teaching. People under appreciate teachers but when there's not a teacher there at all then they're like, "Oh shit what the fuck happened?" I think that's how people place value on things. I mean even in the United States, the union of teaching California is that certain things that are perceived as better hold certain value, like being up on stage, being the one to talk, is the one that holds value rather than the people that actually make it happen because it's the flashy shit that looks cool that everybody likes. It's not the shit that you have to wake up five hours before to do that people; like, it's the 15 minutes of fame that people like. I mean that's what happens in the United States, it's what people want. They want the three judges to give them thumbs-up but people don't want to put in the 15 years of practice to get the thumbs-up from the judges.

At the same time, the physical and emotional labor Makario engaged in to enact these practices took a toll on his overall health:

Shit is stressful. **Stressful** (shakes head). My partner asks me sometimes if I have anxiety and I think part of it is just there's a lot of shit that you have to do. And it's not really something that I necessarily chose to do. Like, I quit being a union organizer ten years ago because it was too much, I didn't like it anymore. I went into teaching because I wanted to teach, and now it's like I have to organize again or I can't do the thing that I want to do anymore. I mean you gotta do that sacrifice to do shit you don't want to do to make sure that things live and then do it. But it still sucks.

Makario's experience points out issues of sustainability when the burden for creating change is

placed solely on the shoulders of Teachers of Color, and at the expense of their time and social emotional well-being.

Summary

Teachers building a coalition with students, families, teachers, and community members, one that is inclusive, comprehensive, and clear in vision, was a significant aspect of demanding social change. A situated analysis of how these coalitions form reveal how Teachers of Color foregrounded and shifted particular identities, through linguistic and embodied practices, as a means to co-construct shared identities and commitments towards collective action. Not only did racially transformative practices shift within and across social spaces, they became more effective through deepened relational ties over time. Specifically, their practices often leveraged community-oriented ways of being to center the voices and experiences of racialized groups.

At the same time, efforts for coalition building were highly demanding given lack of resources, time, and social capital. Such working conditions resulted in issues of teacher sustainability and well-being.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

NAVIGATING PLACE-BASED CONSTRUCTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Overview of Chapter

In this chapter, I demonstrate the fluidity and constructed nature of “leadership” by documenting how the transformative resistance of Teachers of Color at the intersections of multiple identities and oppressions (e.g., race, class, gender) shape to what extent they are seen and treated as “leaders” in certain contexts. Through the case studies of Lucia, R. Love, and Ryan, I discuss how place-based dynamics influence how their embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance are taken up by other social actors at their school site. For each case, I consider how power dynamics shape the racial counterscripts Teachers of Color develop to responsively shift their practices to (re)position themselves as leaders who produce racially transformative practices. In Lucia’s case, I discuss how racialized, gendered, and colorist dimensions of leadership at Earth Charter High socially positioned her as an “inspiring” and “inflexible” leader, and how she utilized her light-skinned privilege to challenge and transform leadership models rooted in anti-Blackness. In R. Love’s case, I discuss how racialized and cis-heteropatriarchal dimensions of leadership at Malcolm High School socially positioned her as an “intimidating” yet “effective” teacher, and how she embraced her Black feminism to demand quality education for Black students. In Ryan’s case, I discuss how colorblind and gendered dimensions of leadership at Warriors Middle School socially positioned him as a “charismatic” and “natural” leader even without an official leadership title, and how his gendered privilege simultaneously enabled him to organize collective action and masked his intentions to advance racial justice.

Case 1: Lucia

Lucia has been described by her peers as someone who has “influence” in a social setting, who “pushes back with a smile” so as to push for critical thinking without “making anyone feel threatened” (Interview). Given the make-up of predominantly White women in leadership positions, Lucia’s embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance were more socially acceptable at her school site:

I feel like if a man specifically at Earth High School were to try to do interventions, I think it would be difficult. I say that because we are predominantly all *mujeres* and when men have tried to – whether it's nonsense or not, *mujeres* are always like, “For real, shut the fuck up.” We have those conversations of “Why is this guy talking? Who's he? Be quiet. You're taking up space. That's for White nonsense as well as Men of Color who are trying to say some shit.” Right?... I think it comes from a lot of White feminism because men are too quickly read as [aggressive and hostile], even by Women of Color. I think that being a *mujer* allows me to do those interventions and I'm never read in that way (Lucia, Interview).

Given her racialized and gendered positioning within the particularities of existing power dynamics, her embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance were received positively; more specifically, being a light-skinned Latina socially positioned her to challenge racial ideologies with more ease relative to her peers, particularly her Black male colleagues.

I worry that I'm like an easy [Person of Color] to pick because I'm light-skinned and my name is easy to say, for the most part. In those ways, people can welcome me into their spaces without too much nervousness, I think, in the way that other people couldn't. In the past years, I think that that's become more clear to me in working with Max who's Black, right? We'll have the same critiques and everything but the way that we move around in the world is different. It's totally different. I feel like I really want to be careful about not being used in those ways (Lucia, Interview)

Aware of the racialized, gendered, and colorist constructions of “leadership” at Earth High, Lucia enacted racial counterscript by drawing on her social positioning to navigate power dynamics in an attempt to transform racialized constructions of leadership within her school site as well as at an organizational level.

One way that she challenged constructions of leadership at her school site was through questioning her own official leadership title as Social Justice Coordinator. In the first example, she discursively challenged racialized meanings of leadership by naming and legitimizing her Black colleagues' contributions upon which their organization-wide efforts to improve Black student recruitment and retention were dependent. In one of the early planning meetings with the site team, including Max, an Afro-Latino male and teacher representative, Kelli, a Black woman and staff representative, and Kate, a mixed-race woman and administrator, Lucia acknowledged mismatch between stipends and labor needed to carry out their action plan (Figure 7.1). Referring back to her conversation with Dawn, a Black woman and Director of Social Justice, Lucia expressed her concerns:

Figure 7.1: Contesting Racialized Dimensions of Leadership

1 Lucia: One of the concerns that I expressed to Dawn was that, I feel that because
2 we're doing a focus on Black families that that's gonna somehow translate
3 into a lot of labor being done by **you all**, right? Which I don't want that to
4 happen like unconsciously. And I wanna be really careful about that happening.
5 But I also want us to be honest if that ends up happening so that we figure out
6 how to address it and deal with it. And then also, the way that y'all's stipends
7 are set up is like \$300, \$300, and then because I'm the coordinator, I get \$1,000
8 but if that needs to be disseminated differently, like where we all get an equal
9 piece, we can do that too. Or if y'all feel like you need more, then we can figure out how
10 to get y'all more. But I feel like this is a lot of work already, and \$300 doesn't cover the
11 fuckin' labor that we're gonna be doing if we're gonna really do this **the right way**. So if
12 what I need to advocate for is y'all getting more money or anybody in here getting more
13 money, then please let me know so that I can do that.

Pointing to Max and Kelli while emphasizing the words “you all” (line 3) and potential oversights of the undefined work that will fall on her Black colleagues (lines 3-6), Lucia unveiled inequitable distribution of material resources and its relation to racialized constructions of leadership through open discussion of compensation. In her role as coordinator, she

challenged hierarchical recognitions of leadership, using curse words to convey a sense of deliberateness (e.g., *fuckin' labor*) and emphatic tone to leverage a sense of equity and ethics (e.g., *do this **the right way***), by advocating for redistribution of her own stipend to Max and Kelli (lines 6-10). Harkening back to her earlier reflections about her racialized privilege in a position of influence, Lucia's embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance, particularly her willingness to name and "give up" power, sought to transform constrained views of individualistic leadership founded on collective action and Black labor. Such a phenomenon is often missing in conceptions and practices of racial justice leadership in that Teachers of Color may be offered tools to develop racial literacy, but are often treated as a monolithic group who then miss out on opportunities to engage in deeper interrogation of multiple identities and oppressions in an attempt to recognize privileges and give up power or positions to open up space for other marginalized voices.

Lucia's discursive practices to challenge hierarchical value of leadership and labor opened further dialogue about anticipated labor for carrying out actions based on school-wide decision-making processes (Figure 7.2)

Figure 7.2: Co-Constructing Contestation of Inequitable Labor

1 Max: Yeah. It's gonna be a lot of work. I mean Lucia did it last year and it was a
2 lot of work. And I think from today we actually need to start logging the
3 hours to have **DATA** to show them what we've been doing.
4 Lucia: Yeah. And so what I think, because I feel like the way that we're working
5 together feels real=
6 Max: =Lateral.
7 Lucia: (0.3). Like we're all pulling same weight or (0.3) And if we're not, we should
8 talk about that? But I wanna propose from right now that we all get the
9 same. If that's okay. And we can talk about - we can leave that for next
10 meeting if you guys want to.
11 Max: We can. Yeah.
12 Lucia: But I feel like it would make me feel better if we all received equal. Parts.
13 Kate: And I think that that's more gonna entail bringing up the stipends for you
14 two ((*points to Max & Kelli*) and not bringing down the stipend for you
15 ((*points to Lucia*)) And if we need to bring yours up too alongside, then
16 that's what makes more sense. So this is work that no one else in the
17 organization can do, and everyone recognizes that even if they're not
18 talking about it.

By bringing up discussion of compensation in the earlier stages of planning in the form of a question and as an option (lines 9-10), Lucia invited Max, Kelli, and Kate to express their questions, insights, and concerns with regards to their anticipated yearlong work. Strategically, Max suggested they document their hours as evidence for verifying compensation for overlooked leadership (line 3). By drawing on Lucia's work from the previous school year (lines 1-2) and completing her sentences (line 6), Max was able to co-construct a sense of agreement that relied on Lucia's social positioning as coordinator and stance for fair compensation. The interplay between Max's and Lucia's discursive practices were crucial, as Kate, the administrator, then suggested additional compensation for both Max and Kelli, with the potential of requesting more compensation for Lucia's role as coordinator if needed (lines 13-15).

Arguably, Lucia's embodied ways of challenging distribution of compensation catalyzed how this co-constructed suggestion played out. In another instance when Max jokingly critiqued Kate's suggestion during a planning meeting, she asked him if he was being "passive aggressive" (Field Notes). While we cannot know for sure if Lucia would have been regarded in the same way had she challenged Kate's idea in the same manner, based on patterns of interactions throughout the course of this study and Lucia's own critical reflections, her embodied ways of resisting were received more comfortably by organizational leaders. As is the case with Lucia and Max, racial justice leadership is complex in that intersecting positionalities in place may grant Teachers of Color more or less opportunities to resist in ways that are taken up and positively received. Thus, Lucia's social positioning as a "leader" could have been easily used as a wedge to further marginalize other social actors and leaders who were not recognized as such.

Nevertheless, despite Lucia's efforts to transform racialized meanings of leadership through equitable compensation, the foundational understandings of Lucia's practice were yet to be fully realized, as can be seen through Kate's uptake (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Reproduction of Racialized Dimensions of Leadership

1 Kate: And we've talked about this before, like I'm interested in (0.3) I recognize
2 and have recognized for a long time that this is a lot of labor that's totally
3 undervalued at our organization and being in EIG, I remember that, and it's
4 been a long battle to get people compensated for that and we're finally
5 there, but the stipend's not enough. And even though we know that this
6 work is valid and legitimate, we're under the board and our executive
7 director and the way that they value and recognize things as legitimate is
8 through data and logic models and charts, right? So I can do that. That's my
9 strength and I also get to approve my own budget, so **that's tight** for us.
10 *((Lucia, Max, & Kelli laugh))*
11 Kate: So that's just something that I want us to be cognizant of moving forward,
12 even if it means us tracking our hours. Like how many hours are we putting
13 into these things, like what's the work that we're doing, how do we
14 articulate it? This is actually also in our plans. This is in our LCAP that there's
15 money going into these things, and I'm doing our budget in two months,
16 and so if what we need to budget for is increased stipends for this work,
17 then that's totally justifiable because it's in our site plan and it's in our LCAP
18 and that shit's not a mistake. And that's me trying to be stealthy leader
19 trying to get this shit by, right?

Given Kate's own understandings of unrecognized forms of labor in her historical experiences as a teacher and member of the Equity Inquiry Group (lines 1-4), she leveraged her administrative position to create a budget within the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) as a means to recognize efforts that focus on equity and diversity (lines 14-19). Despite her compassion for and solidarity with teachers, solely drawing on "data and logic models" as a means to affirm and legitimize their work (lines 8-9) erases the opportunity to redefine efforts that position Black teachers as leaders, and other cultural ways of being and knowing. Thus, while her intentions were to be a "stealthy leader" by using her strengths to honor the labor of Max and Kelli, racialized constructions of leadership can still be reproduced in an existing organization that values Kate's skillsets as "leadership," rendering Lucia's attempts to give up power in an effort to redefine and make space for other forms of "leadership" invisible.

Lucia was able to enact transformative resistance more directly and personally because of her personal relationships with the social actors at her school site. When she participated in

organization-wide meetings about school site action plans, a team that consisted predominantly White women with a few Black woman, Latino, and White men, she initiated discussions to challenge racial inequities two times more often than at her site team meetings (Field Notes). According to Lucia, she felt urgency to speak in spaces where marginalized voices were not present, especially in a sociopolitical era of “post-truths” and “fake news.”

We have so little opportunity to make good interventions that they can't be wasted. They can't be squandered. In this political moment where we're told that we need to be careful about what we say or whatever, then I really have to be very strategic about how I intervene and in what ways and to do it (Interview).

One way in which she accomplished this was when she pushed back on a colleagues' response in a planning meeting at which they discussed design-based inquiry cycle originally created for the purposes of making an app. When discussing how to adapt the inquiry model for equity and justice work, Dawn, a Black woman and Director of Social Justice, asked the group members what their takeaways were from the reading. Steven, a White male teacher, said, “This entire system is generated for us to go back into the cycle and redo it and rehash it. Go back and get more feedback, and revamp it. I love that it feels it's okay to fail! We tried something, it didn't work, we got feedback from the stakeholders that we need feedback from, and therefore we rehash it one more time.” Lucia responded (Figure 7.4):

Figure 7.4: Indirect Contestation of Dehumanizing Approach to Inquiry

1 Lucia: Is it just takeaways or can we also like share reflections?
2 Dawn: Yeah. Please.
3 Lucia: I feel like uh (0.1) mmm, I don't wanna say pushed back, because I don't
4 wanna be antagonisti:::c to what we just read. I think it has valuable parts to
5 it. I do feel like (0.2) maybe being critical? That this is a design article? And
6 that that's a different field than what we do. Right? So like in one of these,
7 just the language of '**user**', we're not testing an app, right?
8 Steven: Right.
9 Lucia: This is real people's lives. Real urgency, which I think we all feel, that's why
10 we're here because when we feel like we mess up, it feels, the gravity of it
11 feels really overwhelming. And so yes? Knowing that we're going to fail
12 and that it's okay to happen, but also that this is not applicable to all of the
13 things that we do. We need to -That's how we should be approaching this
14 work and taking this with some caution, I think. The article.
15 (:): Mmhmm
15 Lucia: Also, the language of "I'ma let the user use this, and then I'm gonna go
16 back and design." I think that's **problematic**, because if we're really trying
17 to do equity and justice, then it has to be **young** people, families who are
18 at the center. Which is so radically different from what schooling is
19 **inherently**. What we're talking about has never been imagined I think in
20 our lifetime. Maybe, also we need to be adding to this ... yeah. Sorry for the
21 ramble.

In posing a question to Dawn (line 1), Lucia discursively shifted the discussion from response to content from the article to problematizing applications of the design-based inquiry cycle. First, she countered Steven's suggestion that it is "okay to fail." Rather than calling on Steven's point directly, she complicated her support for the article by acknowledging its value so as to not be read as "antagonistic" (lines 3-5). Pointing out the contradictions of the language in the article (e.g., "user") to apply the same principles for their equity and justice work (e.g., real people's lives), Lucia pushed back on their abilities to "fail," to get Steven to align with her thinking (line 8). To further emphasize her point of proceeding "with caution," she used a quieter voice and urgent tone to elevate the severity of "failure" and "gravity" in "people's lives at stake" (lines 9-

15). She then critiqued who was centered in the design of the inquiry by making visible the needs and interests of people who were not in the room but were the very ones who the inquiry cycle is for (lines 15-21). Furthermore, she ended her talk with an apology (lines 20-21), conveying a feminine linguistic move that seemingly contradicted her direct tone yet aligned with the gendered dimensions of leadership within the organization. This move enabled her to create discomfort even within the palatable manner in which her embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance were perceived:

Even if typically, I am seen as warm and thoughtful, I still make people uncomfortable in these ways, in these other ways. Right? So, that's good. I also hope that I don't lose opportunities where I could have pushed for other things, too. I think I'm trying to negotiate all of those things at the same time (Lucia; Interview).

What followed her critique was further discussion of people complicating and critiquing the article as they moved towards application to school sites. Lucia's interventions were well-received, as she received the first appreciation shout-out at the end of the meeting, an occurrence that happens at most meetings (Field Notes). One teacher, a Black woman from another middle school, stated, "I think she voiced so well opposition in a very poetic way. In a way that makes me really think about the issues in what we're reading, in what we say. Put it into words that make me question it in a really, really good way." In other words, Lucia was reconstructed as an "inspirational" leader.

In the presence of CEOs, though, Lucia was much more demanding and direct in her advocacy of Black interests and needs:

I walk into that space as I know what the fuck I'm talking about. I'm going to make some insights in here, and because it's a lot more of the CEO people, whatever, I try to be very nice in my emotions. I try to be hella matter-of-fact and I try to say things that I know puts them in a difficult position. When we have to do like a "Let's talk about our takeaways or whatever," I know I'm read as a Person of Color even the way that I speak or whatever. I'm read in certain ways in terms of class and race, but because I'm a light-skinned Latina, there are some things that I can say that my Black counterparts cannot,

and also that White people cannot say. If any of my Black colleagues said that, it wouldn't be taken seriously or it would be too aggressive. If White folks said that, then it would be super fucked up because you've been doing this and you haven't even said it or articulated it. I also know that they haven't even thought about that. Right? (Interview).

While Lucia engaged in leadership practices that aligned with dominant meanings of “leadership” within this particular social space, her purpose was to leverage her phenotypical privilege to transform racial inequities for her Black peers as well as her Black students. For example, by the end of inquiry, she shared takeaways for the organization in a Powerpoint presentation (Figure 7.5):

Figure 7.5: Direct Contestation of Anti-Blackness

1 Lucia:	Some of our takeaways: Black centered spaces need
2	to be something that happens at our schools. Two ,
3	we have to have permanent structures and positions
4	that address this. Three , have intentional positions
5	that enable Black leadership and provide proper
6	compensation. We had a lot of folks lend us their
7	labor and often times for no pay or not enough pay and so really trying to correct that
8	problem. (0.2) Or that inequity. Four , we need to provide a variety of PD and coaching
9	towards developing the racial literacy and practices of our staff. And then five, our hiring
10	needs to move beyond diversifying. Just because you're a person of color doesn't mean
11	you know how to teach people of color so being very intentional about how we hire, who
12	we hire, and for what ends.

TAKEAWAYS

1. Black centered spaces need to and will continue to be an ongoing practice at our school.
2. Permanent structures (Black Families & Parent Resource center) and positions (AA liaison) need to be created in order to properly address this issue and build trust with families
3. Intentional creation of positions that enable Black leadership and provide proper compensation
4. PD and coaching needs to work towards developing the racial literacies and practices of our staff.
5. Hiring needs to move beyond diversifying



In her talk, Lucia leveraged the visual of the book *Teaching for Black Lives* to recount her points which were made in direct statements with deep attention to race, Black labor, structure, and ideology (lines 1-12). As a result of her presentation, her colleagues had a range of positive responses, including affirmation (e.g., “This was great, amazing as always” and “Super kudos on looking at this as a three-way plan. Generally speaking, we’re like yeah look at what we’re

doing? But you're really holding yourselves accountable."), sense of collective pride ("Extra extra kudos on the long-term planning that is really amazing and really awesome. I'm really proud of that even though I didn't do it."), and desire for collaboration ("Again kudos and amazing. This is more a reminder for me to talk to you about connecting for internships and people and colleges."). Even in the midst of being recognized as a "visionary" leader, Lucia was also careful to credit voices of people who were not invited to the meetings (Figure 7.6):

Figure 7.6: Crediting Voices Not Present in the Room

1	Jah:	I LOVE the connections you made about AP and equity shift. That is so right on that that
2		is a gap that predetermining students not getting the 3.5 and still go on to college but
3		aren't getting the opportunities to get exposed to that.
4	Lucia:	And that is the babies, sorry I call them babies
5	(:):	(((<i>laughing</i>)))
6	Lucia:	[but the young people articulating that.

Lovingly referring to students as "babies" and "young people" (lines 4 and 6) to redirect affirmations, Lucia attempted to amplify the perspectives of marginalized people.

While Lucia effectively shifted her practices as a response to constructed and reconstructed "leadership" in different social contexts, her actions did not result in the organization offering her an administrative position, despite the apparent privileges she experienced through her embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance:

When the CEO told me that people weren't ever going to let me be a principal because I wasn't willing to be flexible with my ideals, that I was too aggressive about them or whatever, that made me feel good because I was like, "Okay. I'm doing something right." But it's so painful to hear that, that what I wanted or was aspiring to, I'm not going to get. It's also good that I am not digestible, but I still don't get rewarded like other People of Color in the organization who actually play by the rules (Interview).

Lucia continued to be admired for her "leadership potential" but was yet overlooked as someone

who had “what it takes to be a good administrator.” Even though her social positioning and ways of being opened up opportunities for her to serve in a leadership role for social justice, her ways of being were still not deemed “fit” to propel her to a position of power as an organizational leader.

Case 2: R. Love

At Malcolm High School, R. Love’s embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance tended to conflict with a leadership team dominated by Latino men:

At my school, it's tougher being a woman in general, just have to be careful about everything, what you wear, how you sound. We're heavily male at my school. Heavily *Latino* male, it's a boy's club! The boys joke around. In general, people joke around in Spanish, and so if you're White and not Spanish-speaking or of Color and not Spanish-speaking, it's pretty exclusionary in staff meetings when someone makes a joke and it's not explained... In that same vein, there's a lot of anti-Blackness from some of our Latino teachers because they hold their own cultural perceptions, and that goes unchallenged because they're good at teaching the Latino kids, and the “rough” Latino kids, or the “rough” ELD kids, but not our Black kids (Interview).

Considering her social positioning as a Black woman within this context, and her critiques of and desires to challenge hegemonic discourse and perception of Black students, R. Love had to navigate power dynamics strategically in an effort to sustain transformative resistance.

I think that is the burden of Black teachers, that when you look out for Black kids, people accuse you of being partial to them. And other teachers don't think about it like that. And no one accuses them of being partial. But I'm accused of being partial or whatever, have to take that into consideration, and navigating those spaces as a Black woman means I have to be cognizant of all that stuff.

Specifically, R. Love’s embodied ways of enacting transformative resistance stemmed from her cultural roots as a Congolese woman:

So like, African women, they say like, "Are you going to eat?" That's not a question. It's like, "You are going to eat. Right? Like, get your food right now. Why aren't you eating?" All of those questions sound like questions, but in their delivery, they're not questions. Especially when they point, like, "Are you gonna eat?" That means you need to get up and get food. And in my classroom, that's how I speak when I'm talking to my students. It's phrased syntax-wise as a question, but the students all understand that [it] means I

need you to get up and go do whatever I asked you to do, five minutes ago or two seconds ago. I speak like that, generally, all the time... I make another choice to not say, "I feel" but "I think" that is, men *think*, and believe and state. And women *feel* and wonder. Like there's these "feminine" and "masculine" perceptions, type of ways that we speak that I make sure to think about sometimes before I speak (Interview).

Through her cultural ways of communicating, which conflicted with hegemonic constructions of "leadership" with her administrators, R. Love challenged racial inequities and thus became identified as "disrespectful," "biased against White people," and "surprisingly articulate" (Field Notes; Artifacts). These descriptions align with leading scholars' analysis of race, language, and the Black body, and how styleshifting is perceived through the White gaze (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). Tensions between R. Love's cultural ways of communicating and being, and how she was perceived as Black woman through a White and cis-heteropatriarchal lens, often created contradicting tensions when she questioned or challenged racial inequities:

As a Black woman, I really try to not be hyper-visible because we're told "you're loud, you're aggressive, you're angry" even when we weren't yelling. We were just stating an opinion. It's because we don't smile or we use more linguistically male patterns of speaking... [As someone who is Congolese], we don't speak in qualifiers, we don't ask questions or say, "I'm sorry, but..." We speak directly. So it might be too much for other cultures. It's not too much, leadership looks different, communication looks different in the Black community, and so I don't need to be super quiet or docile or whatever. I can be intense and passionate, and it's not scary. It might be scary if that's a perception that other people are assigning to me, but other Black people are like, "Oh, no that's just normal." Just like our Black girls having a conversation across the quad. They're not mad. They're just... that's normal" (Interview).

Through a Black feminist lens, R. Love's enactment of leadership was "direct," "intense," and "passionate," but her leadership was reconstructed as "loud," "aggressive," or "angry" for not being "quiet" or "docile" enough. Recognizing this tension, as a racial counterscript, she was purposeful in how she presented herself in her role as an "credible" and "caring" leader advocating for Black student needs and interests at her school site:

Being a Black woman, I just have to acknowledge that my presentation, physically, that people are just going to find me intimidating. So, because of that, I have to create a... my

go-to is either to make a joke, share who I am, present my credentials, which is like what you do in general presenting to build your credibility and rapport, but also giving some emotional thing to reflect on, it's usually a video that I have them look at, to tug at their heart strings, so that way it puts them in a vulnerable space, to be open, while also sharing how that can make me feel (Interview).

One key example of the (re)construction of her perceptions as a leader was the ways in which her practices as a professional development leader were taken up by peer teachers. As one of the few People of Color on the team, she was aware that she could have been read as “controversial” and not as “competent” of a leader; therefore, she strategically navigated her role in particular ways. For one, she titled her workshop, “Strategies for Student Talk: Dialectical Journals & Digital Discourse” (Artifact). Based on her title alone, her workshop title conveyed Common Core State Standards and emphasized teaching practices, which aligned with the goals of organization-wide development. However, given the relationships that she had built across the organization, and her reputation as a racial justice teacher, participants who attended her workshop “expect[ed] to learn about teaching practices that relate[d] to racial literacy and structural racism” (Field Notes).

Recognizing that she had to socially position herself as an “expert” within a broader context that produced hegemonic constructions of “leadership,” she talked about herself to peer teachers in particular ways (Figure 7.7):

Figure 7.7: Constructing Social Positioning as Expert and Equal Status

1	R. Love:	My name is R. Love; this is my sixth year teaching at Malcolm
2		High School. I started teaching there but some of you already
3		know me so this is <i>awkward</i> .
4	Janet:	It's not awkward.
5	R. Love:	I'm a double Park University alum; I went to PU for everything. I
6		got my Bachelor's in English and African American Studies. I just
7		got my Master's in Rhetoric and Composition. I really like rhetoric.

8 I didn't think I would like it but it turned out to be cool. I teach
9 English 11, an AP English, and then Latinx and Africana Lit.
10 So I have three preps this year, but that last prep has actually been a
11 really life sustaining prep to be able to teach one of the few
12 culturally and racially relevant courses. And it's also informed how
13 I teach my other American literature courses as an 11th grade
14 teacher. Currently, some of you might have heard,^o I had the
15 opportunity to teach part-time at PU, so I'm a part-time lecturer
16 technically and the course that I teach is Race, Gender, Privilege,
17 Ethnicity, and Culture. And that's been a cool experience to be able
18 to be in that position. I've had – so I've been teaching for six years
19 at King and a couple students that went to King go to PU and they
20 saw me in my classroom like through the window like creepers and
21 then they **SCREAMED**; they were like, "**OH MY GOD MS.**
22 **R. LOVE!**"
23 *((Teachers laugh))*

In this example, R. Love simultaneously positioned herself in high and equal status with her peers. For one, she named years of teaching experience her in a school with high teacher turnover rates (lines 1-2), which positioned her as a veteran. At the same time, she contrasted this opening with “this is awkward” to appear humble despite her expertise (line 3). She also listed her degrees of formal education to position herself as an expert in the field and used informal language about her reaction to her degrees (e.g., “rhetoric is cool”). She then listed her teaching responsibilities in her role as an 11th grade teacher (lines 8-14), as well as a lecturer at a local university (lines 14-17). While the status of teaching at a local university could make her seem intimidating to other teachers, her story about former students attending PU constructed communal connection between her work as a classroom teacher and professor (lines 17-22). Laughter from the teachers (line 23) indicated that she constructed herself as an authority figure who also happened to be “warm” and “approachable.” Not only did she construct this status through the ways she talked about herself, she also created an ambience of warmth through music, shifting between her role as a leader and role as colleague (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Constructing Affirming Learning Environment

1 R. Love: All of you are writing such great posts and comments. Then just a
2 quick post check, how many more still need time to write
3 comments?
4 ((*Five teachers raise their hand*))
5 R. Love Thank you. Anyone still writing their post?
6 ((*Two teachers raise their hand*))
7 R. Love: Perfect. Thank **you** for listening to my soca music, island
8 Caribbean music. With this warm weather, trying to liven up this
9 space!

By facilitating the time for individual writing time based on teachers' needs (lines 1-5) and praising their writing and progress (e.g., "great posts" and "perfect"), R. Love achieved high status as the leader of the space. At the same time, she acknowledged the need for consent of participants by thanking them for listening to her music (lines 6-7), all the while exposing teachers to music that was associated with a particular African diaspora.

Another practice she used to normalize talk about racial inequities was encouraging teachers to learn more about racial inequities alongside her. For example, while leading a professional development (PD) session about dialogical journals and digital discourse, she interspersed opportunities for social justice-oriented PD as an accessible and communal event (Figure 7.9)

Figure 7.9: Invitation to Participate in Critical Professional Development

1 R. Love: Some of this PD has been informed by the following: I went to a
2 Teachers for Social Justice up in the Bay; if you haven't gone, go.
3 It's in October; it's a great break. Dana went with me; it's so much
4 fun. I went my second year and I've gone almost every year!

Again, she constructed herself as equal status by demonstrating how she herself was engaging in

professional development and growth as a leader, naming it as “fun” and a “great break” with a friend.

Through R. Love’s reconstructed leadership and centering of social justice frameworks in her PD, teachers initiated discussions about racial identity and controversies of social justice work, including a first-year Latino male teacher who asked for advice about how to respond to people who refer to social justice work as “reverse racism” (e.g., “In your experience as an educator and a leader, and here at this organization, have you encountered any other colleagues or at PU, or at conferences, who have asked you whether teaching the language of oppression creates a divisive agenda and how do you, or how have you encountered those, or responded to those questions?”), and a veteran White female teacher who brought up issues related to white fragility (e.g., “I think a lot of people don’t speak up because they’re afraid to be branded as racist; they’re afraid to be, you know, we’re all speaking in this room as this is the only valid viewpoint and other viewpoint is not valid”). These organic discussions reinforced R. Love’s positioning as a “warm leader” despite misconceptions of her being “intimidating.” In fact, she received high praise from teachers across the organization, as evidenced in this impromptu appreciation at the close of her workshop (Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10: Affirmation from Peer Teachers

1 Jesus: I just want to say thank you, just because this type of PD I think is a rarity
2 in K-12 unfortunately. So I appreciate that you as a leader have the
3 courage and the wisdom to facilitate this I think in a productive way at the
4 K-12 level because this is happening for *days* in higher ed, but it doesn't
5 trickle down to us. I think we also need it, so I definitely appreciate it. It's
6 very helpful.

7 R. Love: Thank you.

8 Toni: I have to piggy back, I picked this for that reason, because I know I would
9 get something. I am not a fan of PDs. I really, really hate them.

10 R. Love: I do too, and now here I am: "the man."

11 Toni: (laughs) Yeah, I would avoid them at all costs. But I specifically chose
12 yours because I knew I would get something out of it.

13 R. Love: Thank you, guys. I didn't think it was going to be nice things, so I don't
14 know what to do with that except say thank you and not try to downplay it.
15 Thank you, I appreciate that.

Despite the practices she had enacted to reposition herself as a credible and approachable professional development leader, R. Love's leadership as a Black woman continued to be contested by those who did not know her or worked with her personally:

The broader organization doesn't see me the same way that people who have worked with me do. And most of the time they have found me to be warm and intelligent in teaching, and supportive, and willing to share. Which I don't know if these are the same adjectives that generally my colleagues would say, except for the ones that do know me, that I do associate with, that I'm close with. And often, now that we have more Black teachers at King High, it's the other Black teachers that I sit and am close with, and they understand. They don't find me scary or find me intimidating or find whatever I'm saying too much.

The construction of her leadership shifted in relation to other social actors whose ways of being and acting aligned with place-based constructions of leadership. For example, she was invited to serve as a keynote speaker for the organization's Black Excellence Conference. Because of her reputation as a professional development leader and "effective" classroom teacher, as well as her status as a lecturer at a local university (Field Notes), she was proudly

recruited by organizational leaders to speak about the needs of Black male students alongside two renowned Black male scholars in urban education. Interestingly, it was the very qualities that constructed her as a leader which minimized her role as such in relation to “Dr. Rod” and “Dr. Hughes.” For one, the framing of the conference was to bridge “research with practice to find ways to close the achievement gap for African-American students,” with an invitation to “support the equity work that is happening in our community” (Artifact). As the only speaker who directly worked in the community, R. Love was introduced and featured on the flyer as “Professor R. Love, Parks University,” listed third underneath “Dr. Rod, Elite University” and “Dr. Hughes, Elite University” (Artifact). Thus, her leadership was defined by her credentials as a university educator, hierarchically compared to these two scholars, and erased her role as a classroom teacher from the community which the participants of the conference sought to serve (and which she already served daily).

On the day of the conference, attendees – the majority of whom were Black students and teachers – could be seen taking pictures with the two scholars. Upon registration at the door, attendees signed up for a workshop led by one of the keynote speakers following the talks; by the time everyone was seated for opening remarks, Dr. Rod’s and Dr. Hughes’s workshops were filled, and R. Love’s workshop was half-full. Attendees were given color-coded bracelets to indicate which workshop they were going to; the low numbers of yellow bracelets among blue and purple bracelets sprinkled throughout the room made visible the lower interest in her workshop relative to those of Dr. Rod and Dr. Hughes.

Following opening remarks, Jazz, a Black male who served as moderator, had each keynote speaker share for ten minutes about the barriers for Black boys’ “low” academic achievement. R. Love spoke last, following Dr. Hughes’s and Dr. Rod’s talk. She was strategic

about how she talked, being the only Black woman on a panel of highly respected Black men.

I made a choice to remove, "I feel," out of my sentences when I was speaking, and said, "I think," or "I believe." Because I didn't want it to be tied to emotion. It's not about how I feel. It is what it is. The way that I spoke there was a specific choice, to say stuff that wasn't... it wasn't a question. They were statements of facts. And I think women linguistically speak like questioning or asking for permission or like, "Don't you agree?" That's their framing. And I'm not asking if they agree. I don't care if they agree (R. Love, Interview).

After identifying structural issues that constructed Black boys as “failing,” R. Love discussed the daily emotional labor of supporting her students while having high expectations, particularly through the story of two Black boys. In the middle of her talk, she was interrupted by Dr. Rod (Figure 7.11):

Figure 7.11: Constructed Social Positioning as Lower Status



1	R. Love:	So, I don't care what the severity of the action is and when they apologize	
2		I apologize too because~there's~usually~something~that~I~would~have~	
3		done that also caused them some kind of reaction. And those boys came to	
4		school early every day but did not come to my class. I had them first	
5		period. I watched them in the quad (0.2). They watched me get out of my car	
6		(0.2), staring at me and all of my students in my other periods knew about	
7		this incident because all~of~my~other~periods were communicating. I	
8		said these two boys, someone needs to get them [and have them figure it	
9		out. You know what? It took them three weeks, but they came to my class. I	 A
10	R. Love:	will keep it together and I stepped outside and they both apologized for	
11		their actions and they said, "You know at the end of the day this could just	
12		be your job and you're here to get paid and that's not gonna help us in	
13		any way" and that's the conversations we've been having. "Yeah, I know	
14		I can just get paid but this is your choice to be here. You have to	
15		want to be educated as well. I can't make you, I can do all that I can but I	
16		can't make you care and that way you have to decide what kind of life --	
17		Can I ask you a quick question? Did you get at what caused that outburst?	
18	Dr. Rod:	Of that day? He just felt frustrated that he thought I was picking at him for	 B
19	R. Love:	that day. No, no, but he felt frustrated and he also acknowledged that he	
20		just lost his temper because he was stressed out about other things. Other	
21		things going on and he said there was no reason for him to have yelled at	
22		me or addressed me in that way. He just lost his temper and for me as a	
23		teacher I have to then let that go. I have to let that go. Once he apologizes	
24		it's like nothing ever happened and it really was like nothing ever	
25		happened because then he and his friend didn't stop talking once they	
26		came back into the room.	
27		((Audience laughs))	
28		((Audience laughs))	
29	R. Love:	Oh my gosh people!	

In the moment she said “You have to want to be educated as well,” both Dr. Rod and Dr. Hughes looked up at the same time and frowned (Image A) after having had their heads down and nodding or laughing in the earlier parts of R. Love’s talk. Soon after, Dr. Rod interrupted R. Love mid-story, placed his hand on her shoulder, and emphatically gestured in front of her face to ask about the reason why the student was upset to begin with (Image B; line 18).

My purpose in noting this particular moment is to consider power dynamics that construct who is a leader on this panel. Undoubtedly, the dominant narrative that “Black children do not care about education” is one that should be taken seriously and challenged, and it is highly likely that R. Love’s choice of words caused concerns of perpetuating deficit beliefs. It is also highly likely that Dr. Rod’s intention was to make sure the audience considered the reasons behind the student’s outburst, rather than blame the student. In fact, there are moments in the other speakers’ talk that may be read as deficit when out of context. However, R. Love was the only one who was interrupted and asked to explain herself during her talk, and was later told by the moderator to keep her responses to one minute during Q&A (Field Notes). Inadvertently, she was re-inscribed as “lesser knowing” on a panel alongside Black male scholars.

If she were given the space and time to complete her thought, the audience would have seen that her underlying message was not grounded in deficit beliefs. As she continued her story, she described the emotional labor and emotional toll of advocating for Black students within an institution that was at odds with their shared humanity (Figure 7.12).

Figure 7.12: Emotional Contestation

1	R. Love:	Even now thinking about it and thinking about all of the things that you	
2		discussed it's so complex and I go home and cry all the way home because	
3		I don't know what to do to tell my student who gets stopped by the police	
4		every single day, what to do to make that not happen anymore. And as a	
5		Black educator the weight of what we have to deal with is not the same.	
6		I can't even communicate how much more difficult it is being Black in this	
7		country, let alone being a Black educator. Seeing your own children not	
8		being educated. It is heartbreaking ((voice cracks))	
9		((Audience is quiet and nods))	
10	R. Love:	And I didn't know I was gonna cry, but it is just heartbreaking. And every	
11		day you have to wake up and try again and it's s::o hard. It's so hard to	
12		think that there's very few things that I can try to change because	
13		structurally this institution and these places are so wrong for them.	
14		They're not meant for ME . This place is still not meant for me and I have to	
15		work within the system and at times feel extremely complicit in the	
16		system because I know that I still have to teach and get my students who	
17		are in 11th grade and are reading at a 4th grade level, to be able to be	
18		college ready for the SBAC, which is our state exam. They have to be at	
19		grade level by then and we do it but it takes so much extra work to build	
20		that relationship, to build that safety and to allow our students and give	
21		them permission to actually fail and try again. Because when students	
22		give up it's because they don't want to feel stupid anymore. Not that they	
23		don't want to be educated, not that they don't care . They just don't want	
24		to feel stupid anymore.	

Constructing shared identity between her own struggles as a Black educator and the struggles of Black students as her “own children” (line 6-8; lines 14-16) while pointing to her chest and articulating feelings of “heartbreak” (Image A), R. Love engaged in emotional contestation of racialized inequities. The heaviness of racial justice work was not only conveyed through her tears (Image B), it was also discursively conveyed through contradictions of engaging in this work within institutionalized contexts that were not designed for Students of Color (lines 11-24). Furthermore, her comment about students “not wanting to be educated” (see Figure 7.11, lines 15-16) did not come from a deficit understanding of students; rather, it came from an understanding of learned helplessness due to constructed “failure” (lines 21-24).

While a majority of questions asked during Q&A following the panel were directed at Dr. Rod and Dr. Hughes, a Black woman in the audience acknowledged R. Love’s pain as a Black

educator and began to vulnerably share and cry as well. Her emotional contestation relative to the ideological contestation displayed by Dr. Rod and Dr. Hughes throughout the panel opened up new possibilities for radically reimagining the education of Black boys.

I'm fully aware that, because I present myself or I am perceived as strong, that when I choose to be open and cry, it grants other people permission to cry, or be vulnerable. And this goes within my classroom. I sometimes cry in front of the students so they understand that I'm a human being and I'm not just some strong robot teacher thing, but then it gives the students permission to cry. I make that choice, psychologically, to let them see that, so then that way they won't feel too scared to do it (R. Love; Interview).

These events across social spaces brings to question how cis-heteropatriarchal constructions of leadership overshadow and erase the labor of Women of Color, and Black women in particular.

I'm trying to do this work and I'm being disregarded and acknowledged in the same breath, and then being asked to do more so people can profit from it. And I would much rather hear, "This is the great work that you're doing. This is what we see and this is why we want to learn from you." Not "That sounds great. You're asking a lot of us. We see what you're doing. Why are you doing that? Explain it so that way we can get other teachers to do what you do." And none of it says, "Thank you for your work" or acknowledging what I do. And research and studies already show that the amount of physical and emotional trauma that happens to Black women in general, like it's killing us, to be this way. And I feel it. It is, which is why I try to do self-care and mindfulness, because I feel it, physically, every time I go through something like this. My body reacts. I get sick, I get really bad cramps, I can't sleep for a night, I have dreams that are about these issues; that's not, it's every day, it's never-ending (Interview).

Case 3: Ryan

At Warriors Middle School, the teaching staff consisted of 80% women, most of whom were Latinx, with a handful of teachers who grew up in the community in which they taught. Despite these demographics, there was a major presence of hypermasculinity within the teaching staff, a group of male teachers who also considered each other friends. Ryan's complex relationships with a group of male teachers, which were deepened through activities such as playing basketball together every week to coordinating plans to attend teacher-led rallies with

one another, socially positioned male teachers as well as himself as visible social actors in the school (Figure 7.13).

Figure 7.13: Constructed Social Positioning alongside Male Teachers



The administrator, Cesar, occasionally joined the men's social outings as well. In addition, Ryan also cultivated friendships across other social groups within the school, including all the teachers in the history department. In fact, he brought Vietnamese sandwiches for his teacher friends once a week, and they occasionally ate together in his classroom (Figure 7.14).

Figure 7.14: Cultivating Community through Food



He also sent encouraging text messages to his peers in the morning, and willingly shared his curricular resources in the hopes of collaborating and strengthening student learning, a trait not often shared amongst other teachers (Interview).

Considering his personal relationship with a wide range of social actors in various positions of power and influence, Ryan was often perceived as a “natural” leader by his peers in official roles, such as in his role as department chair (e.g., “Let’s thank Mr. Ryan for making the time to bring his knowledge to the group.”), as well as in unofficial leadership roles (e.g., “Hey Ryan, just take over the union meeting.”). Such constructions of his leadership were also reinforced by the hypermasculine culture and gender politics involved in the power structure (e.g. four out of five of the administrators were Latinos and one was Latina). While he admitted he was not always aware of his male privilege, it was quite clear that his personal relationships with male teachers and administrators granted him privileges in ways that were normalized and taken for granted (Field Notes; Focus Group Interview). At the same time, Ryan claimed that he may be “doing the work the administrators ask [him] to do, but not for the reasons they want [him] to” (Interview).

Take for example this interaction between Ryan and Cesar during a department meeting. Ryan led an activity in which teachers evaluated the rigorousness of their own assessments, based on what he had just learned at a conference about metrics of levels of knowledge. The assessments were rated as 1 being surface level and 4 being high level (Figure 7.15):

Figure 7.15: Co-Constructing Social Positioning with Administrator

1	Cesar:	A lot of it is just again for you to look a little bit closer in your
2		planning, as you reflect on your lessons, on your assessments,
3		whatever you actually are asking the students to do. As I
4		mentioned to them is that we're looking at this sort of approach.
5		There's this mantra of <i>task predicts performance</i> . So if students are
6		constantly operating at level ones and twos, then we can expect
7		that they're going to do very well given the tools, which goes to
8		your point that, "Hey, but like the students, they're really low with
9		reading."
10	Ryan:	We know that 70% of them are not low, even in writing. If 90%
11		of our instructions, level ones and twos and they're never going to
12		go beyond. They're never ever going to go beyond. That's a
13		challenge right? It's kind of saying that's really the challenge
14		because some of them, that gap is so great, that it's hit and miss
15		whether you start high and bring it up or you start going to try to
16		push up, it's hidden in this conference.
17	Cesar:	Soo::o thank you Mr. Ryan for bringing it back. I think you saw
18		some value in and you want to show requirement that every
19		department is doing.

While Cesar associated the importance of designing tasks that incorporated high levels of knowledge to improve student performance who were "low in reading" (lines 7-9), Ryan

indirectly reframed Cesar's statement by relocating issues with the task rather than the students in themselves (lines 10-16). As a response, Cesar praised Ryan for leading the activity (lines 17-19). At first glance, praise from an administrator in the context of his peers may seem as though Ryan was being socially positioned as high status. Contrary to this analysis, Ryan perceived such interactions as unspoken tension between his administrator and himself that were often overlooked. When considering the slower-paced tone, as well as the bodily positioning in which Cesar straightened up his own shoulders while thanking Ryan, Ryan viewed such interactions as Cesar's indirect way of reestablishing authority.

Nonetheless, given Ryan's complicated leadership status, he drew from his privilege to challenge racialized inequities. To be clear, Ryan exhibited great comfort in seeing race and talking about race in everyday language with teachers, specifically using jokes to both employ racial categorization and reject it. For example, when talking to teachers within his own department, with whom he has personal relationships, he made jokes about stereotypes of Asians "being good at math" when grouped with another Asian American teacher and myself – all of whom were humanities teachers – to participate in a math-related professional development activity. He said, "Yeah, let's go, we got three Asian people over here!" and "I learned how to do math before I could speak" to acknowledge the discrepancy between stereotypes and reality. He was also comfortable talking about race with teachers he did not know very well, as explained by Linda, a Latina history teacher:

Some people don't really know him so when he's saying a joke, some people might take it as, "Was he being serious or not?" And I actually got to experience that once when we were at the cafeteria I went to pick up my food and that time he also went. And a teacher asked for, um, sauce, but wait what type of sauce, it was a Chinese sauce? [Sriracha] I can't remember the name of it. He was like, "Hey Ryan do you happen to have some?" And he's like, "Are you asking me just because of my race?" But he said it really serious and the other teacher, he turned RED and he didn't know what to do. And I could just see it and I'm like, there he comes! But I know that he was kidding but the other teacher felt

really uncomfortable (Interview).

Working in a homogenous setting where race was taken for granted and rarely talked about, specifically in a school that had a reputation for being “anti-union,” he did not explicitly talk about race when engaging in peer dialogue in formal settings.

I think any type of movement, moving people in the middle is the key. Because if you move people in the middle, it's easier to move the extremists... I'm constantly trying to move the middle, is the difference. I think other people are putting their fist in the air and proud of it. I do that too. That can be argued that I totally do that too. But, I'm trying to connect with everyone, and not push anyone away (Interview).

For example, when Ryan prepared teachers for strike-readiness during a teacher union information meeting, he drew on their collective identities as teachers (Figure 7.16):


Figure 7.16: Repositioning Veteran Latina Teacher as Expert

1 Ryan: So ... **thank you** for your time and your respect (1.0). I really appreciate it.
2 We're looking to strike in February. And we've been mentioning it often.
3 And I don't ... I haven't been here long enough, and I don't know how the
4 administration is going to respond to that. But I do know that unity and
5 solidarity goes farther than anything. Miss Rios shared with me the two
6 strikes we've had in the past. And [inaudible], but she said, I
7 think one of them, not many ... It wasn't a strong enough number of
8 teachers striking. And because there was less teachers striking, the strike
9 lasted longer. That was the first one. So, they said the second one, there
10 was **a stronger critical mass**. And the strike didn't last as long because it
11 was more powerful.

Positioning himself as a teacher to produce a familiar identity to his colleagues (line 1), Ryan advanced a call to action by drawing on historical events of successful and failed strikes (lines 6-11), specifically by repositioning a veteran Latina teacher as a “knowledgeable” leader (line 5). Following this constructed shared identity as teachers (Interview), he then called for collective action to unionize for their own shared interests as well as the larger common good (Figure

7.17).

Figure 7.17: *Repositioning Asian American Male Teacher as Lower Status*

- 1 Ryan: What we almost went on strike for last year, it was for a ten
2 percent raise. And each and every one of us is gonna get that ten
3 the rest of our lives. (2.0) So, a **week**, is it worth a couple extra weeks of
4 work to get ten percent for the rest of your life of your last salary
5 of your last year? Right? Plus health benefits that we're fighting for
6 right now that we're trying to cut that we fought for, we're able to
7 retain for now. So, when you talk to your colleagues, we all are
8 from different circles of school. (h) **SOME** of us 
9 ((pats Jack on shoulder)) don't get along
10 with anyone cause we have trouble
11 talking to people. [That's understandable, right?
12 Teachers: (((laughing))
13 Ryan: But, you all are from different departments, different circles and you
14 don't have the issues that **Jack** has. But that's beyond the point of what
15 we're [talking about.
17 (((Announcement on speakers))
18 Jack: Ahaha, way to put that out there.

In this interaction, Ryan used humor and Jack as an example of an “inadequate mobilizer,” as noted by his hand on Jack’s shoulder combined with talk about the importance of expanding their critical mass (lines 2-5). It is worth mentioning that Jack and Ryan had a strong personal relationship and a reputation as “effective” teachers, who were also part of the highly visible male teacher group. It is quite possible that their gendered ways of relating with one another (e.g., playing basketball with other male teachers and administrators) made such bantering and jokes seem socially acceptable during professional meetings (Field Notes). By drawing on the case of Jack, Ryan reconstructed an Asian American male teacher as lower social positioning who did not have the skillsets to mobilize. Utilizing banter and their personal relationship to make indirect social commentary was a common strategy that he enacted to advance his political agenda (e.g., Ryan asking Jack why he wasn’t wearing a red shirt in solidarity for union

awareness week). In doing so, he initiated open conversations about strategizing for strike readiness (Figure 7.18).

Figure 7.18: Co-Constructing Shared Identity as Teachers

- 1 Ryan: Talk to your friends that I'm sacrificing my time, I'm sacrificing
2 my service, **for the better good of our families and our students** and
3 ... For how much you're gonna make, because all of you are in, we
4 all do this for the money, right? (h) Cause we're making so much,
5 right?
6 Teachers: ((*laughing*))
7 Teacher: ((*coughing*))
8 Ryan: I told my friends, I'm making \$80,000 a year now. My friends was
9 like, "**Oh that's COOL, I've been making that for AWHILE!**" And it's just
10 like, I **barely** got to 80! And I'm not gonna lose this right now. We
11 are~on~a~roll, we have a strong (0.2) We have strong leadership, but
12 we need strong numbers to stand up together. Everyone of us that
13 crosses the picket line and goes into school at that time, I will
14 remember. Because I'm out there sacrificing what I do, and then
15 you're gonna get the raise for me, for what I do. And I'm gonna
16 remember that.
17 Ms. Rios: It created a lot of division and—
18 Ryan: —It's gonna happen.
19 Ms. Rios: With the people that crossed the picket line, and even years after
20 there were videos. And I mean, they just did not get along and it
21 was just...
22 Ryan: It gets ugly. But we're sacrificing—
23 ((*crosstalk amongst teachers*))
24 Ms. Rios: But, we can use our, if I'm not mistaken, we can use our illness
25 days to cover for that.

By discussing their ethical commitments as community members, parents, and teachers (line 2), and their collective interests of salary and benefits, all while drawing on the familiar narrative that teachers do not make a lot of money (lines 9-11), Ryan called for collective action with a long-term vision. Such an intervention was necessary as more people began to express interest in the rally by asking questions following his talk. Furthermore, Ms. Rios was repositioned as a source of knowledge to offer expertise as part of Ryan's call for strategically coming together

(lines 23-25).

The gendered dimension of leadership at Warriors Public Middle School complicated who was constructed as a leader in particular spaces; at the same time, Ryan's practices revealed that leadership could be still be reconstructed to include marginalized voices. At first glance, it might have appeared as though Ryan was engaging in conformist resistance. Through a place-based raciolinguistic lens, place-based dynamics complicated and amplified the innerworkings of internal transformative resistance, especially as it related to Ryan's racialized privilege as Asian American:

I'm always aware of my racial identity more than my gender identity in the classroom. But like I said earlier, that comes with male privilege. You're not as conscious of that. I never think I do enough. I'm a heterosexual male Asian teacher at a 99% Latino school. But the sad part always is as much as I try my best to give them a voice and show them that I understand their point of view, the majority of my friends don't share that. The majority of my friends and family are Asian, and that hurts. That hurts every day. And most of them who are going to college are probably going to a UC or a state school, which will be majority Asian, too.

Summary

Place-based dynamics of race relations impacted how Teachers of Color were positioned as leaders as it related to race and other social axes of differentiation. Thus, leadership is an unstable and dynamic construct – inextricably linked to power relations – that Teachers of Color have to navigate according to their social positioning in place as a means to reconstruct race relations.

At the same time, their responses to reconstructed forms of leadership often emerged tensions that may conflict with their justice-oriented goals. Their efforts to enact racial justice leadership could still be commodified and re-inscribe social reproduction, despite goals to transform racialized inequities.

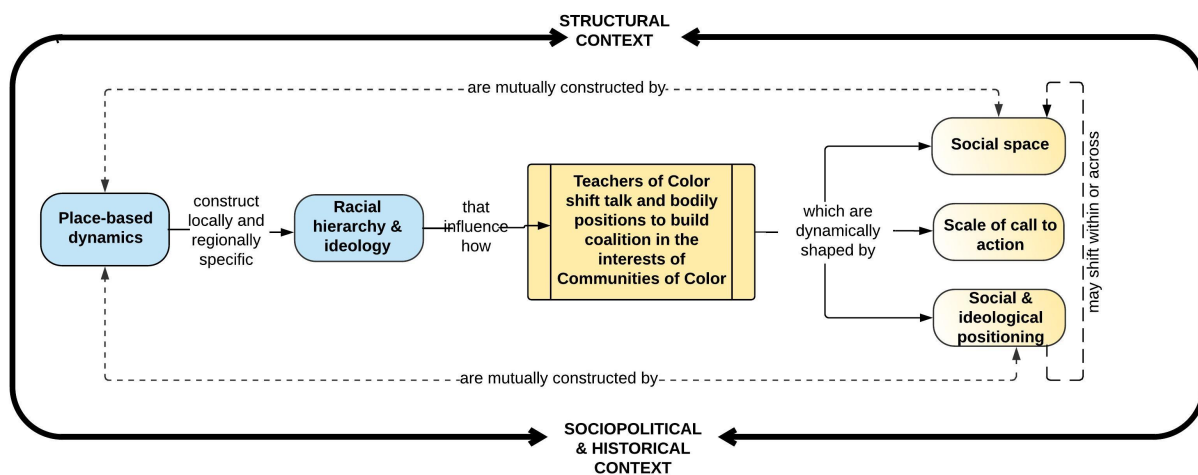
CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

The Multi-Faceted Nature of Racially Transformative Practices

Ongoing debates about how best to prepare Teachers of Color for social change stem from diverse and often divergent understandings of the fundamental causes and remedies for inequitable schooling. The “problems” and “solutions” of teacher education are often constructed by dominant paradigms of “quality” and “effective” teaching (Cochran-Smith et.al., 2015), which have shifted and re-emerged across time. Such efforts have included an emphasis on technocratic training to address “lack of teaching skills and practices” in the 1950s through 1980s, as well as an emphasis on policy and standardized measures of achievement to address “low student performance” in the 1990s to present day (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Challenging these dominant paradigms, critical teacher education scholars have re-articulated the “problems” of teacher education through a lens of race and power, including teaching critical theory to develop teachers’ structural analyses of inequities (Giroux, 1988), and reframing the constructed “achievement gap” to a structural analysis of the “education debt” owed to marginalized communities (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Building on the work of scholars who have contributed to ongoing debates about how best to prepare teachers towards social transformation (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1991; Nieto, 2007; Paris & Alim, 2016), through this dissertation study, I argue that paradigms of “quality” and “effective” teaching for social change must engage shared attention to structural, institutional, and interactional scales of systemic racial and intersectional inequalities. Specifically, my analysis of the case studies reveals that racially transformative practices emerge within historically, structurally, and spatially produced racial hierarchies in place. Interconnected with regionally specific constructions of power relations, the micro-

interactional processes through which racially transformative practices emerged are also shaped by social space, calls to action, and social and ideological positioning (See Figure 8). Mapping the multi-faceted nature of racially transformative practice, in the sections that follow, I expand on how dynamic and situated understandings of racially transformative practices at macro- and micro- levels can reframe ongoing debates about issues of preparing, supporting, and retaining Teachers of Color, while inspiring new pedagogical approaches to the preparation of Teachers of Color as change agents.

Figure 8.1: Multi-Faceted Nature of Racially Transformative Practice



Macro-Level Influences

As stated earlier in this chapter, racially transformative practices emerge within historically, structurally, and spatially produced racial hierarchies in place, and these productions take on “new” meanings in a given sociopolitical moment. In essence, race is a dynamic construct that has a “changing same quality at its core” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2012).

Expanding on these insights about (re)constructions of race, given dominant paradigms guided by a colorblind and market-driven schooling context (Lipman, 2011), I locate the “problem” of

teacher preparation in the ways race is talked about or not talked about. When approaches to transform inequities and access are absent or minimize discourse about race, a “colormute” (Pollock, 2005) conception of race erases the larger social processes that influence the temporal and spatial contexts in which students are situated and racialized. In other words, a colormute approach to teacher preparation may peripheralize or reproduce issues of equity and justice (Philip et.al., 2017). On the other hand, an over-deterministic approach to race may reduce, essentialize, or pathologize how race is produced and experienced in conjunction with class, gender, sexuality, abilities, and other axes of social differentiation. Specifically, a static conception of race dismisses how race is experienced in body and being in various spaces and times (Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016).

To be clear, I am not claiming that teacher preparation programs are solely responsible for developing the racial literacy of prospective teachers, nor am I claiming that prospective teachers do not already enter programs with racial literacy of their own. Rather, I am arguing that, at best, colormute, color evasive, or static treatment of race, ethnicity, and cultural ways of being and knowing hinder and constrain learning possibilities for Teachers of Color and, at worst, reinforce learning that (inadvertently) reproduces dominant racial ideologies, structures, and practices. To cultivate Teachers of Color as agents of change, programs must foster a dynamic understanding of race as a historically contingent construct with intersectional qualities that are not only re-invoked and re-applied to racialized groups in situated contexts, but can also be contested, transformed, and re-imagined.

Micro-Level Influences

As a response to locally specific racial hierarchies and ideologies, as demonstrated through this study, Teachers of Color shifted their talk and embodied practices to enact racially

transformative practices in micro-level contexts based on three dynamic factors: 1) how they are situated in social space, 2) the scale of desired action, and 3) constructed social and ideological positioning.

First, where Teachers of Color are and who is present in the social space shapes how they engage in talk and embodied practice as a means to advocate for social change. Is the space a hallway, a formal meeting, or public? What are the racial ideologies of the social actors involved, and how many are present? What relationship do they have, if any, with these social actors? In the case of Lucia, for example, her linguistic practices within the social space of the organizational meeting, consisting of multiracial social actors, were significantly different from her linguistic practices within the social space of school site action, consisting of Black social actors. Such a phenomenon illuminates how factors such as national origins, immigrant status, skin color, language acquisition, and perception of foreignness, class, generation, citizenship status, ethnic group, gender, and language complicate processes of racialization (Pulido, 2006); at the same time, linguistic and embodied practices are crucial resources that can be used to (re)construct race and power relations in social space.

Furthermore, racially transformative practices are entangled with the body as a sociopolitical construct produced in social space. Hegemonic forces that shape and give meaning to urban schools condition the experience of Teachers of Color as “embodied subjects emplaced in and moving through the material world” (Delaney, 2002, p. 7). Inspired by Cruz’s (2001) “epistemology of the Brown body,” I maintain that the bodies of Teachers of Color sit at the intersection of “multiple and often oppositional intersections of sociopolitical locations” that shape “regulation of [their] movements” and “reclamation of narrative and the development of radical projects of transformation and liberation” (Cruz, 2001, p. 657). As demonstrated through

this study, race and the body shape teachers' racialization in social space, both societal space and interactional, and sometimes at tension with one another (Alim, 2016). Racialization-in-context informs how they interpret and creatively engage in the flow of practices for social change with racialized groups, which informs how social identities are spatially and linguistically produced.

These findings challenge disembodied understandings of “problems” with developing teachers' needed skillsets and sensibilities for coalition building and social change. For example, scholars have identified effective practices for teaching in urban schools (Duncan-Andrade, 2007), encouraged organization of collective action (Dewey, 1939; Pantic, 2015) and called for micropolitical literacy to navigate institutions that are often at tension with their justice orientations (Jacobs et al., 2014; Robinson, 2012b; Ryan & Armstrong, 2016). However, a disembodied approach to cultivating these skillsets may erase the unique vulnerabilities that justice-oriented Teachers of Color experience in hostile campus climates (Achinstein et al., 2010; Kohli, 2016), specifically the uneven social positionings of Teachers of Color at the intersections of multiple identities and oppressions. Thus, approaches to developing teachers' racially transformative practices must attend to dynamic meanings of how race and intersecting social identities are produced in social space.

In short, I locate the “problem” of teacher learning as the disentanglement of skillsets and sensibilities with learners in the process of becoming racialized and engaging change. Aligned with scholars who illuminate unique challenges that emerge for Teachers of Color (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2008; Philip et al., 2017), I argue that a disembodied approach to teacher preparation may reinforce monolithic or essentialized approaches often used to support the diverse learning needs of Teachers of Color within and across racialized groups. Specifically, an embodied approach to teacher preparation can reveal how “effective” enactments of transformative

resistance vary at the intersections of multiple identities and oppressions; conversely, an erasure of the bodily experience at the intersections of multiple identities and oppression may narrow conceptions of criticality and approaches to social change (Philip & Zavala, 2016). To adequately support Teachers of Color with the skillsets and sensibilities needed to realize their potential for racial justice work, I consider how sophisticated enactments of racially transformative practices rely on a dynamic conception of social positioning as it relates to the body-in-context.

Secondly, the scale of action and perceived capacity to engage in action influence how Teachers of Color engage in talk and embodied practice. This factor includes attention to who and how many people are needed for the action to happen, and what resources are needed to engage in that change. In the case of Makario, for instance, his vision to galvanize a large critical mass given the scale of action shaped the ways he approached talk to accommodate individual as well as collective interests of teachers, regardless of their ideological commitments. Not only were his racially transformative practices to reclaim quality public education founded on structural understandings of racial inequities, his perceived capacity to promote social change at a district level relied on relationships with social actors in leadership positions as well as resources and experiential knowledge from prior years of union organizing. The more teachers are able to recognize and challenge racial inequities as it relates to structural, institutional, and interactional scales of racial and intersectional inequalities, and the more resources they are supported with, the more they are able to realize their potential and perceived capacity for social change.

In teacher education, scholars have located the problem of teacher preparation with attention to scale as one that separates learning of theory with learning of practice, resulting in

arbitrary divisions of content learning within and across coursework and field work accordingly. These limiting structures of learning may contribute to challenges, tensions, and fragments in teachers' ideological sensemaking and transformation (Philip, 2011), and Teachers of Color may become "change(d) agents" who reproduce hegemonic learning structures they sought to transform (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011). For example, in their literature review, Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) found that the development of teachers' racial literacy is often solely relegated to social foundations or multicultural courses, leading to fragmented understandings of how to identify and challenge inequities in everyday practices. To be clear, social foundation courses can strengthen teachers' practices through deeper understanding of structural hierarchies across factors such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and abilities (Philip, 2013). However, as seen through the lens of "gaps between theory and practice," learning about critical social theory void of context and social realities may produce abstract understandings of race and racism that are difficult to translate into practice. Similarly, the affordances and constraints of learning about daily practices, as is often relegated to methods courses, parallel tensions of social foundations courses. Methods courses offer powerful tools for developing important skillsets and sensibilities for developing democratic and student-centered classrooms. Nonetheless, as argued by the lens of theory separate from practice, an overemphasis on micro-level interactional processes of teaching and learning may overlook larger social processes that influence the temporal and spatial contexts in which students are situated and racialized (Picower, 2011). As a result, teacher education scholars have attempted to re-imagine organizational dimensions of teacher learning that bridge these gaps, including field-based learning in an afterschool program to inform classroom contexts (Orellana et al., 2017), positioning families and communities as teacher educators (Guillen & Zeichner, 2019; Zeichner et al., 2016), cultivation of peer teaching

model to bridge university coursework in the field (Pham, 2018), implementation of urban teacher residency programs (Kawasaki et al., 2018), and emphasis on practice-based teacher education (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman & McDonald, 2008). Teacher education scholars have also documented alternative spaces for politicized learning as a response to apolitical teacher education, such as critical professional development (Kohli et.al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2016; Navarro, 2018; Nyachae, 2018).

Reframing the “problem” of teacher preparation through dichotomous applications of theory and practice, I contend that the “problem” of teacher learning lies in structures of learning organized by ontologies of what constitutes “practice.” Contrary to assumptions that micro-level activities (practice) are more identifiable and less abstract than macro-level processes of policies, structures, and institutions (theory), I argue that conceptions of “practice” are ideological and political. Dominant paradigms of “quality” and “effective” teaching are often rooted in White middle-class norms of language, literacy, and cultural ways of interacting (as cited by Flores & Rosa, 2015), denying broader conceptions of “practice” rooted in the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices of Communities of Color. Thus, a narrow conception of “practice” overlooks racism as hegemonic, inevitable, naturalized, and embedded in institutions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2001), minimizing the significance of everyday activities that contribute to the reproduction, resistance, and re-imagination of dominant social orders. Thus, teacher education must take on an ontological commitment to structures of learning that foster more comprehensive and community-oriented conceptions of “practice” for social change as it relates to and is intertwined with, rather than viewed as separate from and less than broader structures of power and large social movements. Specifically, teacher learning must incorporate opportunities to develop teachers’ responsive creativity as a means to co-construct social change with social

actors (Philip, 2019). Such an approach can support Teachers of Color with seeing their own agency for change across multi-scalar forms of racially transformative practices as interconnected forms of social transformation, as well as cultivate and reimagine resources to galvanize efforts towards social transformation.

Finally, how Teachers of Color are socially and ideologically positioned in place shapes how they construct their social identities through talk and the body to promote shared interests for solidarity and collective action. The processes of racialization are integrally tied to power structures and relations, which take on various forms as a response to inequitable distribution of power across race, gender, the body, and other social axes of differentiation. Given existing power dynamics, do Teachers of Color position themselves to appear higher or lower ranking, or as equal status to other social actors? How do they construct their identity in relation to the call for action? In the case of Ryan, he socially positioned himself as a child of refugees to express solidarity with Latinx students, and adapted his linguistic practices to convey his ideological positioning despite the constraints of his school. It is important to note that these social identities shifted within and across social spaces. The phenomenon that racial identities are constructed in relation to other racialized groups, and can shift within and across social spaces, aligns with research in the fields of ethnic studies and anthropology (Alim, 2004; Molina, 2014; Ochoa, 2004). Thus, I argue that sophisticated enactments of racially transformative practices rely on a place-based understanding of race that is situated in histories of oppression and the sociopolitical climate. In fact, the teachers in this study who exhibited a dynamic understanding of race and racism were more likely to take public actions for social change because they viewed histories of oppression and their own racialization as interconnected to the collective experiences of marginalized groups in place. Surely, a call to cultivate teachers' racial literacy in an attempt to

transform racialized inequities is not new: scholars have argued that issues of preparation and retention of Teachers of Color as change agents stem from limited to no critical theories of race and structural racism in teacher preparation, professional development, and schooling contexts (Achinstein, et al., 2010; Knight, 2002; Navarro, 2018; Nyachae, 2018; Pham & Kohli, 2018; Pour-Khorshid, 2016) and lack of learning opportunities to understand how their racial identities inform their racial justice work (e.g. Lee, 2018). Along the same lines, I argue that agency for change must consider place-based dynamics that determine how intersecting positionalities and race relations shift.

Because productions of racial hierarchies shift across time and space, teacher education must support Teachers of Color with the skillsets and racial literacy to co-construct shared identities and cultural intimacies with racialized groups as a means to build coalitions that center marginalized groups towards social change. Specifically, given the unique positioning of Teachers of Color as racialized beings who have the potential to enact racial counterscripts, they must be supported with understanding about how the similarity of their own racialized experiences are interconnected with the collective experiences of other racialized groups. Teachers of Color do not inherently have the skillsets to enact change (Villegas & Davis, 2008), nor do they naturally develop racial counterscripts to question, challenge, and transform issues of equity and access. Thus, they must have learning spaces that cultivate their abilities to recognize racial projects happening at the same time or across time in order to develop the desire to form coalitions and perceived capacity to take on racial justice work, and meaningfully recognize power dynamics and privileges. One way this can be done is through what Pour-Khorshid (2019) refers to as “critical affinity groups” with a commitment to intersectional healing and politicized understandings of race across and within racialized groups.

Significance

In sum, a multi-faceted understanding of racially transformative practices serves to strengthen teachers', teacher educators', and researchers' efforts to understand how to work meaningfully alongside students, families, teachers, and community members towards social change. For one, it challenges homogenizing notions of how to engage in this work: where teachers are, how they are racialized, how they talk, and how they position their bodies, among other factors, shapes the ways in which teachers are able to produce racially transformative practices. It also requires a deeper understanding of place-based dynamics in which dynamic practices for resistance and coalition building may otherwise be neglected, erased, or overlooked. Teachers must be supported with the skillsets needed to understand how racial hierarchies shift across time and space; thus, how they enact racially transformative practices is context-dependent. Also, social and ideological positioning can shift. Teachers must be supported with the sensibilities to draw on various social identities in order to position themselves to mobilize other social actors. Without a multi-faceted understanding of racially transformative practices, educational leaders may risk losing the important humanizing insights and dismissing the labor of Teachers of Color who serve as crucial catalysts for social change. As change agents, Teachers of Color must develop skillsets, tools, and sensibilities for social change through shared attention to structural analyses, sociopolitical context, and the racialized body.

CHAPTER NINE: IMPLICATIONS

Implications

As of the writing of this chapter, each teachers' culminating practices across the span of the 2017-2018 school year resulted in various scales of social change in the interests of Communities of Color: By the end of her yearlong inquiry, Lucia co-developed a long-term school-wide plan to sustain systems and structures designed to support Black students and teachers. Since then, she transitioned from her role as a full-time classroom teacher to serving as a part-time instructional coach while pursuing graduate studies. Lucia continued to organize in teacher-led organizations and served on panels in community and university settings to share insights with educators about teaching and organizing for social justice. In January 2019, Makario co-led and co-organized a six-day strike against the District alongside 50,000 students, educators, families, and community members, resulting in improved conditions for public schools in Los Angeles, including the reduction of class size, charter school accountability, elimination of "random" searches that disproportionately impacted Students of Color, and resources to support immigrant defense fund. In solidarity with teachers struggling with similar schooling conditions in Bay Area School District, the Union influenced and supported the aforementioned teacher union to strike almost a month following their own historic win. To sustain their momentum following the strike, Makario co-led workshops that offered strategies and tools for union organizing across various organizational contexts. Per usual, R. Love had the highest number of students pass the AP exam at her school site, one of which was a Black female student. Inspired by her abilities to identify her strengths as a classroom teacher, namely due to her participation in this study, she advocated for and taught an all-Black Afro AP language

course the following school year, as well as mentored an all-Black girls' advisory for the purposes of sustaining one another's social and emotional well-being. In addition, she taught workshops about her Afro-centered teaching framework organization-wide, as well as at regional and national teacher-led conferences. Despite restrictive contexts in which he worked, Ryan continued to co-create a social space of positive morale and support in the classroom and school-wide contexts. Continuing his roles as an eighth grade History teacher, department chair, and student leadership advisor, he expanded the strengths of his department to influence teaching and learning across other content areas and grade levels. Because of the critical mass of teachers that became more involved in union-related activities, he participated in and contributed to the strike with his colleagues, an essential factor that contributed to the work that Makario engaged in at a larger scale.

While it may be tempting to essentialize these outcomes and glamorize the role of Teachers of Color as change agents, it is essential that educational leaders understand that the trajectories of activities leading up to justice-oriented outcomes are often difficult, contested, intense, and complex. The labor and leadership of Teachers of Color co-exist within broader power structures. In other words, despite best intentions and transformative possibilities of Teachers of Color, their practices can still be commodified within neoliberal and political economic context of schooling, one that promotes meritocracy, re-inscribes social reproduction, and serves as barrier for social change (Baltadono, 2012; Lipman, 2011). Efforts to prepare and retain Teachers of Color have focused primarily on recruiting a diverse teaching population without enough attention to reimagining institutionalized contexts embedded in whiteness. This inherent tension contributes to the erasure of humanistic labor and leadership of Teachers of Color working towards social transformation, contributing to burn out and push out of the

profession. Due to abstract and narrow conceptions of social transformation, teacher preparation and professional development may (unwittingly) reinforce hegemonic approaches to teaching and learning that reinforce the status quo and/or maintain racialized inequities. Without teacher learning experiences that adequately prepare them with the practices, language, and sensibilities to serve as change agents, Teachers of Color may be unsupported, devalued, and misunderstood, even in the midst of actively engaging in social change.

The contradiction between the desire to diversify the teaching population without explicit attention to transforming inequitable schooling demands new theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical possibilities for understanding the conceptualization, examination, and practices of social processes that contribute to social transformation within existing power dynamics. As shown through my dissertation study, there are multitude of ways Teachers of Color develop and enact racially transformative practices, which are often overlooked, misunderstood, and disregarded. In the sections that follow, I provide theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications for teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders, and researchers seeking to prepare, support, and retain Teachers of Color as change agents.

Theoretical Contributions

While there has been increasing acknowledgement about the value of Teachers of Color who are uniquely positioned to enact instructional and institutional change for Students of Color, narrow conceptions of social change constrain how teacher educators and educational leaders build upon the potential of Teachers of Color to effectively promote social change. By focusing solely on outcomes in themselves, they may overlook micro-interactional processes that culminate into racially transformative classrooms and schools. Utilizing my place-based raciolinguistics framework to illuminate the racial and spatial dimension of social activities that

reconstruct race relations, I offer a theoretically expansive conception of racially transformative practices that consider the multi-scalar nature of social change. The culminating activities that enabled Lucia, Makario, R. Love, and Ryan to act as change agents in their respective contexts were rooted in relational trust with other social actors, the development of which stemmed from the intersections between the racialization and socialization of each teacher within his or her particular historic geographic context. From a place-based raciolinguistic perspective, social transformation cannot occur through prescriptive and oversimplified “how to” practices. Instead, racially transformative practices must be understood as dynamic, emergent, and creative social activities that are mutually informed by geographic and institutionally specific racial hierarchies, situated within a broader historical and structural context. While schools operate within larger contexts that reconstruct them as racialized places, how racial hierarchies are formed vary across regional contexts. In the case of R. Love, for example, she co-created a Black sense of space in response to historical and contemporary erasure of Black communities at Malcolm High School, relying on the recognition of her own racialization in the collective experiences of Black students to guide her actions. Still, her abilities to co-create a Black sense of space may not work for all Black teachers and students, let alone non-Black Teachers of Color. In fact, appropriation of her cultural practices, such as the use of baby oil as a cultural artifact that tend to the needs of students, can be highly problematic if applied to a different context without understanding how these cultural artifacts were rooted in relational trust that transformed how R. Love and her students interacted and related to one another. Surely, the various practices that R. Love utilized to center the needs and interests of Black students may not work for Makario, Ryan, and Lucia, given their own diverse positionalities, skillsets, and practices as it relates to social actors at Malcolm High. In a similar vein, what worked for R. Love in this context cannot be readily

applied to Makario, Ryan, and R. Love's context. It is important to note that social transformation rooted in relational trust does not always have to occur within same racial groups. In the case of Ryan, for example, he was able to develop relational trust with Latinx students through their shared experiences as (children) of immigrants and refugees. In sum, a deeper understanding of the racial and spatial dimensions of racially transformative practices can equip teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders, and researchers with expanded conceptions of culturally responsive agency for change and transformation of racialized places.

A place-based raciolinguistic framework also expands conceptions of what it means to be an "effective" Teacher of Color working towards social transformation. As evidenced by the four case studies in my dissertation, Teachers of Color engaged in purposeful, intentional, and deliberate work to transform schools in subtle and diverse ways. Arguably, each case study offered a valuable and critical portrait of agency for change that meaningfully contributed to micro, meso, and macro levels of social change, as well as dimensions of social change that go beyond the scope of this study. A multi-scalar understanding of social change through a lens of social activities enacted by racialized bodies can minimize potential essentialization or pathologizing of marginalized social actors in urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Additionally, a multi-scalar understanding of social change through a lens of social activities can challenge narrow conceptions of what it means to sound and look like a "social justice educator." Because the social positioning of Teachers of Color as "leaders" vary by context and mutually constructed by race relations, processes for social change necessarily look different in social space and in body. By attending to racial and spatial dimensions of racially transformative practices, while honoring the heterogeneity of agency for social change as they intertwine with social positionings-in-context, teacher educators and educational leaders can sustain Teachers' of color

engagement as agents of change as well as acknowledge diverse and nuanced portraits of agency for social change.

Methodological Contributions

To better understand how trajectories of activities contribute to social transformation, new analytic approaches that detail moment-to-moment processes for social change are needed. Much of existing scholarship about Teachers of Color as change agents rely on posthoc data, such as interviews, which may dismiss the nuances and contradictions of racial justice work that emerge over time and across social spaces. Furthermore, a static conception of Teachers' of Color ways of knowing, being, and acting may reduce the dynamic ways they transform race relations, including how their insights, narratives, and activities shift across time and space. In an attempt to examine the holistic ways in which Teachers of Color engage in racially transformative practices as they occur and as they unfold, my embodied raciolinguistic analysis illuminates an often underappreciated and overlooked dimension of social change: everyday practices that are seemingly mundane yet contribute significantly to the quality and trajectories of larger social movements and change. These everyday social activities may seem fleeting, mundane, or minuscule but are actually sophisticated and key contestations of power and power relations. Bringing seemingly disparate theories and methods together to conceptualize racialized places and the everyday interactions that happen in them as mutually constitutive rather than discrete social processes, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers can draw on this analytic tool to consider the joint presence of stability and change in institutionalized contexts: the endurance of larger historical and structural contexts that shape localized social reproduction of racial inequities, and the fluidity of racial hierarchies and dynamic practices that have the potential to transform race relations. Given the taken-for-granted nature of everyday

activities, the macro level influences in which racially transformative practices occur may not be as easily observable as micro level influences. By making visible the key moments of micro-level contestations that are inextricably linked to macro-level contexts, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers can reimagine approaches to supporting the work and possibilities of Teachers of Color as change agents.

Take the case studies in this dissertation as a case in point about the need for methodological approaches that detail everyday activities for social change: Social transformation is often understood as bold actions that occur on a macro scale of change. Popular images of social movements, such as large protests and walkouts, tend to come to mind in educational discourse about social transformation. Through a critical ethnomethodological approach to examining processes of social reproduction and transformation, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers can capture snapshots of racially transformative practices that are often disregarded, social activities that contribute significantly to more apparent images of social change. For example, Lucia was recognized for her leadership abilities to co-create a long-term plan for retaining Black students within the charter school. What is not immediately seen is how these outcomes stemmed from years of strategic organizing and micropoliticking – ranging from raising a seemingly mundane question that shaped decision-making processes that centered Black voice, to developing relationships with various social actors to increase attendance and interest in school events for Black families. Despite Makario’s instrumental role in a historic moment of union organizing, one that garnered regional and national attention, images of 50,000 people participating in rallies often circulated throughout media, rather than behind-the-scenes-labor to rally and sustain efforts leading up to and post-strike. While R. Love was seen as a pioneer for developing an Afro AP Language class, her abilities to engage in this possibility

stemmed from years of tending to her students' everyday needs for physical sustenance and social emotional wellness, which were often omitted or at odds with practices deemed "effective" by educational leadership. Finally, while Ryan played a key role in co-creating a school culture that sustained sense of belonging for teachers and students, his abilities to develop meaningful relationships and amplify marginalized voices through humor and banter were often overlooked by his abilities to "effectively" manage the classroom and develop common core-aligned curriculum.

By shifting examination of social change through moment-to-moment practices enacted by Teachers of Color, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers can better understand the cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and contextual dimensions of labor towards social change, which yield new understandings of factors that contribute to issues of Teacher of Color retention. Attending to the invisibilized everyday activities of Teachers of Color working towards social transformation can offer new ways to understand, honor, and value the work of Teachers of Color. For example, instead of focusing solely on outcome-based activities, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers can pay more attention to how Teachers of Color talk to and about marginalized students, and how they attend to human needs that lead to racially transformative classrooms and schools.

Pedagogical Possibilities

A multi-faceted understanding of racially transformative practices, one that treats race as a dynamic social construct and engages a multi-scalar, embodied approach to social change, demands new teacher educator pedagogies and professional development that address the unique and diverse learning needs of Teachers of Color situated in temporal and spatial contexts. Guided by a theoretically expansive conception of social change, one that attends to dynamic

social positionings of Teachers of Color as they intersect with the geographic context in which they are situated, and a multidisciplinary examination of everyday activities, one that considers micro-interactional processes of social reproduction and social transformation, I argue that teacher educator pedagogies and professional development must cultivate learning opportunities that holistically cultivate Teachers' of Color ways of knowing, being and acting by grounding teacher learning within social realities of schools. Situating teacher learning within social realities of schools can inspire new programmatic approaches to teacher learning for social change. Common pedagogical approaches to cultivating Teachers of Color as agents of change focus on deep understanding of positionality and development of critical consciousness. This approach in itself may cultivate critical ideologies for social change yet fail to consider the social relations and social activities in which social reproduction and transformation emerge; conversely, pedagogical approaches that cultivate Teachers' of Color teaching practices may strengthen their abilities to sustain student learning, but this approach in itself may risk reproducing status quo if these practices are rooted in hegemonic understandings of “quality” teaching and learning. Fragmented approaches to preparing teachers as change agents, particularly approaches that do not attend to unique learning needs of Teachers of Color, may result in teacher learning for social change that is abstract or decontextualized. Abstract and decontextualized teacher learning may not prepare Teachers of Color to effectively negotiate and respond to social actors in situated contexts, and may gloss over power dynamics that complicate how their practices play out; thus, teacher learning for social change in the context of schools can strengthen how Teachers of Color develop practices, skillsets, and insights for social change across social spaces.

Not only will grounding teacher learning on school grounds offer new learning possibilities for examining regionally specific race relations in the broader context of historical and structural racism, it also offers new learning opportunities for Teachers of Color to articulate and understand the dynamics of their social positionings across space and time within a particular geographic context. Rather than tailoring teacher learning that rely on teachers' self-reflections out-of-context, tethering teacher learning to social context can offer new insights as to how Teachers' of Color ways of knowing, being, and acting shape how they make sense of, relate to, and transform meanings of race in social space. Through this pedagogical approach, teacher educators can disrupt monolithic approaches to address diverse learning needs of Teachers of Color. Sometimes it is the case that Teachers of Color engage in practices that positively impact intra-racial groups, as evidenced through R. Love. Sometimes it is the case that Teachers of Color enact practices that positively impact interracial groups, as evidenced through Ryan. Sometimes it is the case that Teachers of Color shift practices to impact multiscalar change across social spaces, as is the case for Lucia and Makario. In sum, utilizing a situated and dynamic approach to teacher learning can offer new learning opportunities.

Teacher educator pedagogies and professional development must also attend to each moment of teaching and learning as critical processes that meaningfully contribute to social change. Considering everyday social activities as key moments of contestation, teacher educators and professional development leaders must take seriously the political and ethical dimensions of teaching and learning in everyday life. Undoubtedly, transformative approaches to teacher educator pedagogies must be met with transformation of programmatic approaches to teacher learning. To foster an understanding of how Teachers' of Color racialization is experienced in body and in being as it relates to moment-to-moment practices, one approach is to

reorganize coursework learning with an emphasis on embodiment in the field. Focusing on moment-to-moment analyses of racial formation in the social context of the field can strengthen how Teacher Candidates of Color experience larger processes of domination in the context of schools, which may differ with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and national origin depending on the communities they work with. To summarize, teacher learning with an emphasis on analysis of every day productions of race and race relations can contextualize structural understandings of racialized inequities, while considering “new” forms of racialized inequities within a localized context.

Knowing that reimagination of teacher preparation programs is a long-term endeavor, the shifting of teacher educator pedagogies can still move programs towards supporting and retaining Teachers of Color as change agents. Diverse case studies of Teachers of Color serving as agents of change, with an emphasis on embodied raciolinguistic analysis, can serve as a pedagogical tool for teachers examining their own social spaces, their own embodiment, and their own ways of participating in schooling contexts. Certainly, locating and tracing the nature of social change as it happens *in the moment* and as it happens *over time* may be beyond human capacity to process multi-scalar constructions of race, making the work of preparing, sustaining, and supporting Teachers of Color as change agents that much more difficult. The use of video recordings can serve as a pedagogical tool for paying close attention to the routine moments of schooling and capitalizing on every opportunity during everyday acts to counter inequality, activities that are easily overlooked as mundane and informal but have significant influence of the trajectories towards social change.

A Call to Listen to and Amplify the Labor and Leadership of Teachers of Color

The case studies represented in this dissertation is a starting point for examining and understanding the unique strengths and diverse learning needs of Teachers of Color; the findings from this study are not meant to be comprehensive or generalizable within and cross group differences. Given my attention to racialized bodies, more research is needed to better understand intersecting identities (e.g. mixed race, LGBTQ, adoptees) or other markers of “difference” outside White middle-class norms of language, literacy, and cultural ways of interacting (e.g. apparent accent) that did not clearly emerge as a focal point in this study. Given my attention to race, space, and place, future research with cross-case analyses of racially transformative practices enacted by Teachers of Color within schools and across regions could further inform larger scale understandings of social change and teacher learning.

To be sure, the racially transformative practices of Teachers of Color are not often documented, not often seen, and not often heard, and not often understood, even by the teachers themselves. And while the public may never know the private acts of Teachers of Color who act as agents of change, nor will the public ever learn the names of Teachers of Color whose labor meaningfully contributed to large scales of change, it is inevitable that the role and presence of Teachers of Color matter in schools. Without a critical understanding and close analysis of their ways of knowing, being, and acting in situated contexts, teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders, and researchers may undervalue – or can miss entirely – the many displays of racial justice leadership that Teachers of Color deliberately or organically already do every day, all the time, right under their noses. At the same time, Teachers of Color who have the potential to create and sustain racially transformative classrooms and schools are the same teachers who may be deemed “ineffective” and “too demanding” in schooling contexts. To dismantle whiteness

and imagine new schooling possibilities, teacher educators, educational leaders, and researchers must listen to and amplify the labor and leadership of Teachers of Color who work towards social transformation and restoration of humanity for and alongside marginalized students, teachers, families, and communities.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Gail Jefferson's Transcription Conventions

- A dash marks a cut-off in sound or an interruption.
- WORD** Bold italics indicate some form of emphasis, such as changes in pitch and/or amplitude.
- [A left bracket marks where there is overlapping or simultaneous talk.
- : Colons indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been noticeably lengthened.
- . A period indicates a falling intonation.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising intonation.
- , A comma indicates a falling-rising intonation.
- = An equal sign marks where an utterance is “latched;” there is no interval between the end of a prior turn and the start of the next turn of talk.
- *h A series of h's preceded by an asterisk marks an inbreath.
- h A series of h's (without an asterisk) marks an outbreath
- ~ Tildes indicate rapid speech.
- (()) Double parentheses enclose material that is not part of the talk being transcribed, for example, a comment by the transcriber which describes the talk or other non-verbal action.
- (0.0) Numbers in parenthesis mark silence in seconds and tenths of seconds.
- () Material in parenthesis indicates that the transcriber was uncertain about what she was hearing.
- (h) An h in parenthesis indicates plosive aspiration from laughter.

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