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**BARRIERS TO DEVELOPING ANTIRACIST TEACHERS: THE ROLE OF
POLICY, PEDAGOGY, AND PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of

the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

EDUCATION

With a Designated Emphasis in Sociology

by

Kimberly J. Vachon

JUNE 2023

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Abstract

Barriers to Developing Antiracist Teachers: The Role of Policy, Pedagogy, and Practice in Teacher Education

Kimberly J. Vachon

Following the murder of George Floyd and the wide-spread recognition of systemic discriminatory abuse of power by police, organizations across the country were jolted into reviewing their own policies and practices for evidence of prejudice and racial injustice. Teacher education programs were no exception. As teacher education grapples with this critical historical conjuncture, it is imperative to deeply examine how logics of systemic racism are embedded in the social and political structures charged with preparing future teachers. This dissertation contributes to this investigation by exploring how teacher education state and program policies intersect with teacher educator pedagogies regarding the development of antiracist engagement in pre-service teacher practice.

Framed by critical whiteness studies rooted in Black scholarly perspectives and Victor Ray's conception of racialized organizations, the purpose of this research is to bring awareness to how education policy and pedagogical strategies in teacher education support or challenge the development of racial consciousness and engagement in antiracist education. This study draws on teacher education state standards and assessments, teacher educator focus groups and pre-service teacher interview data from three teacher education institutions in central California, all with a stated commitment to preparing teachers as change agents and social justice advocates. Teacher educator focus groups were composed of program administrators,

social foundations and methods instructors and examined the structural and pedagogical ways in which their programs met their social justice and equity-centered missions. In addition, eleven pre-service teachers were interviewed three times each throughout the course of their teacher education program. Each of the three interviews included questions that directly inquired about the pre-service teachers' experiences regarding race, racism, and equity within their teacher education program and student teaching placements.

My findings indicate that state policies largely sidestepped addressing issues of race, racism, and whiteness directly. Despite this omission, teacher educators in these three programs sought to provide teacher preparation that centered justice and equity-oriented education. Often they were successful, but sometimes the disconnect between the state policies and the teacher education programs created confusion and internal conflict for the student teachers. This disconnect revealed several potential barriers to developing teachers committed to antiracism, notably (1) the reliance on whiteness as a norm in the teacher education state standards, (2) the dominance of the edTPA, an assessment that does not attend to race and racism, among teachers educators and pre-service teachers (3) isolating silos of teacher educators in teacher preparation programs, and (4) the dearth of antiracist teaching methods that interrogate whiteness provided to pre-service teachers. Ultimately, I argue that we can no longer afford to only focus on transforming individual teachers one at a time, but must also attend to the larger structures that uphold values embedded in white supremacy and inequality so that as many educators as possible can be prepared to be

racially literate and justice-oriented. The findings from this study uncover the sites in need of transformation and provide important implications for teacher education and education policy preparing teachers to be justice and equity-oriented change agents.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

When I first began the Ph.D. program, a mentor told me that I would need to unlearn everything I thought I knew. Then slowly I would engage in the process of rebuilding my understanding of how the world works by carefully weaving my past knowledge into the tapestry provided by the many scholars I would encounter throughout the next several years. In this brief section, I want to express my deep gratitude to the many guides and supports who have contributed to this transformative journey.

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Thank you to the thoughtful and generous participants in my dissertation study. To the teacher educators I interviewed, thank you for expanding my thinking

on how to provide an antiracist and equitable education to future teachers and thank you to the pre-service teachers who carefully led me through their thinking, shared with me their joys and their challenges and brought their whole, authentic selves to each interview.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Following the murder of George Floyd and the wide-spread recognition of systemic discriminatory abuse of power by police, organizations across the country were jolted into reviewing their own policies and practices for evidence of prejudice and racial injustice. Teacher education programs were no exception. As teacher education grapples with this critical historical conjuncture, it is imperative to deeply examine how logics of systemic racism are embedded in the social and political structures charged with preparing future teachers. This dissertation contributes to this investigation by exploring how teacher education state and program policies intersect with teacher educator pedagogies regarding the development of antiracist engagement in pre-service teacher practice.

The policies and pedagogies of teacher education institutions are informed by state policy, education faculty, local community and the pre-service teachers themselves, making these programs heavily determined by their environments and those who participate within them. The 2015-2016 school year was the first time that students of color were the majority (51%) in the United States K-12 population and yet the teacher workforce has remained mostly homogenous with 80% identified as white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Given the racially different make-up of the U.S. teaching and student populations, it is imperative for pre-service teachers to understand their own social and cultural backgrounds and how they are positioned in contexts of power and dominant ideologies in American society. Pre-service teachers' engagement in reflexivity regarding their beliefs, attitudes and

values to explore how one can be complicit in upholding an oppressive system is crucial if we expect teachers to provide an equitable education to all students (Achinstein, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay and Kirkland, 2003; Salinas and Blevins, 2013; Sleeter, 2001; Villegas and Lucas, 2002). To date, developing critically conscious teachers has focused on emphasizing racial literacy and critical reflection and mainly caters to white teachers (Hambacher and Ginn, 2021; Jupp, Berry, & Lensmire, 2016; Sleeter, 2001), who make up the majority of the teacher workforce (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). This individual identity orientation, while important, offers an incomplete frame for understanding and addressing the logics of racial hierarchy and social reproduction structurally embedded in expectations for future teachers.

This research study moves beyond the individual antiracist identity work of pre-service teachers, attending as well to the systems of state and program policy that shape and reinforce racial identity constructions. It examines the *relationship* among teacher education policy, pedagogy, and practice in the construction of an orientation to race and racism. By situating pre-service teacher conceptualizations of antiracism and equity within the critical pedagogical strategies utilized by teacher educators and the expectations embedded in state policy standards and assessments, this dissertation sheds light on the affordances and constraints of policy to develop commitments to antiracist engagement. While the structure of state standards and assessments do not fully determine the epistemologies and ontologies available in teacher education, teacher educators and pre-service teachers are still made to negotiate an

understanding of antiracist teaching by navigating within and/or venturing outside the ideological frameworks provided by teacher education policies. In centering the analysis on the negotiations of teacher educators and pre-service teachers within teacher education policy, this dissertation research highlights the systemic and structural barriers to developing teachers committed to antiracism.

The sidestepping of a focus on structural barriers in prior research can be understood within the frameworks of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) on colorblind ideology and Sara Ahmed's (2006) delineation of the nonperformativity of antiracism. As Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) outlines in his book *Racism without Racists*:

Color-blind racism serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-civil rights era. And the beauty of this new ideology is that it aids in the maintenance of white privilege without fanfare, without naming those who it subjects and those who it rewards. (p.15)

Colorblind policies fly under the radar given their mundane and "covert" perpetuation of racial hierarchy. Furthermore, the notion of colorblindness is appealing to well-intentioned whites because it assumes everyone is equal and deserves equal treatment indicated by the sentiment "we are all the same". By avoiding discussion of race, whites believe they are being polite and that to see racial difference is to admit that we are not all the same. And yet, the reality is that while race and racialization are socially constructed, those who are racialized in the United States have a markedly different experience due to systemically engrained practices that confer power and privilege to whites. In a context that is often assumed to be post-racial, it is even more

important to be conscious of and denounce colorblindness in the education system as well as to recognize and act against its ties to a neoliberal agenda (Omi and Winant, 1986). With the election of Barack Obama in 2008, the identification of the United States as a post-racial state (Banet-Weiser, Mukherjee, & Gray, 2019; Bonilla-Silva, 2003) revived the notion that colorblindness equals equality, while critical whiteness studies postulate that it only solidifies whiteness as the norm. Throughout this study, I will use a definition of whiteness from Peter McLaren (1998):

Whiteness is a sociohistorical form of consciousness, given birth at the nexus of capitalism, colonial rule, and the emergent relationships among dominant subordinate groups. Whiteness constitutes and demarcates ideas, feelings, knowledge, social practices, cultural formations, and systems of intelligibility that are identified with or attributed to white people and that are invested in by white people as ‘white’... As a lived domain of meaning, whiteness represents particular social and historical formations that are reproduced through specific discursive and material processes and circuits of desire and power” (p. 66)

It is with this definition of whiteness in mind, where it functions both as an ideology that informs identity and the processes of systems, that I delve deeper into the political project of colorblindness. In “Colorblindness, Neoliberalism and Obama” of the third edition of *Racial Formations*, Omi and Winant (2014) describe the rise of neoliberalism and its tight bond with racial politics. They write: “Neoliberalism was at its core a racial project as much as a capitalist accumulation project. Its central racial component was colorblind racial ideology. The hegemony of neoliberal economics is matched and underwritten by the racial hegemony of colorblindness” (p.211). Neoliberalism’s focus on a free market system infused with choice inherently assumes that everyone is starting at the same place, ignoring the institutionally racist,

classist and sexist systems on which this country was built, which have historically given preferential treatment to white, heteronormative, Protestant men. Omi and Winant illustrate how colorblindness developed through various neoliberal projects including the use of “code words” for racist policies that did not center race such as “getting tough on crime” or stirring up anger towards “welfare queens.” This rhetoric eventually shifted to include the notion of “reverse racism” taking place in policies such as affirmative action, where it was spun that whites were being punished for being white, propagating a myth that applying for college and for a job were somehow equal playing fields where only your merit plays a role. This perspective was portrayed as one of fairness, ultimately to be colorblind was to be fair. As Omi and Winant put it, “The new right could now present itself as antiracist: To understand the ‘true meaning’ of civil rights was to declare that race would henceforth be ‘irrelevant’ to the distribution of scarce resources like jobs or college admissions” (p.220). If white people engage in colorblindness with the intention of treating everyone equally, the racial hierarchy status quo is maintained such that white people, who thrive in the current system continue to do so, while people of color are blamed for falling behind. Of particular concern are the uses of colorblind ideology in the K-12 classroom, where the teachers are primarily white women who risk erasing experiences of students of color when whiteness is treated as the norm.

Some progressive teacher education programs seek to develop racial consciousness in their teachers by bolstering social and cultural competence and combatting notions of colorblindness (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Gay and Kirkland,

2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2001). In particular, examining “teacher identity” is a means to reflect on teaching practices and on how one’s biography and positionality influence the lenses through which one teaches. Various methods of critical reflection on social identities (race, class, gender) are utilized in progressive teacher education such as conducting autoethnography and autobiography projects, developing culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), recognizing the funds of knowledge of K-12 students (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), and utilizing antiracist pedagogy (King, 2022; Kishimoto, 2022; Milner, 2019; Simmons, 2019). While research on culturally relevant pedagogy and the inclusion of funds of knowledge primarily focus on K-12 classrooms, this study is concerned with how teacher educators develop these pedagogical strategies with pre-service teachers, rather than their future students.

Beyond the pedagogical approaches utilized by critical teacher educators, social justice-oriented teacher education programs include in their mission and purposes their commitments to anti-oppressive approaches such as focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice. These statements suggest that these values are not only held by individuals in the program, but are espoused throughout the faculty and programming, while also signaling to prospective teachers that they too will become social-justice teachers if they attend these programs. In her article *The Nonperformativity of Antiracism*, Ahmed (2006) discusses the potential for performativity embedded in the stated commitments of programs touting

diversity, equality, and antiracism as central values. Ahmed names mission statements as an example of “institutional speech acts” and emphasizes that inherently

Speech acts do not do what they say: they do not, as it were, commit a person, organization, or state to an action. Instead, they are nonperformatives. They are speech acts that read as if they are performatives, and this ‘reading’ generates its own effects (p.104).

Ahmed warns that it is precisely in the touting of antiracist commitments that these institutions might obscure the continuation of systemic racism rather than addressing it because by identifying as antiracist, institutional authority keeps others from associating them as racist. This concern provides the basis for probing deeper into the action behind institutional speech acts, particularly when it comes to their commitments to, antiracism, equity, and justice. Drawing on frameworks of neo-liberal practices of colorblindness and the nonperformativity of antiracism (Ahmed, 2020) from education and sociology, throughout this dissertation I investigate the efforts and barriers to developing critically reflective teachers committed to engaging in antiracism by attending to the systems and structures that shape and reinforce these affordances and constraints.

This Study

This dissertation manuscript unfolds in six chapters. Throughout Chapter One, I provide a literature review on the movement towards an antiracist orientation in teacher education, followed by a discussion of prior research on how this orientation intersects with policy structures such as standards and assessments that function to ensure the quality of the teacher workforce. Concluding the chapter, I outline how

critical whiteness studies and a theory of racialized organizations serve as the theoretical frameworks that guide this investigation. Chapter Two provides the research design and methodology of investigating policy, pedagogy, and practice in this study. Accompanying a description of the site selection, data sources, and analytic approach, I describe the social and political context in which the study took place, as well as the study's limitations and my positionality as a qualitative researcher. Throughout Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I unpack the findings of this study. In Chapter Three, I examine the antiracist commitments of the three teacher education programs selected for this study by considering their mission statements and values, as well as teacher educator and pre-service teacher perspectives on the programs all within the context of the California state standards for beginning teachers, the Teaching Performance Expectations. This chapter illustrates how teacher educators work within and outside of the confines of the state standards in order to provide an antiracist and equity-oriented preparation program and reveals how pre-service teachers interpret and practice these pedagogical strategies. Chapter Four highlights an important application for pre-service teachers of the state standards: the edTPA and CalTPA. This chapter provides an analysis of the TPAs regarding their attention to race, racism, and equity, while also chronicling the ways teacher educators integrate preparation for this assessment into their programming and the resulting orientation of pre-service teachers to the assessment and their beliefs around what constitutes a good teacher. Chapter Five delves into pre-service teacher sensemaking of race, racism, and equity by examining how the PSTs conceptualized

antiracism and perceived justice and equity-oriented teaching practices through the lenses of their content areas. Furthermore, this chapter foregrounds the perspectives of the pre-service teachers of color in this study and addresses the challenges of putting antiracist theories into practice. Chapter Six presents a discussion of the findings of this study through the perspectives of critical whiteness studies and Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations. The main takeaways outlined in this section emphasize that teacher education programs matter in their ability to bolster critical reflection on teacher identity and an awareness of justice and equity in schools, and yet policy and program organizational structures have the potential to undermine teacher educator efforts in developing pre-service teacher commitments to antiracist teaching. Furthermore, a pervasive reliance on whiteness as a norm throughout teacher education policies and pedagogical approaches hinders the antiracist development of teachers of color and the ability for all teachers to engage in antiracist teaching practices.

As cries ring out across the country demanding recognition and protection of Black lives, it is even more necessary for systems of education to uncover how they participate in a project of white supremacy and the erasure of race and racism. This dissertation study argues that it is essential to dismantle the tangled web of teacher education policy and pedagogies from its reliance on whiteness as a norm in order to provide a racially just and equitable education to beginning teachers and ultimately to K-12 students. This entails naming and challenging hegemonic white disciplinary

knowledge and engendering a practice of promoting justice and equity in all teachers entering the teacher workforce.

Addressing Race, Culture, and Ethnicity in Teacher Education

While the rise of neoliberalism brought with it a dependence on colorblindness, teacher education simultaneously developed a wave of methods to directly address race, ethnicity and culture in preservice programs. (Cochran-Smith, 2004). In this section, I describe three examples of how this was taken up in teacher education, through 1) a focus on multiculturalism and/or diversity (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Sleeter, 1996; Sleeter, 2001), 2) attention to culturally relevant pedagogy/culturally sustaining teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012; Villegas and Lucas, 2002) and 3) the development of antiracist pedagogy (King, 2022; Kishimoto, 2022; Milner, 2019; Simmons, 2019). Each of the listed methods operates under the assumption that white supremacy is infused into the education system and seeks to combat deficit framing of students of color by bringing race/ethnicity/culture more clearly into the teacher education curriculum. In practice, given the overwhelming majority of white women in the profession, these approaches tend to assume a white pre-service teacher (Sleeter, 2001). As the bifurcating racial demographics widen between K-12 teachers and students in the United States, attending to pre-service teachers racial consciousness and awareness of how race is prevalent in every aspect of student learning becomes even more essential (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Philip and Benin, 2014; Sleeter, 2001). However, focusing on catering educational approaches addressing race primarily to

white teachers presents at least three issues: 1) it assumes that all teachers of color have the racial literacy and pedagogical skills necessary to teach in a culturally responsive/antiracist manner simply due to their racial/ethnic identity, 2) it ignores the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) that teachers of color can bring to the teacher education classroom environment, and 3) it illustrates and relies on the lack of attention to systemic changes to teacher education to recruit more teachers of color. Centering whiteness in the curriculum while encouraging pre-service teachers to decenter whiteness remains a challenge for teacher educators and pre-service teachers to manage in teacher education classrooms. The following descriptions describe the development of each approach followed by a discussion of the challenges and contradictions in teacher education as a site for antiracist work.

Multiculturalism and Diversity

Multiculturalism in education could function as an umbrella term for the ways in which race and culture have been addressed in the field of teacher education; however, it is more accurate to discuss it as historically situated in the field's early attempts to redress racial disparities in schools. Sleeter (1996) describes multicultural education as a social movement arising out of the civil rights movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's. As multicultural education developed, Cochran-Smith (2004) maintains, teacher education sought to address the growing "demographic divide" between teachers and students through adding social and cultural foundations and diversity courses into the teacher education curriculum, attempting to combat the

historical use of deficit framing of marginalized students. However, addressing race was often confined to offering one course on multicultural education, which was not included in the core curriculum. Relegating the politics of difference in identities to electives or peripheral courses side-steps the prevalence of race, class, and gender in all aspects of education. Multicultural courses were designed to celebrate diversity and difference between students, often through a recognition of an array of holidays and foods. However, the depth of this examination remained in question, when all differences were considered equal without further excavation of the hierarchies embedded in the construction of these differences. Sleeter (1996) purported that multicultural education should be conceived of as a social movement, including community members in decision-making and school reform, rather than letting it function solely in the realm of academic discourse, teaching techniques and acting as a kind of therapy for prejudice and stereotyping. In further critique of the burgeoning multicultural education, Cochran-Smith (2004) suggests that outside the conservative practices of teacher education, a theoretical “new multiculturalism” began to appear which was “imbued with critical understandings of how race, class, gender, and culture structure the life chances and school experiences of both individual schoolchildren and large groups of people who are not part of the cultural, racial, language, and socioeconomic mainstream.” (p.17). Scholars such as Ladson-Billings (1995) and Villegas and Lucas (2002) saw the need to disrupt the implicit ideology of teacher education that relied on meritocracy and apolitical attitudes towards race, class and gender (Cochran-Smith, 2004) and emphasized the necessity for teacher

education to incorporate multicultural issues *throughout* the teacher education curriculum. As they write, “This infusion process requires that teacher educators critically examine the curriculum and revise it as needed to make issues of diversity central rather than peripheral.” (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Developing culturally relevant pedagogy and preparing culturally responsive teachers was a step towards making multicultural education a core part of the curriculum for future teachers, rather than an elective on the margin.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In her seminal piece “But that’s just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy,” Ladson-Billings (1995) introduces the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as a method to be utilized throughout the curriculum. Culturally relevant pedagogy works to combat deficit framing of students of color, to go beyond celebrating diversity in the classroom and to advocate pedagogical methods necessary for students of color to thrive in schools. This approach involves teaching through a critical lens by providing “collective empowerment” (p.160) with which students are able to understand the systems in which they learn, rather than simply learning the content itself. Ladson-Billings states that:

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (p. 160)

Ladson-Billings emphasizes the need for a link between school and home cultures (specifically homes of students of color), where culturally relevant teaching involves

empowering students to develop cultural competence and a critical consciousness that “allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities.” Her approach to CRP harkens back to Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), where the oppressed educate themselves on the confinements of their oppression and through action and reflection (praxis) they move towards humanization and liberation. Ladson-Billings likens Freire’s approach to the work African-American teachers were engaged in to empower African-American students.

Since this introduction in the 1990’s, culturally relevant pedagogy has gone through many iterations and is a staple in most social justice-oriented teacher education programs. Scholars have developed different language to build on the foundation of CRP such as culturally *responsive* (Gay, 2000) and culturally *sustaining* teaching practices (Paris, 2012), which lends itself directly to curriculum for teacher preparation programs. Villegas and Lucas (2002) center the teacher rather than the pedagogy in their recommendations on developing some of the following characteristics in order to be a culturally responsive teacher: sociocultural consciousness, an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds, commitment and skills to act as agents of change, constructivist views of learning, and knowledge of students’ lives to construct curriculum and instruction that is responsive and familiar to students. Similarly, to counter the possible assimilationist practices suggested in the utilization of language such as relevant or responsive, Paris (2012) asserts the need for culturally *sustaining* teaching practices.

The term *culturally sustaining* requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people -- it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence... [it] seeks to perpetuate and foster -- to sustain-- linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling.” (p. 95)

The suggestion made here is that culturally sustaining teaching practices not only create connections between the cultures of home and cultures of school, but also seek to avoid essentializing cultural and linguistic practices to specific ethnic groups. Ideally, culturally sustaining practices acknowledge and accommodate cultural change in an effort to achieve cultural plurality and equality.

Antiracist Teaching Practices

While culturally responsive and sustaining teaching practices recognize and seek to represent a diversity of cultures in the curriculum, antiracist teaching strategies identify and denounce the lack of attention to race in education. This perspective recalls Angela Davis: “In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be antiracist.” In his book *How to be an Antiracist*, Ibram Kendi’s (2019) definition of an antiracist is simple: “One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.” He further defines an antiracist policy as “any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups.” Kendi describes a policy broadly, as “written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations and guidelines that govern people” (p.18). This definition aids

in understanding how antiracist teaching may differ from a focus on multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching practices.

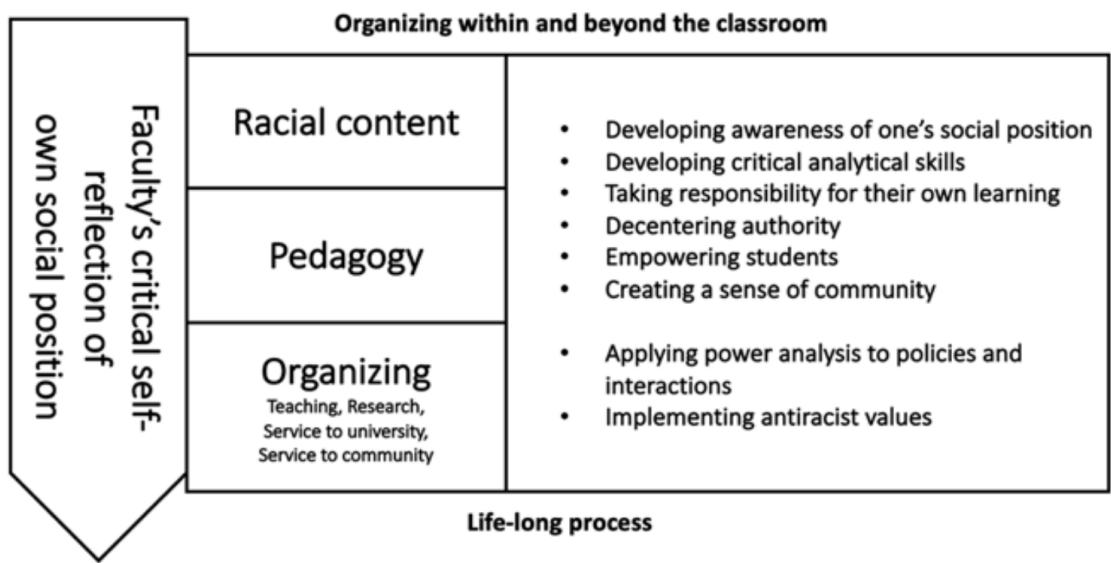
As an attempt to combat colorblindness by seeking to address racism itself rather than simply acknowledging race, antiracist approaches in teacher education require reflection on relationships of power and privilege and acknowledging the systemic presence of white supremacy. In his interrogation of color-blindness, Bonilla-Silva echoes Angela Davis' call by recommending a "personal and political movement away from claiming to be 'non-racist' to becoming 'antiracist.' In their view, being an antiracist begins with understanding the institutional nature of racial matters and accepting that all actors in a racialized society are affected *materially* (receive benefits or disadvantages) and *ideologically* by the racial structure." (Bonilla-Silva, 2003: p.24). Furthermore, given the current pushback against instruction regarding critical race theory and ultimately race in general, Kishimoto (2022) suggests that it is even more necessary to adopt antiracist pedagogical approaches.

In this social and political context, why do antiracist pedagogy? Why antiracist pedagogy when there are other pedagogies? When political forces try to obscure and make racism invisible, antiracist pedagogy intentionally exposes and highlights it. When everything, including education, is made political, implementing antiracist pedagogy becomes a necessary and strategic action to prevent the perpetuation of racism because merely trying not to be racist is not enough (p.106).

Several educators have suggested roadmaps for how to maintain an antiracist approach such as Milner's chapter in Lisa Delpit's book *Teaching When the World is on Fire* (2019) in which he offers ten tips on how to engage students in difficult

conversations around race, some of which include “reflect on your personal views and positions on race and society,” “draw from current affairs as a jumping off point for tough talks” and “recognize and nurture the social-emotional impact of these topics on students” (pp. 35-36). Similarly, Dena Simmons at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) states that “educators have an obligation to confront the harm of racism” and outlines five antiracist teaching actions, including engaging in self-awareness, studying/teaching representative history and talking directly about race and racism. In the recently released book *Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education: Moving to Anti-Racist Pedagogy*, scholars emphasize how teacher educators can model antiracist pedagogy in their teacher education classrooms while also instructing pre-service teachers in antiracist teaching practices. King (2022) emphasizes the need for teacher educators to decenter whiteness in their syllabi and courses and teach through white guilt as a way to enact antiracist pedagogy and move beyond simply embracing the idea of antiracism. Similarly, Kishimoto (2022) foregrounds antiracist pedagogy as the approach that most closely attends to educator and pre-service teacher development of equity and systemic change. She developed a model (Figure 1) for how teacher educators can move beyond simply integrating racial content into their courses by considering antiracist pedagogy as an organizing project.

Figure 1 Antiracist pedagogy as an organizing project (Kishimoto, 2022)



In this model, Kishimoto posits that antiracist pedagogy must involve components outside of the classroom, such as faculty critical reflection and political organizing, in order to authentically engage in antiracist work. They conclude their article by stating that “Just as committing to antiracism work is a political commitment (not an identity), implementing antiracist pedagogy is a political act—of incorporating antiracist practices to challenge systemic racism and create a more equitable society” (p.121). Overall, antiracist pedagogy is a method of teaching about race that not only explicitly brings race into the conversation, but also names that which may try to deny race as essential or relevant, thus emphasizing how race is pertinent to all aspects of education.

Teacher Education as a site for Antiracist work

While the approaches described above directly address race and racism in education, they primarily center how teachers can develop these practices in their K-

12 classrooms without attending to how teacher educators are addressing race and racism in the learning communities of pre-service teachers. Are the same approaches of culturally responsive and antiracist teaching practices used for pre-service teachers as K-12 students? And what does this look like? For instance, how are the categories of race and culture being discussed amongst pre-service teachers in teacher preparation classrooms? These questions are undergirded by two areas of concern regarding the teaching methods described above: (1) the reliance upon and essentialization of racial categories (Hall, 1990; 1996b) and (2) the balance between teacher education as an idealist or materialist project (Andersen and Cross, 2013).

The first concern considers that while theorists of race and culture understand racial identity to be constructed, negotiated and dynamic, in practice it is too easily considered innate, stable and static. For example, in the descriptions of multiculturalism and culturally relevant pedagogy above, there can be a problematic assumption that the celebration of a Mexican holiday represents all Latinx people or that providing a lesson utilizing hip-hop will represent all Black students' experiences. When choosing what is or isn't culturally relevant for one's students, how does the teacher decide what exists in the confines of a population's culture or racial experience? While engaging in a cultural activity can be an opportunity to recognize and represent the diversity within a classroom, there is also the danger of falling into stereotypes and representing a race and culture as a homogenous community. Stuart Hall's theory (1996a/1989) on the politics of recognition and

representation captures the concerns around the essentialization of racial identity. He outlines in *New Ethnicities*:

What is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences and cultural identities which compose the category 'black'; that is, the recognition that 'black' is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed transcultural or transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantees in nature. What this brings into play is the recognition of the immense diversity and differentiation of the historical and cultural experience of black subjects. This inevitably entails a weakening or fading of the notion that 'race' or some composite notion of race around the term black will either guarantee the effectivity of any cultural practice or determine in any final sense its aesthetic value. (p.444)

Hall warns against the notion that "black" can mean one single thing and emphasizes the plurality encompassed in the Black experience. In this same argument, he asserts the need to reclaim "ethnicity", a term previously colonized and tied to race and geographical space or nation. He proposes "a new conception of ethnicity: a new cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses difference and which depends, in part, on the cultural construction of new ethnic identities" (pp. 447-448). This suggested redefinition of ethnicity allows for "a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position... We are all, in that sense, ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are" (p. 448). This articulation of racial identity as an unstable category encompassing a multitude of "ethnicities" alludes to the potential problematic pitfalls that multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy could fall into when put into

practice. Applying Hall's framing of racialized subjectivities to considerations of preparing culturally responsive teachers draws attention to questions about how teachers are taught to consider culture and race.

As a way to address the second concern regarding the balance between teacher education as a materialist or an idealist project, Andersen and Cross (2013) provide a helpful guide in their consideration of critical race theory (CRT) in the context of urban teacher education. They outline two ways of thinking about CRT in teacher education, the idealist and materialist perspectives, and they ultimately suggest a third approach, or a hybrid perspective that combines the two. The idealist at work in teacher education seeks to transform the "language, images, and attitudes in the perpetuation of racism and inequity" (p.389) whereas the materialist is less focused on "psychological concerns and more on critical social structures and resource allocation." To develop the recommended hybrid approach, Andersen and Cross rely on Delgado and Stefancic's (2001) concept of *structural determinism*: "the structure of the law and other societal institutions imposes a particular framework upon the thought processes of those who operate under those structures" (p.392) It is due to structural determinism and the broad utilization of colorblindness that the idealist and materialist (or disposition and distribution) perspectives must be combined in order to appropriately address racial justice.

While the approaches of multiculturalism and diversity, culturally responsive teaching practices and antiracist teaching in teacher education work to address the disposition of future teachers regarding race and racism and ideally their K-12

students, how does teacher preparation attend to distribution and the material aspects of race and racism? The approaches described above contribute to a valuable shift in the racial attitudes of pre-service teachers by emphasizing the value of cultural pluralism and teaching students to recognize racism at an individual and systemic level. However, what material changes does this produce? State and program policies of performance expectations that largely ignore issues of race and racism, the lack of university faculty and teacher educators of color, and the high cost and full-time commitment of university teacher education programs that further marginalize future teachers from a (true) diversity of backgrounds are just two examples of how teacher education programs disregard the importance of material distribution. By changing the structural frameworks of teacher performance expectations at the state and program level by making them more racially conscious (rather than colorblind) and making teacher preparation more accessible and inviting for students of color, material distribution could begin to be realized in teacher education.

While the previously mentioned teaching approaches examine and recommend classroom methods to be taught in teacher preparation programs, antiracist teaching practices come closest to the project of transforming white supremacist systems by explicitly acknowledging that those systems exist and exploring how the logics and discourses of whiteness are maintained. Yet if the static categories and constructions of race go unquestioned, its legitimacy is reified and whiteness is maintained as the dominant ideology. Philip and Benin (2014) expand this notion by proposing that white teachers be prepared to recognize and disrupt

structures that maintain and reproduce dominant ideologies through schooling. They state that:

White teachers have been encouraged to (1) move from deficit understandings of communities of color to understandings that value their cultural wealth (Valencia, 2010; Yosso, 2005), (2) to engage in teaching practices that build on the funds of knowledge of their students and are culturally relevant (Gay, 2000; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995), and (3) to examine the historical, social, political, and economic processes that have created and continue to sustain a society that disproportionately benefits Whites (Leonardo, 2004; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007) (p.1).

The authors are particularly concerned with the “role of localized institutional spaces as mediators of racial and academic identity.” Similarly, Leonardo and Boas (2013) continue the structural and programmatic focus by exploring the particular relationship and historical dynamic between white women and students of color. Through the lens of critical race theory and with the assumption that “the current racial formation is dominated by whiteness and its structures,” the authors examine the historical social position of white women and how their position as both oppressed (via sexism) and privileged (via whiteness) contributes to the reproduction of white domination in schools under the guise of benevolence and good intentions. They conclude that “the process of racial hegemony creates alliances among different White interest groups wherein they surrender certain ideal goals, such as gender or class equality in exchange for White racial domination” (323). Primarily, Leonardo and Boas emphasize the importance of broadening the focus from each individual’s view on race to an understanding of race as a sociohistorical construct in which we all exist. In other words, the essential shift for teacher education programs is

conceptualizing pre-service teachers in their individual experiences and how they fit in the greater social, political, historical and cultural context to transforming the existing racial hegemony and truly making teacher preparation a site for antiracist work.

Current context for antiracist teacher education

Many teacher education programs, especially those in politically liberal environments, espouse some combination of social justice-oriented approaches mapped out throughout this section. However, the same historical conjuncture that spurred teacher preparation to urgently infuse their programs with antiracist intentions and efforts has generated a severe backlash to the explicit recognition and teaching of racism and systemic oppression in schools. As of spring 2023, there is legislation either established or in the process of being passed that bans the instruction of topics relating to critical race theory in K-12 schools (Polluck et al., 2022; World Population Review, 2023). Thus, while teacher educators may recognize that attending to issues of race, racism, and equity is essential knowledge for teachers entering the workforce, the orientations of educational reform, state politics and policies have historically and currently represented structural barriers to enacting teacher educator anti-oppressive objectives.

Intersection of Teacher Educator Orientations with Policy Structures

A conceptualization of what makes a good teacher is embedded in each educational reform. As education reform in the United States shifts through considering education to be a public or private good, emphasizing schooling as an

opportunity to create democratic equality, social efficiency or social mobility (Labaree, 2010), the definition of what it means to be a good teacher is redefined. Subsequently, teacher preparation is compelled to adjust to each new reform environment. From the early feminization of the teaching profession (Goldstein, 2014), to the evolution of normal schools eventually becoming a fixture in university education departments (Labaree, 2008), to the development of alternative routes to teacher credentialing that bypass formal teacher education altogether, the relationship between educational reform, what it means to be a good teacher and how to prepare such teachers are intimately intertwined. However, a historical review of the relationship between policy and teacher education scholarly expertise regarding issues of race, racism, and equity illustrates that the orientation of educational reforms, particularly standards and accountability, are in conflict concerning the necessary racial literacy and anti-oppressive pedagogical approaches needed to be a “good teacher.”

The standards and accountability movement prioritized standardized testing for K-12 students but given the emphasis on teacher subject-matter expertise and the public distrust of teacher education programs as competent, teacher preparation was made to rely on high-stakes assessments for pre-service teachers entering and exiting their programs. These assessments are considered “high-stakes” in that state credentialing systems require the successful completion of the assessments in order for teachers to enter the profession. Teacher licensing and credentialing are determined at the state level, therefore each state has different expectations.

Teacher performance assessments use traditional question and answer exams to measure teachers' basic academic, subject-specific content and pedagogical knowledge. Performance-based assessments can include written analyses of planning, teaching and assessment practices, videos of teaching, examples of student work, along with written exams (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2019; Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2020; Gitomer et al., 2021). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) began the development of performance-based assessments for teacher certification in the 1990s (Sato and Kempner, 2019) and it was taken up by teacher educators as a way to standardize the practice of creating a teacher portfolio as an exit-credential (Gitomer et al., 2021). While performance assessments have been widely adopted, there are still many concerns around their use. An issue repeatedly referred to is outlined by the California Alliance of Researchers for Equity in Education (CARE-ED): The current performance assessments do not assess for social, cultural or racial competence and the financial cost to take the tests deter potential teachers of color and marginalized teachers from entering the teacher workforce (CARE-ED, 2019). These researchers suggest that this not only has grave implications for the social and cultural competence of all students but especially for students of color who are less likely to see themselves racially and culturally represented in their teachers. Teacher assessments and credentialing standards are meant to maintain high expectations for teacher performance and quality, yet given the colorblind approach embedded in the use of high-stakes teacher performance assessments, the knowledge of communities

of color is devalued and teachers of color are dissuaded from pursuing the teaching profession. This dissertation specifically considers the use of the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) and its adaptation in California (CalTPA) as a main method of qualifying a teacher for the profession with particular attention given to how these assessments address issues of race, racism, and equity.

Teacher Education and Teacher Performance Assessments

The rise of teacher testing as a way to qualify teachers entering the profession is intimately intertwined and reflected in shifting expectations in teacher education programs. Research on university teacher education programs increasingly illustrated that teachers' basic skills and standardized test scores were lower than the average university student (Borman et al, 2009; Gitomer, Martinez, Battery and Hyland, 2021; Sato and Kempner, 2019). Because the quality of teachers is seen as a main contributor to the achievement of K-12 students, leaders of the standards and accountability movement similarly sought to elevate the achievement status of *teachers*. Thus, there was a push to create teacher assessments as a method of ensuring standardized teaching practices and consistent high expectations across teacher education programs. In most states, assessments are used at the point of entry into teacher education programs and as teachers exit the program in order to receive a credential. The teacher-led decision to include a teaching performance assessment as the culminating project for teacher education programs shifted the state credentialing expectations such that credentialing began to require passing exams such as the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) and subsequently the

edTPA and CalTPA. This illustrates an example of the push and pull between the state standards and teacher education program expectations.

In further evidence of the relationship between teacher standards and assessments, many teacher education program learning outcomes mirror the state credential expectations, not only because they represent the knowledge necessary for pre-service teachers to obtain a credential, but also because they serve as an accreditation tool for teacher education programs in California. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2016) outlines the teaching performance expectations (TPEs) for multiple and single subject teachers in the state of California in two parts: The first focuses on six TPEs and the second part outlines subject-specific pedagogy. In part one, the TPEs are organized into six expectations: (1) Engaging and supporting all students in learning, (2) Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning, (3) Understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning content-specific pedagogy, (4) Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students, (5) Assessing student learning, (6) Developing as a professional educator. Notably, within TPE 6 on developing as a professional educator, beginning teachers are expected to “recognize their own values and implicit and explicit biases” (CTC, 2016) and yet there are no areas that primarily focus on the development of social and cultural competence in the performance assessments (Tintianguco-Cubales, et al., 2014). This indicates a disconnect between what is claimed to be a requirement for credentialing (through the TPEs) and what is actually assessed in order to complete the performance assessment and obtain a credential.

This disconnect is further explored in the policy analysis of the teaching performance expectations in Chapter 3.

In California, the TPEs are adopted into the University of California and California State University teacher education programs as learning outcomes, providing synergy between the program goals and credential expectations. It is logical that the outcomes in teacher preparation are reflected in the credential expectations, however the high-stakes nature of the performance assessments necessary to earn the credential bring about a concern of the inclination to “teach to the test”. This concern is heightened by the examination of who evaluates those tests and their distance from university educational faculty (CARE-ED, 2019). While standardized teacher performance assessments began as a way to attain a National Board Teaching certification (an advanced teaching credential that goes beyond requirements of state licensure), they were adopted by teacher education programs in the form of portfolios and eventually state policy elevated performance assessments to a “high-stakes” status where they serve the role of gatekeepers to the profession.

Issues of Race and Racism in Teacher Assessments

One particular danger of using standardized assessments in any educational setting is that in the process of sorting and ranking, there is the possibility of systematic bias where particular populations end up being poorly ranked or sorted out altogether (Sato and Kemper, 2019). In their review of teacher assessment from pre-service through in-service, Sato and Kemper (2019) note that “as teacher preparation programs in the United States strive to diversify their candidate pools, researchers are

finding the screening effects of standardized tests disproportionately eliminate candidates from certain ethnic, racial, and language backgrounds” (p.13). This assertion has been widely studied in K-12 testing (Au, 2013 etc.) and teacher testing suffers from the same affliction.

Tuck and Gorlewski (2016) posit that the adoption of the edTPA in New York State is an “example of what Sharon Patricia Holland (2012) has called ‘racist ordering,’ the constant attempt to align the world according to a particular racialized hierarchy” (p.200). This racial ordering is evident in teacher testing and serves to limit the qualifications and credentialing of teachers of color. The authors assert that the lack of teachers of color in K-12 schools ultimately harms students of color, given research on the academic benefits to racial student/teacher matching (Coker-Kolo, 2014; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter 2016). Furthermore, Tuck and Gorlewski point out that the edTPA disincentivizes pre-service teachers from requesting placements in high-needs schools when there is a performance standard that the teacher is held to that is directly connected to the performance of the students. Additionally, while the edTPA was developed with input from teacher educators and education researchers, the scoring of the exams is completed by external anonymous reviewers through a for-profit assessment company Pearson Inc. who are divorced from the local context of the pre-service teacher. As Tuck and Gorlewski note:

Wrapped in the rhetoric of professionalism and quality, edTPA represents that normalization of teaching as a technical and apolitical act, of examinations as meaningful measures of complex acts and useful instruments for surveillance and discipline, and of relationships and local contexts as subordinate to distant, objective expertise (p.203).

Ultimately, Tuck and Gorlewski advocate for Schools of Education to critically examine the policies and assessments they adopt and contend with antiBlackness and Indigenous erasure and social reproduction embedded in these assessments.

In conclusion, at the root of requiring teacher testing there is ostensibly a concern for providing students with effective teachers by elevating the expectations for teacher performance. However, there is disagreement about what makes a teacher high quality and if those characteristics can accurately be assessed on a standardized test. Importantly, what is lost and what is gained in the use of high-stakes teacher performance assessments? Critical educators who center equity and racial justice argue that standardized tests disproportionately filter out Black and brown teachers, who may have stronger ties to communities of color and relational skills that do not show up on a test. Thus, while teacher assessments are meant to uphold a standard and professionalize teachers, they do not appropriately take into account the impact on the representation of teachers of color in the teacher workforce. The California Alliance of Researchers for Equity in Education (CARE-ED, 2019) problematizes this colorblind approach in their review of state policies that serve as barriers to diversity and justice in teacher education in California. The authors released a research brief that outlines trends in the teacher pipeline that include a shortage of teachers in urban districts that will be exacerbated by a wave of retirements and budget cuts (assumedly only augmented by the pandemic). They expand upon two main barriers to strengthening the teacher workforce as (1) the financial burden of teacher education programs, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds

and (2) mandated high-stakes assessments, such as entrance exams and performance assessments (edTPA) which lack sound research basis and disproportionately filter by race. The authors warn of outside evaluators de-professionalizing teaching through the dislocation of program faculty in the most significant stage of evaluation (the credential) and teacher education programs “teaching to the test” just as has been evident in K-12 schools. Overall, this collaborative of educational researchers recommends that California remove the edTPA from its role as a high-stakes gatekeeper, particularly due to its relationship to Pearson and the profits made off students given the exam’s mandated status. Additionally the researchers suggest utilizing the edTPA as a formative assessment situated contextually in terms of its use as a technical preparation tool and its limitations. Lastly, CARE-ED recommends that California policy makers “support institutions in developing and implementing their own criteria and process for ensuring that diversity and justice are at the heart of assessments” (p.4). These recommendations serve as an important guide for how teacher education can respond to state policy in defining a high-quality teacher as socially and culturally competent, color-conscious and equity-minded.

The ever increasingly diverse landscape of K-12 education and the call by education scholars and activists to combat colonial, Eurocentric, systemically racist schooling patterns demands that teacher education center anti-oppressive approaches in their preparation of future teachers. The literature presents a conflict between how critical teacher educators and scholars consider this necessity and how policy, standards, and assessments might include attention to race, equity and justice. This

study dives directly into this conflict by examining the relationship between policy and assessment regarding teachers' knowledge of race, racism, and equity, teacher educators' pedagogy and pre-service teachers' reported practice and sensemaking around issues of antiracism and justice in education. Through critical policy analysis and interviews with teacher educators and pre-service teachers, this study illuminates and defines antiracist work in the different contexts of policy, pedagogy, and practice, and contends with what it means to be a teacher committed to antiracism and justice in the current politically charged context. By drawing attention to the connections between policy, pedagogy, and practice, this study will contribute to scholarship that supports equitable and racially just educational policy and inform pedagogical practices of teacher educators engaged in liberatory, anti-oppressive teacher preparation.

Theoretical Framework

In the exploration of policy, pedagogy and practice, this project is guided by the theoretical perspectives of critical whiteness studies (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Delgado and Stefancic, 1997; DuBois, 1935; Gillborn, 2005; Harris, 1993; Lensmire; 2017; Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 1998) and Victor Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations as a way to explore and understand conceptualizations of and efforts towards antiracism in teacher education. Critical whiteness studies provide the individual and structural framework to interrogate and unveil the maintenance of whiteness even in unexpected places, while interpreting organizations such as teacher education as racialized aids in naming the systems within teacher preparation where

antiracist efforts should be focused. In addition, it is within a critical whiteness framework informed by racialized organization theory that this study questions conceptualizations of antiracism held by pre-service teachers and teacher educators in order to deepen an understanding of the ways antiracism is described as individualized or structural (Bonnett, 2000; O'Brien, 2007) and how it may function as nonperformative (Ahmed, 2020) in teacher education programs.

Whiteness in Teacher Education

Considering the role that state systems and institutions have in shaping and categorizing identities, the presence of white supremacy and whiteness as an ideology and norm in teacher education cannot be ignored, especially in the context of the United States. In 2017, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that out of 1.5 million full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 76% were white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Thus, the chances that most instructors are white in a teacher education program are quite high. While the implications of whiteness are often examined in K-12 teachers and classrooms, teacher education programs function as racialized organizations (Ray, 2019) that rely on dominant (white) norms informed by education policy where “taken for granted, routine privileging of white interests that goes unremarked in the political mainstream” (Gillborn, 2005, p.485). Whiteness as an invisible default impacts all aspects of education, where hegemonic values such as meritocracy are given more weight than the recognition that racial construction is a political project creating an uneven playing field. The theoretical framing of this study positions teacher education

as a historically white space by considering the development of the notion of whiteness and illustrating its intertwining relationship with teacher identity and the social structures of education in the U.S.

While white supremacy and the construction of whiteness existed long before his time, W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) was among the first sociological scholars to theorize about whiteness. Du Bois outlines why post-civil war reconstruction failed to result in class solidarity across racial differences:

The theory of race was supplemented by a carefully planned and slowly evolved method, which drove such a wedge between the white and black workers that there probably are not today in the world two groups of workers with practically identical interests who hate and fear each other so deeply and persistently and who are kept so far apart that neither sees anything of common interest (p.700)

From this depiction of reconstruction, Du Bois describes the “psychological wage” accumulated by white workers ultimately solidified racial solidarity over that of class. Although not directly an economic reward, white workers to be considered “white” and associated with the upper class allowed for sought after social benefits.

It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference and titles of courtesy because they were white. (Du Bois, 1935, p.700)

In other words, low wage white workers identified with the dominant group as “white” in order to receive social rather than material benefits, despite the possibility for economic gains for both groups had low wage workers, black and white, joined in solidarity for higher wages. This fundamental identification with race-based rather

than class-based groups sets the stage for the economic importance of whiteness. It also illustrates how whiteness did not necessarily include all people with light skin but rather outlined a hegemonic ideal that included values and expectations around race, class and gender.

Critical whiteness studies (CWS) offer a field of scholarship that centers the invisible structures that uphold and reproduce white supremacy, white privilege and its ties to racism. For the purposes of this study, I emphasize work in CWS that focuses on the ways in which whiteness is taken up in identity negotiation and studies that describe how whiteness is woven into U.S. systems and institutions. As a guide for this discussion, Twine and Gallagher (2008) provide a comprehensive account of the development of critical whiteness studies, beginning with W.E.B DuBois into the present and the “third wave” of whiteness studies. “This new wave of research utilizes: 1) innovative research methodologies including analyses of ‘racial consciousness biographies’, music and visual media; 2) an analysis of the recuperation of white innocence and reconstitution of white supremacy in neo-apartheid, postimperial and post-Civil Rights contexts; and 3) analyses of white identity formation among members of racial and ethnic minorities” (p.4). Particularly of note in regards to this project is the shift from viewing whiteness primarily through an identity lens to focus on the “nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented” (p.5). Whiteness does not merely refer to racial categories, but a multiplicity of shifting identities that implicitly work to maintain and reproduce white

supremacy and privilege. Furthermore, third-wave whiteness studies seek to move away from the essentialization of racial identity, particularly white identity, in order to “demonstrate the situational, relational and historic contingencies that are reshaping and repositioning white identities within the context of shifting racial boundaries” (p.7). Despite the current state of whiteness studies as Twine and Gallagher outline, literature about whiteness in relation to teacher education remains primarily about teacher racial identity. There is considerably less discussion about the systemic and institutional dimensions of whiteness within teacher education.

Whiteness and Identity

There have been many studies that explore white identity construction in teacher education. Two literature review articles help provide a sense of what work has been done around considering whiteness in teacher education and suggests what future directions this line of research should take. Jupp, Berry and Lensmire (2016) provide a robust compilation of work done on white teacher identity, specifically from 2004-2014. They have coded the articles from this time period into two categories: White identity race-evasive studies and white identity race-visible studies. White identity race-evasive refers to the observed avoidance and resistance that white preservice teachers partake in when confronted with issues of race, racism and white supremacy. Race-visible studies acknowledge white identity and white preservice teachers as having varying degrees of recognition of “race, class, culture, language, and other differences in students and themselves and understood differences as having potential for teaching and learning” (1168). It is important to note here that the

way in which resistance is described in much of the research regarding critical White teacher identity is markedly different from the concept of resistance that exists in critical social theory (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1994, Tuck and Yang, 2014). While Aronowitz and Giroux (1994) describe resistance in contrast to the determinism of social reproduction and suggest that social actors have agency and the ability to act in opposition to the current social order, researchers exploring white teacher identity define resistance in a more colloquial sense, as avoidance, and in this context primarily regarding information around race, white supremacy and inequality. As the term resistance arises throughout this section, the reader can assume the definition of avoidance, as is suggested by white teacher identity studies.

Frequently cited white identity race-evasive studies include Applebaum (2005), Castagno (2008), Garrett and Segall (2013), Gay and Kirkland (2003), Segall and Garrett (2013), Ohito (2016), Picower (2013) and Shim (2017), all of whom examine different ways that white teachers engage in resistance and avoidance of discourse in race, racism and white domination. Whether through silence (Castagno, 2008), maintained ignorance (Garrett and Segall, 2013), moral responsibility (Applebaum, 2005), or emotional, ideological and performative tools of Whiteness (Picower, 2013), these researchers demonstrate the varied ways white identity is constructed in varied ways to avoid issues of race and racism, as these researchers demonstrate. Several authors utilize aspects of psychoanalytic theory including the presence of an unconscious and concepts of ignorance and resistance as a way to maintain wholeness in order to demonstrate how White teacher identity is shaped and

maintained (Garrett and Segall, 2013; Segall and Garrett, 2013; Shim, 2017). Ohito (2016) and Camangian (2010) both offer particular methods of addressing resistance, Ohito through a practice of confrontation called “the pedagogy of discomfort” and Camangian through use of autoethnography.

As a specific example of a race-evasive study, Castagno (2008) illustrates how teachers consistently sidestep race in the classroom through silence, or “colormuteness” and the legitimizing of whiteness. Castagno uses data from an ethnographic study in which she observes and interviews several teachers and administrators in an urban, low-income school district in Utah. The students are designated as 51% students of color, 60% qualified for free or reduced-price lunch and 39% were limited-English proficient. She explores the ways in which topics of race and racial identity are often avoided in the classroom which leads to the maintenance of inequity and the status quo and perpetuation of the belief in meritocracy. Furthermore, Castagno cites Pollock to elaborate on why such colormuteness matters: “*Race talk matters*. All Americans, every day, *are* reinforcing racial distinctions and racialized thinking by using race labels; but we are also reinforcing racial inequality by refusing to use them (Pollock 2004:4, emphasis in original). Thus, avoidance of using racialized language also solidifies racial distinctions and inequity because the status quo is not troubled but rather maintained and unquestioned. If you do not talk about race, you do not talk about racism (DiAngelo, 2018).

Conversely, race-visible studies such as Crowley (2016) and Lensmire (2010) work towards complicating White identity with the purpose of revealing White preservice teachers to be a heterogenous group that is capable of varying degrees of recognition and awareness of race, racism and White supremacy. Lensmire (2010) adds to (and is indeed a part of establishing) the literature on White teacher identities that serves to “describe and theorize white identity and whiteness in ways that avoid essentializing them, but that also keep in view white privilege and a larger white supremacist context” (159). Drawing from a large ethnographic interview study, Lensmire focuses on one case in this article of a White woman elementary school teacher in a rural town in Wisconsin. Lensmire explores her emotions and conceptualizations of being White and her relationship to people of color. The author identifies themes in her dialog around white fear of people of color leading him to theorize that white racial identities are “profoundly ambivalent.” In other words, “white fear results from acts of violence by white authority against its own white community. That is, white desire for love and solidarity with people of color is policed and suppressed, resulting in fear and a divided, ambivalent white self” (160). This work serves as an example of a race visible study in that it seeks to explore the complexity of white identity. Researchers involved in this work posit that understanding the white racial identity as nuanced and messy may aid in the use of critical pedagogy with white students and social justice efforts in teacher education.

Similarly, in his critical case study, Crowley (2016) seeks to diversify the current research on white teacher identity by exploring the complexities that emerge

in antiracist work with white teachers. Using qualitative data from a multicultural education course at an urban teacher preparation program, Crowley examined observations, audio recordings of class, critical reflections and interview data of 10 White preservice teachers. Crowley uses Leonardo's (2009) concept of white racial knowledge, which encompasses all White teacher discourse around race (including silence). Leonardo posits that "In capturing this White racial knowledge, however, one must consider that these teachers' perspectives may be complicit in Whiteness but do not have to be determined completely by their social positionality." Crowley identifies two types of racialized knowledge held by his participants: transgressive white racial knowledge and negotiated White racial knowledge. He defines transgressive white racial knowledge as crossing established boundaries in white racial discourse, for example acknowledging normalization of whiteness and recognizing deficit framing in urban schools. On the other hand, "negotiated white racial knowledge emerged in the participants' hesitant, ambivalent feelings toward race and their negotiations with issues of personal complicity in racial inequality," which was identifiable by participant silence and the need for safety when engaging in racial dialog. Crowley works to complicate the perception of White identity as homogenous with the intention of understanding further how to address race, racism and white supremacy in teacher education. The categories of transgressive and negotiated White racial knowledge allow an avenue for teacher educators to identify how preservice teachers reconcile their White identity and gain perspective on their positionality in regards to racial inequality. These two articles serve as examples of

the direction of white identity studies in teacher education, which push beyond considering white identity as homogenous without potential for complex racial knowledge.

Systemic Whiteness

Discussion of the manner in which whiteness is structurally maintained is primarily considered at the ideological and institutional level, beyond the specific confines of teacher education, however exploration of racial formation (Omi and Winant, 1986) and possessive investment in whiteness as property (Harris, 1993; Lipsitz, 1998) and Gillborn's (2005) exploration of education policy as white supremacy provide a conceptualization of the environment in which teacher education exists. The examination of whiteness beyond teacher identity is essential because it unveils the technologies in place that perpetuate white supremacy and racial hierarchy, potentially exposing the opportunities for transformation. As Lipsitz (1998) points out, "Conscious and deliberate actions have institutionalized group identity in the United States, not just through the dissemination of cultural stories, but also through systematic efforts from colonial times to the present to create economic advantages through a possessive investment in whiteness for European Americans." Lipsitz (1998) comprehensively brings to light the systemic ways in which whiteness is upheld by outlining what he refers to as the *possessive investment in whiteness*. In his words: "Race is a cultural construct, but one with sinister structural causes and consequences." (p.2). He emphasizes the need for a shift away from centering the individual in discussions of racism and rather examines how criminal justice,

housing, education systems (and more) were developed to sustain white supremacy, implicating the ways in which white people invest in those systems to maintain dominance. This work further elaborates on the connection between neoliberalism and race outlined by Omi and Winant (1986) and points to how whites can avoid responsibility for discrimination or oppression by pointing to the policies, rules and regulations inherent in these systems that were made to be discriminatory. But because the education system is deemed politically neutral, culture becomes the explanation for the failure of upward mobility of people of color. As Lipsitz writes, “[The possessive investment in whiteness] fuels a discourse that demonizes people of color for being victimized by these changes, while hiding the privileges of whiteness by attributing the economic advantages enjoyed by whites to their family values, faith in fatherhood, and foresight- rather than to the favoritism they enjoy through their possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz, 1998;18). Lipsitz encourages the recognition of the possessive investment in whiteness as essential in order to create an interethnic antiracist coalition for racial justice.

While teacher education programs maintain some autonomy in their day-to-day functioning, just like all systems connected to the federal government they are expected to adhere to standards developed and mandated by the state. When state formation is intimately entangled with racial formation as it is in the United States, state institutions preserve and disseminate the construction and categorization of racial hierarchies. Goldberg (2002) comprehensively outlines the relationship between racial formation and state formation, bringing pertinent global examples and

drawing on theorists such as Stuart Hall, Gramsci and Foucault. While it is often thought and implied that racism is as American as apple pie, Goldberg outlines exactly how the state creates racial categories and hierarchies, illustrating how racialized subjects are in fact *essential* to capitalist state formation and the maintenance of power.

State apparatuses sew the variety of modern social exclusions into the seams of the social fabric, normalizing them through their naturalization. So social exclusions in terms of race become the mark of social belonging, the measure of standing in the nation-state, the badge of social subjection and citizenship... Here race and nation are defined in terms of each other in the interests of producing the picture of a coherent populace in the face of potentially divisive heterogeneity” (p.10)

Here Goldberg discusses how race and the nation-state are reliant on each other for meaning and social hierarchy. However, in the interest of maintaining an “apolitical” stance, the state creates distance from the “racist state.” By maintaining separation, the state can appear as a fair and objective entity which forces any discriminatory actions to be seen as contained in the individual citizen rather than the system. For example, segregated schools may be designated as low-performing largely in part due to a lack of federal and state funding yet the students and families will be blamed as not caring enough about their education.

The state in its racial reach and expression is thus at once super-visible in form and force and thoroughly invisible in its osmotic infusion into the everyday, its penetration into common sense, its pervasion of the warp and weave of the social fabric (Goldberg, 2002, p.98).

This notion connects deeply with the exploration of identity negotiation commitment to antiracism in teacher education programs as state institutions that could promote an

environment of political neutrality while reproducing colorblind and racially hierarchical norms. Goldberg's theory helps identify the role of state apparatuses such as the university and education systems and the invisibility of the perpetuation of inequitable racial configurations without being implicated as racist institutions.

Examination of the logics and operations of whiteness individually and systemically provides the necessary framing for this study in order to illuminate its elusive and often invisible nature and pinpoint its methods and strategies of maintenance.

Racialized Organizations

While critical whiteness studies aids in conceptualizing how whiteness functions as a dominating force at the institutional (macro) and individual (micro) levels, Victor Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations provides a meso-level framework where he suggests that racialized organizations are in a position to reproduce or transform policies of the racial state and individual prejudice. In his own words, Ray outlines that this approach "replaces the notion of organizations as race-neutral with a view of organizations as constituting and constituted by racial processes that may shape both the policies of the racial state and individual prejudice" (p.27). This consideration is important in that "the resilience of racial inequality depends on mechanisms being thought of not as a single 'thing'" (p.27) but rather organizations constitute another level where individual prejudice can be translated into maintaining the larger racial order or resisting and transforming it. In theorizing racialized

organizations, he outlines four tenets: (1) racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups; (2) racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources; (3) Whiteness is a credential; and (4) the decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice is often racialized. A primary concern for Ray is that race is considered as constitutive of organizations, rather than identified as race-neutral. Furthermore, “racial structures are produced when central schemas connect to resources” thus “simply put, individual prejudice unconnected to active discrimination hoarding resources does little harm” (p.32). Therefore, organizations are not only in the position to reproduce inequality but also have the opportunity to transform cultural schemas and distribution of resources through influencing agency, motive and action.

The definition of racialized organizations I adopt places agency, motive, and action in relation to resources and cultural schemas. Because organizations consolidate resources along racial lines in ways that constrain (or enable) human action, seeing organizations as racial structures describes one domain through which racial actors express agency. (p. 35).

The relationship between racial ideology, racial structures, and schemas is further depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Relation between Schemas, Racial Structures, and Racial Ideology

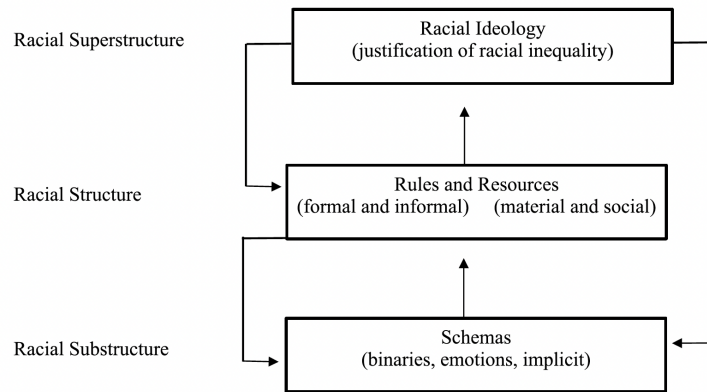


Figure 1. The Relation between Schemas, Racial Structures, and Racial Ideology (Ray, 2019, p.33)

Teacher education functions as a racialized organization in that it can participate in reflecting and reproducing the racial hierarchy of the state and enhance prejudice in individuals, or alternatively, teacher education can reshape cultural schemas and provide access to resources that reject the racial hierarchy. Identifying teacher education as a racialized organization, rather than race-neutral, centers the necessity to transform the environment in which racial identity and structures are explored. This study contributes to the nascent literature on racialized organizations and deepens understanding around how teacher education specifically functions between institutional (macro) and individual (micro) frameworks of racialization. Taken together, a critical whiteness studies perspective in tandem with Ray’s theory of racialized organizations enables a multilevel analysis of how systemic racism and whiteness are maintained and perpetuated throughout policy, institutions, and relational education practices.

CHAPTER 2: Policy, Pedagogy, and Practice: Research Design and Methodology

Research Design and Guiding Questions

In order to examine how teacher education programs may facilitate the development of a commitment to antiracist engagement in its teachers, this investigation includes a multi-prong exploration of the interaction among: (1) Policy - state and program policy documents regarding teaching standards and teaching performance expectations, (2) Pedagogy - the pedagogical strategies used by teacher educators and (3) Practice- the experiences and expressed practice of pre-service teachers within the programs. By considering programs that purport to be driven by social justice and equity, this study focuses on programs most likely to have considered these issues and incorporated them into the pedagogical program. The nested look at these social justice oriented programs in context sheds light on how state policies influence program policy, how teacher educators are supported or constrained by policy structures when it comes to delivering an antiracist education and how pre-service teachers experience the environment of teacher education as space to develop racial consciousness and negotiate identity. Whereas much research tends to limit focus on just one of these areas, the goal of this project was to examine the *connections* between the three domains of policy, pedagogy and practice. This study will provide insight on the points of pedagogical intervention and implications for policy recommendations with the purpose of providing equitable, antiracist teacher education.

The following interrelated research questions guide this study:

1. What learning opportunities do pre-service teachers have to develop a racial consciousness and commitment to antiracist engagement in a teacher education program?
2. What is the role of program/state policy and teacher educators in creating those critical learning environments for pre-service teachers?
3. How do educational policy, teacher education programs, and pre-service teachers represent and engage with antiracism in teachers' work?

Social and Political Context in the 2021-22 School Year

It is important to note the significant social and political context that shaped the unique conditions of the 2021-22 school year as well as the exceptional events of the year that pre-service teachers and teacher educators were made to reckon with in their classrooms. While at times it felt that each month was more “unprecedented” than the last, I am including events that particularly influenced education and schooling, and were specifically mentioned by pre-service teachers and teacher educators interviewed throughout this study.

First, teachers and students continued to feel the impact of the global outbreak of COVID-19, which forced a migration to remote learning and in the United States continues to disproportionately affect communities of color. For most schools in California, the 2021-22 school year was the first full year back in the classroom in-person following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While back in person, the

shock waves of the pandemic were still felt by teachers and students alike throughout the year. In teacher education programs, this meant many classes continued to be held fully or partially remotely in order to accommodate the accessibility needs of pre-service teachers. In the P-12 context, teachers and students dealt with shifting mask and vaccination mandates, ongoing national and local discussions around P-12 student learning loss (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2022; Engzell et al., 2021; Mervosh, 2022; Morton, 2022; Tirado, n.d.; Turner, 2022), and reckoning with the acute social and emotional needs of students who had spent two disorienting years away from their peers experiencing varying types of loss and trauma (Rosanbalm, 2021; Wang et al., 2023).

Second, political tensions in the United States continued to run high following the insurrection on January 6th, 2021 where supporters of former president Donald Trump stormed the capitol, disrupting certification of the 2020 election resulting in the deaths of five people and drawing condemnation from across the globe. January 6th and the subsequent actions and discussion surrounding it deepened partisan divides and brought into question the integrity of the structures that ensure democracy in this country.

Third, following the murder of a black man, George Floyd, by a white police officer in the spring of 2020 unveiled and accentuated a reckoning around the role race and racism play in foundational social and political systems in this country. As discourse addressing racism increased, backlash soon followed with conservative objections to the inclusion of perspectives such as critical race theory and

interpretations of systemic racism being disseminated in schools. This has resulted in over 42 states introducing legislation or taking other steps that would ban or restrict how educators can discuss racism and sexism (Schwartz, 2021; Polluck et al., 2022). In addition to political discord around racism, a forceful anti-LGBTQ campaign swept the country as 240 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced, most targeting trans people (Laviertes & Ramos, 2022). Notably, there was a concentrated effort to restrict and ban young trans people's access and right to gender-affirming care (Migdon, 2022). The ongoing national conversation around how to address race and LGBTQ issues, especially in schools, played a heavy role in the considerations of antiracist engagement of pre-service teachers and teacher educators in this study.

Lastly, two critical events occurred during the school year that greatly impacted the ethos of pre-service teachers and teacher educators. First, Russian troops invaded the country of Ukraine in March, 2022, drawing international condemnation and resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, a global refugee and economic crisis. This conflict is ongoing and was noted as a topic of conversation in both P-12 and teacher education classrooms. Secondly, in May, 2022 nineteen elementary students and two teachers were fatally shot in Uvalde, Texas in the third-deadliest school shooting in United States history. The intense violence of these events, specifically towards children, were heavy on the minds of pre-service teachers as they prepared to enter schools which are increasingly both a hypothetical and literal battleground.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative, multiple case study design (Bhattacharya, 2017; Creswell, 2014) as a way to focus on the conceptualization of antiracist engagement, or “a unique information-rich situation, concern, or problem” (Bhattacharya, 2017) within a “bounded system,” in this case, three teacher preparation programs that identify themselves as social-justice oriented and committed to creating educational equity. As a validity strategy, this case study utilizes data from multiple sources (interviews, focus groups, policy document analysis) in order to provide a rich, thick description and triangulate the analysis of antiracist engagement in teacher education (Creswell, 2014).

Site selection

The literature suggests that most exploration of race and identity takes place in multicultural education and around notions of social justice (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; 2001). Consequently, teacher education programs with a focus on justice and equity are an ideal environment to explore how teacher educators and pre-service teachers pedagogically engage in antiracist education within the constraints of teacher education policy and standards. This qualitative, multiple case study draws data from three teacher education institutions in one state - California. Within that one state policy context, three teacher preparation programs were selected based on their stated commitment to prepare teachers as change agents and social justice advocates and variation in institution type and size. The institutions include one research university and two state universities all within 150 miles of one another.

The first site, Monarch University, is a public research university that enrolled about 18,000 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students in the 2021-22 academic school year. The teacher education program at Monarch University included a masters and a teacher credential at the completion of 4 semesters. In 2021-22, there were 52 teacher candidates enrolled in the program, 13 pre-service single-subject social studies teachers and 7 pre-service science teachers. The second site, Golden State University, is a public state university that enrolled about 29,000 undergraduate and 3,000 graduate students in the 2021-22 academic school year. The teacher education program provided a teacher credential with the completion of one year with the option of adding a masters degree (2 semesters) either concurrently or following the credential programming. In 2021-22, there were 334 teacher candidates enrolled in the program, 27 pre-service social studies teachers and 20 pre-service science teachers. The third site, El Dorado State University, is a public state university that enrolled about 28,000 undergraduate and 5,000 graduate students in the 2021-22 academic school year. El Dorado State offered several pathways to becoming a teacher including a credential only option, MA in Teaching and credential (MAT), residency and intern programs. In an effort to include participants in similar program structures across all three institutions, this study drew participants from the credential only and MAT programs, which provide a credential and a masters degree with the successful completion of 3 semesters in the program. In 2021-22, there were 387 teacher candidates enrolled in the program, 32 pre-service social studies teachers and

25 pre-service science teachers. Each program’s mission and commitment to social justice and equity is described in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Data Sources and Collection

The data for this study is drawn from three sources: (1) interviews with pre-service teachers, (2) focus groups and interviews with teacher educators and (3) state and program policy documents and videos. See Table 1 for a list of participants.

Table 1: List of Participants

Participant type	Pseudonym	Focus Area	Institution	# of interviews	
Pre-service teacher	Alex	Science	Monarch	3	
	Liz	Science	Monarch	3	
	Maggie	Social Studies	Monarch	3	
	Rupert	Social Studies	Monarch	3	
	Diego	Social Studies	Golden State	3	
	Shane	Social Studies	Golden State	3	
	Elliot	Science	Golden State	3	
	Heather	Science	Golden State	3	
	Kenzie	Science	Golden State	3	
	Tomas	Social Studies	El Dorado State	3	
	Jean	Science	El Dorado State	3	
	Teacher educators	Cheyenne	Social Foundations	Monarch University	1
		Shara	Social Foundations	Monarch University	1
Diana		Social Studies Methods	Monarch University	1	

	Julian	Science Methods	Monarch University	1
	Juan	Social Foundations	Golden State	1
	Melissa	Social Studies Methods	Golden State	1
	Chorel	Science Methods	Golden State	1
	Lucas	Social Foundations	El Dorado State	2
TE Administrators	Sofia	Director of TE program	Monarch University	2
	Ben	edTPA Coordinator	Golden State	1
	Paige	Single-Subject Dept Coordinator	El Dorado State	1
	Kate	Field Experience Coordinator	El Dorado State	1

Pre-service Teacher Interviews

The first form of data includes iterative interviews with single-subject science and social studies teachers about their experiences regarding race, racism and equity in their teacher education programs. These two subjects were chosen due to the potential difference for preservice teachers in the curricular and pedagogical experiences in their teacher education programs. Historically, positivist scientific knowledge has been considered objective truth. Even though feminist and critical race scholars have brought attention to the European, white male perspective embedded in scientific research (Barton, 1998), the traditional race-neutral approach in science education may lead science pre-service teachers to have fewer opportunities to engage in discourse on race, racism and equity. Consequently, social studies teacher

education may deal more directly with issues of race and racism due to preparation around teaching and discussing historical events such as slavery, colonization, and the Civil Rights Movement.

A total of 11 participants, 6 science and 5 social-studies pre-service teachers (PSTs) at 3 different university-based teacher education institutions were interviewed throughout their programs. There were 2 additional teachers from El Dorado State that completed the first interview but dropped out of the study due to either leaving the program or changing to another content specialization area (Special Education).

Table 2 illustrates selected demographics indicated by the participants.

Table 2: Demographics of Pre-service Teachers

Pseudonym	School	Subject area	Racial	Ethnicity	Gender	Pronouns
Alex	Monarch	Science	White	Danish, Swedish, Scottish, English	Male	he/him
Liz	Monarch	Science	White	Jewish	Female	she/her
Maggie	Monarch	Social Studies	White		Cis-Woman	she/her
Rupert	Monarch	Social Studies	Hispanic/Latino	Mexican/El Salvadorean	Male	he/him
Diego	Golden State	Social Studies	White	Hispanic	Male	he/him
Shane	Golden State	Social Studies	White		Cis-Male	he/him
Elliot	Golden State	Science	White		Male	he/him
Heather	Golden State	Science	White		Female	she/her
Kenzie	Golden State	Science	Multiracial, "mostly white"	Mexican and Croatian	Female	she/her
Tomas	El Dorado	Social Studies	White	Parents both immigrants from Portugal	Male	he/him

Jean	El Dorado	Science	2nd gen Taiwanese American		Female	she/they
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Pre-service teacher participants were recruited in consultation with administration and program faculty, working within their communication systems and practices. At Monarch University, I sent an email to the director of the teacher education program and she forwarded it on to eligible participants (social studies and science teachers). Similarly at Golden State University, I sent an email to the program administrator which was then forwarded on to eligible pre-service teachers, but then I also visited the social studies and science methods courses via Zoom to provide a brief presentation to pre-service teachers inviting them to participate in the study. At El Dorado State University, again I sent an email to the program administrator which was then forwarded on to eligible pre-service teachers, and then I also visited the social foundations course via Zoom to present on the study and invite social studies and science pre-service teachers to participate. At all institutions, interested PSTs were prompted to complete a Google Form that provided contact information and availability for the first interview. Pre-service teachers were interviewed three times: 1) at the start of their program, 2) half-way through the program after they spent substantial time in placements, and 3) as they completed the program and moved toward their first teaching positions.

After participants completed the interest form, I provided them with a timeline of the study, details on the three interviews throughout their year in the teacher education program, and an informed consent form. The interviews explored their

motivations for becoming a teacher, their identification with social and cultural identities as well as their perspective on the importance of identity in teaching and lastly their impression of their teacher education program. Due to the continued pervasiveness of the coronavirus and as an extra precaution, the interviews took place on the video platform Zoom. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes long and was recorded through Zoom.

Each of the three interviews included questions that directly inquired about the PSTs' experiences regarding race, racism and equity within their teacher education program, yet the main focus of each interview differed depending on the PST's progress within the program. Additionally, while each interview had a broad goal decided upon at the start of the study, specific questions were added in the third interview based on the ongoing analysis of prior interviews, including identification of initial themes.

The first interview focused on getting to know the pre-service teachers, understanding their motivations for becoming a teacher and what drew them to this particular teacher education program. Participants were also asked to name their prevalent social identities, describe how race played a role in their lives and to define antiracism and equity. The second interview took place after the PSTs had completed their initial coursework and spent some time in their placements, and thus focused on their early impressions of the program, and how their courses prepared them for their placement experience. PSTs were also asked in this interview to describe how issues of race, racism and equity appeared in their programs, their student-teaching

placements and their feelings or reactions around these topics. Lastly, the third interview asked questions regarding their overall experience in the program, how it drove their decision-making on where to look for a job and what their expectations are for themselves in their future classrooms. Because this was the culminating interview, PSTs were also asked whether their teacher education program lived up to its mission as a social justice-oriented institution, whether they considered themselves to be antiracist teachers after completing the program, and whether their views on race, racism, and equity had shifted over the course of the year. Due to themes that arose in analysis of prior interviews, I also asked PSTs whether teaching about race and racism was relevant for both white and BIPOC students and if they might approach those topics differently in predominantly white vs predominantly BIPOC spaces. In addition, after almost every teacher brought up the edTPA in the second interview, in the third interview I asked PSTs how the edTPA contributed to their becoming a teacher and whether they thought it addressed issues of race, racism, and equity. Interview protocols for each of the three interviews are available in Appendix A and individual pre-service teacher profiles are in Appendix D.

Teacher Educator and Administrator Focus Groups

The second form of data comes from teacher educator focus groups and interviews that center the exploration of pedagogical strategies employed to encourage antiracist engagement and the use of state standards in pedagogical decision making. While accredited teacher education programs are expected to align learning outcomes with state standards, in the case of California the Teaching

Performance Expectations, this project explored teacher educator strategies in addressing issues of race, racism and equity at their local campuses that go beyond the expectations in the TPEs. The focus groups expanded beyond the explanation used for accreditation of how the TPEs are met and provide insight into how teacher educator expertise might help inform state standards in regards to racial justice and equity. I reached out to program administrators and faculty involved in science and social studies single-subject teacher education on each campus to coordinate the focus groups. A full list of who participated in each focus group is included in Table 1. The focus group discussions included questions about the teacher performance expectations used in their program, examples of strategies and practices in the program that build on the TPEs in terms of issues of race, racism and equity, and how science and social studies subject teachers may be prepared differently in the program. Following preliminary analysis of the first two pre-service teacher interviews and the identification of edTPA as a prominent feature in the experiences of PSTs, I returned to each program with a follow-up interview regarding faculty perspectives on the edTPA. For Monarch University and El Dorado State University, I spoke with the same faculty members I spoke with in the initial interviews, and at Golden State University, I spoke directly with the edTPA coordinator. The focus group and teacher educator faculty interview protocols can be found in Appendix B.

State and Program Policies

Lastly, I examined state and program policies regarding expectations and assessments for teacher performance and outcomes. Specifically, the policy

documents include 1) the teaching performance expectations (TPEs) generated by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), 2) the edTPA and CalTPA which function as state assessments of the TPEs, and 3) the program policy documents that demonstrate the adaptation of the teacher performance expectations for the program.

The Teaching Performance Expectations

The California Teaching Performance Expectations outline the expected candidate performance at the level of a beginning teacher (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2016). These expectations are used by teacher education programs across California to organize concepts within preparation coursework, fieldwork, and assessments and consequently are the measurement tool utilized by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to accredit teacher education programs. Teacher candidates must satisfy the requirements of the TPEs in order to be recommended for a teaching credential. In California, satisfactory competency regarding the TPEs is measured by the Teaching Performance Assessment (edTPA or CalTPA), both standardized exams offered by the state.

The TPEs are aligned with the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP)*, which were jointly developed by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the California Department of Education (CDE) and subsequently approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in October 2009. The TPEs are organized by six domains: (1) Engaging and supporting all students in learning, (2) Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning, (3) Understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning, (4) Planning

instruction and designing learning experiences for all students, (5) Assessing student learning, (6) Developing as a professional educator. Each domain is broken down into 6-8 elements that outline the content and pedagogical knowledge and instructional practices expected of beginning teachers. These elements are then described in a narrative paragraph following each set of bullet points associated with the six broad expectations.

The edTPA and CalTPA

The edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment used by teacher preparation programs across the United States to measure the skills and knowledge of new teachers based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (edTPA, 2023). It focuses on three tasks, 1) planning, 2) instruction, and 3) assessment. The portfolio includes written lesson plans, descriptions of students, videos of unedited teaching, and personal reflection on teaching practices and opportunities for improvement. The edTPA was developed by Stanford University faculty at the Stanford Center of Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) with input from teachers, teacher educators and university faculty. The CalTPA is an adaptation of the edTPA that more directly matches the Teaching Performance Expectations in California rather than the nationwide standards relied upon in the edTPA (California Educator Teaching Assessments, 2023). The cost of taking the edTPA or the CalTPA is \$300 per assessment, which in most cases is paid by the pre-service teacher, however some programs pay the cost of the assessment for all their teachers or just for teachers in high need subjects (such as science). In California,

successful completion of the edTPA and/or CalTPA is mandatory in order to receive a teaching credential.

In addition to reviewing the available materials on the edTPA, I attended a virtual town hall held by the CTC where teacher preparation stakeholders in California were invited to discuss and debate the continued use of the edTPA in California teacher education programs and whether it addressed issues of social and racial justice. While in attendance at the town hall, I took field notes of my observations, which ultimately informed my interview protocol for teacher education faculty and my analysis regarding debate surrounding the edTPA.

Teacher Education Program Policy

In order to understand how each teacher education program centered social justice and equity, I reviewed each of their websites, specifically their mission and statements regarding attention to issues of race, culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, through the focus groups and interviews, teacher educators and/or administrators at each of the 3 sites provided program policy documents that illustrated the program's adherence to the Teaching Performance Expectations, often in the form of learning outcomes. At each institution, these outcomes mirrored the TPEs with additional expectations reflective of the program's mission.

Data Analysis

This project relied on inductive analysis of the interviews, focus groups and state and program policy. With guidance on qualitative data analysis from Creswell (2014) and Bhattacharya (2017), I used open coding to generate categories within the

interview and document data. Then, based on identified categories, I returned to the data for selective coding to determine emergent themes. Bhattacharya (2017) posits that data analysis in qualitative research is always iterative rather than linear, which is reflective of my own process in this project such that I returned to the data frequently in order to consider various categories derived from the data or driven by my research questions and theoretical frameworks. I routinely completed analytic memos, then consulted and discussed my sensemaking of the data with colleagues and mentors.

Transcription and Preliminary Analysis

The focus groups and interviews were recorded through Zoom and on an independent audio recording device as a backup, then transcribed through Sonix. I reviewed and edited each transcript for accuracy and noted any details not recorded in the transcript (such as pauses, laughs, facial expression, or tone). The process of editing the transcriptions allowed for an initial deep read of each interview and provided the foundation for nascent themes and areas of interest to follow up on in later interviews. Throughout the data collection process, I uploaded transcriptions to Dedoose in order to code and create categories. I then used Google Sheets and Mila notes to arrange the data and identify themes.

Analytic Memos

Analytic memos were recorded throughout each part of the research process, including interviewing, transcription, and analysis. Following each interview, I recorded analytic memos in a Google Doc in order to document my reactions, hunches and considerations. These memos aided in providing a comprehensive

picture of each participant, and in identifying themes across participant experiences as well as making connections to existing literature on teacher education policy and antiracist engagement.

Interview and Focus Group Analysis

The analysis of the pre-service teacher interviews and teacher educator focus groups and interviews relied on components of sensemaking as described by Philip (2011) who specifically focuses on racialized sensemaking and transformation of teachers' ideological perspectives on race, racism, and racial justice.

Pre-service Teacher Interviews

Initial analysis followed the research questions to identify where pre-service teachers interpreted or explained understandings of race, racism, antiracism, and equity. Because this project is specifically concerned with how state and program policy shape these interpretations, I also took note of statements where PSTs indicated how their program expectations or pedagogical choices influenced their conceptualization of antiracism and racial consciousness. This initial analysis of transcripts from the first two interviews led to following two additional lines of inquiry exploring: 1) how PSTs consider the difference between teaching about race, racism, and equity to a predominantly white classroom and a predominantly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) classroom, and 2) how the edTPA, the culminating performance assessment, informs PSTs' engagement with and commitment to antiracism.

Following initial analysis while editing and proofreading the transcripts, I read through all of the transcripts once again in Dedoose and created codes that attended to race, racism, or equity and conceptualizations of antiracism in the contexts of their programs, their student teaching placements or in reference to their personal experiences. Examples of codes include “race and content knowledge” or “antiracism and whiteness” or “orientation the edTPA.” Following thematic analysis and identification of categories, I returned to the transcripts to thematically code based on the responses.

Teacher Educator and Administrator Focus Groups and Interviews

The purpose of the focus groups and interviews with teacher educators and administrators was to understand how programs were conceptualizing antiracism and developing a racial consciousness in their pre-service teachers. These focus groups and interviews were largely informational, providing key components for understanding how the programs engaged with and integrated antiracist pedagogy into their curriculum and teaching practices. Responses from teacher education faculty were supplemented by program policy documents demonstrating their praxis and compliance with the teaching standards.

Critical Policy Analysis

Analysis of the documents centers tenets of Critical Policy Analysis (Apple, 2019; Diem, Young, and Samson, 2018; Dumas, Dixson, and Mayorga, 2016), which gives particular attention to the role of power and ideology either explicitly or implicitly embedded within policies. CPA provides ontological and epistemological

foundations as well as the implications for critically investigating educational policy such as the Teaching Performance Expectations. Diem, Young and Sampson (2018) identify that traditional approaches to education policy analysis assume policy is created in a vacuum and consequently give little attention to the role of power and ideology. Critical policy analysis' response to these shortcomings is to focus on five concerns: (1) the difference between policy rhetoric and practiced reality, (2) the roots and development of the policy, (3) the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge, (4) social stratification and the effect the policy has on relationships of inequality and privilege and (5) the nature of resistance to or engagement in the policy by members of nondominant groups (Diem, Young & Sampson, 2018, p.4). This study specifically calls on the fourth concern in the consideration of the preservation of an ideological racial hierarchy within teacher education standards and assessments, yet considers each of these concerns throughout the analysis.

Teaching Performance Expectations

The Teaching Performance Expectations provide the foundation for the program learning outcome policies as well as the performance assessments that teachers need to complete in order to obtain their credentials. Because of its foundational role in relation to the edTPA, CalTPA and program policies, I gave particular attention to the TPEs as a policy document and engaged in open coding using CPA as a thematic lens. The first pass at coding examined broadly anything that could be connected to the five concerns of CPA listed above. These codes were separated into the following categories: 1) Culturally relevant instruction, 2) High

expectations, 3) Critical self-reflection, 4) Family and community involvement, and 5) English language learning. However, through this analysis, another theme emerged within areas of the TPEs that addressed race, racism, and equity: a subtle, pervasive reliance on norms that lacked context or appropriate definition. These norms invoke Omi and Winant's (2014) discussion of how colorblindness developed through various neoliberal projects including the use of "code words" for racist policies that did not center race such as "getting tough on crime" or stirring up anger towards "welfare queens." I went back through the document and searched for any "code words" (Omi and Winant, 2014) that might indicate a standard with racial implications and bolster the colorblind racism that serves as the "ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-civil rights era" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003: p.15). These code words made up the sixth category in the analysis: Whiteness as a norm.

Limitations

The primary limitation to this study is its small sample size in regards to the number of pre-service teachers interviewed. With only eleven pre-service teachers across three programs, this study does not intend to make broad generalizations about their experiences as representative of all social studies and science secondary pre-service teachers in California. However, the small sample size did allow for deeper and seemingly more authentic interviews over the course of a year and thus this study relies on the quality of those interactions over the quantity. As Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont (2003) state in their discussion of participants' "telling-the-truth" in

interviews, the purpose of these questions is not simply to evaluate the teacher education program and its efficiency in developing a racial consciousness and commitment to antiracist engagement, but also to bring awareness to the teacher education program as an important environment for personal negotiation and a potential mediator of social identities (Philip and Benin, 2004). Atkinson et al (2003) state this interviewing intention as such: “The purpose of the interview is not to gain referential information about some anterior events, but rather to gain access to the interior world of the private and the personal” (p.133). One indication that pre-service teachers began to open up was that at first, when PSTs provided answers to questions, they reported being concerned about “getting it right”. By the third interview, PSTs used language such as “I’m going to be honest with you...” and “This is anonymous right?” indicating their desire to be more forthcoming with me as the interviewer. The opportunity to have three interviews over the course of a year allowed for us to build a relationship in which the PSTs felt they could trust me to represent them accurately.

Researcher Positionality

As a researcher and educator, I believe that critical reflective identity work and the process of unlearning white supremacist logics is essential for educators who plan to work with socially and economically diverse student populations in order to reduce harm and promote social and racial equity. This sentiment is reflected in a statement by the president-elect of the American Educational Research Association, H. Richard Milner (2007) who states:

It seems that researchers instead should be actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that can surface when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned. Moreover, it is important that researchers possess or are pursuing deeper racial and cultural knowledge about themselves and the community or people under study (p.388).

My interest in education and justice are rooted in my experiences of unpacking privilege and interrogating white supremacy. My participation in a Chicago south side based student teacher preparation program and subsequently a counselor in a social justice-oriented counseling preparation program allowed me to deconstruct and begin to unlearn the “white savior complex” at play in my understanding of community work. Ultimately, the communities of color I worked within as a counselor, youth advocate and community outreach specialist provided an environment that allowed me to unlearn oppressive relational engagement practices and delve deeply into understanding racial identity and the systems and institutions that shape those identities. I continue this work to further my own racial literacy as a scholar and educator by engaging in critical communities, including an antiracist study group made up of faculty and graduate students focused on readings centering Afropessimism, anti-Blackness, and abolition, as well as a racialized-gendered organizations working group comprised of graduate students from various institutions. The continuous journey towards developing racial literacy through academic and community engagement engendered my research interests and led me to pursue a Ph.D. in Education.

My most prevalent social identities include identifying and being perceived as white and as a cisgender woman. Embodying these identities include incurring their

nuanced array of benefits and privileges as well as the structurally informed ignorance and violence embedded in them. Additionally, for the purposes of completing this study, my position as a PhD candidate and my involvement in the academy had implications for how I was treated by administrators, teacher educators, and pre-service teacher participants in this study.

Nearly 75% of the pre-service teachers in this study identified as white and as a white woman, research would suggest that white participants would feel safe to express themselves candidly to me (Frankenberg, 1993), while teachers of color might feel more hesitant or find me untrustworthy. Indeed, some white teachers in this study did not seem encumbered with sharing their perceptions on issues of race and racism and their desire to “take a break” from discussions surrounding it. Teachers of color did not seem to find me untrustworthy, perhaps due to our shared involvement in teacher education.

As a doctoral student at a reputable research university in the same general geographical area as the sites selected for this study, I was able to gain access to the teacher education programs through mentors and other connections. Given these built-in relationships and my recognized status as a teacher and teacher educator, pre-service teachers treated our conversations like it was a part of their program, a space to review. At first, this position seemed to make our interviews more formal, with careful attention paid to providing what might be considered the “right” answer. However, in the second and third interviews, the pre-service teachers seemed to relax and were noticeably unfettered in how they answered questions. This was specifically

evident when they confirmed with me that “this interview is anonymous right?” and phrases such as “To be honest...” My positionality as a doctoral student potentially had a different influence on the teacher educators I spoke with who treated me formally and with some suspicion of my intentions. These reservations are not without merit, given that research and media has frequently laid the blame for all social inequality at the schoolhouse door (Goldstein, 2014), thus it was necessary for teacher educators and administrators at these institutions to feel assured in my objective to learn from their programs rather than simply scrutinize them. I mitigated this tension by being transparent in my aims for the study and when possible, sharing general themes that I had gathered from PST interviews so that we could be in discussion with one another rather than sticking to the formal structure of an interview or focus group.

CHAPTER 3: Teacher Education Programs and Their Antiracist Commitments

This chapter examines the role of the three teacher education programs in developing a commitment to antiracist engagement in their pre-service teachers. It considers each program’s stated and unstated antiracist and equity-centered priorities and the resulting reported experiences and practices of the pre-service teachers in those programs. The data drawn on in this chapter includes program policies and mission statements, as well as teacher educator accounts of the justice and equity-oriented pedagogical methods. These data are put in conversation with the PST’s perspectives on each program within the context of the Teaching Performance

Expectations, which serve as the standards under which teacher education programs operate. Ultimately, in this chapter I argue that the teacher education programs in this study functioned as a mediator of antiracist engagement and critical reflection for pre-service teachers, yet this process is undermined by the elusive presence of whiteness as a norm in the Teaching Performance Expectations and the structural organization of teacher education programs into silos that limit teacher educator contributions to issues of justice and equity.

This chapter begins by examining the Teaching Performance Expectations and identifying the ways in which these state level expectations address issues of race, racism, and equity. This line of inquiry reveals evidence of some attention to justice and equity, however there remains a reliance on whiteness as a norm throughout the standards and limited direction for programs to integrate justice and equity into their curriculum. Despite this omission, teacher education programs and educator level data indicate that program policies and teacher educators go above and beyond to address subjects of antiracism and equity in their values, goals, and courses. While not necessarily the draw to their programs, pre-service teachers engaged with this material experienced shifts in their perspectives on race and racism as well as their understanding of their own positioning in the school systems they would soon enter. This heightened critical awareness led PSTs to be hyper-aware of how the spaces they encountered “practiced what they preached” particularly when it came to antiracist and equitable actions. Taken together, this chapter illustrates that teacher education programs matter in terms of developing a racial consciousness and antiracist

engagement in its teachers, moving beyond the constraints of the standards and emphasizing the expertise of faculty within their programs to provide an educational experience that centers justice and equity.

Teacher Education Policy and Antiracism

State-wide standards for the expectations of teachers can serve many important purposes for teacher education programs and teaching as a profession. This section focuses specifically on the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) in California, which were developed in order to elevate the status of teachers, provide a framework for teacher education programs and ensure that K-12 students across California receive a consistent quality of teaching (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2016). The TPEs are comprehensive and detailed with much attention paid to the varied social and cultural backgrounds of the future students of beginning teachers. Even so, the following critical exploration of the TPEs provides a deeper understanding of how policy provides affordances and constraints for teacher education programs in what they are able to provide to teacher candidates regarding antiracist pedagogy and a liberatory educator preparation environment. This analysis first details areas of the TPEs that could be seen as giving attention to issues of race, racism, and equity and secondly, I discuss how the lack of attention to race and equity in some expectations leads to a reliance on whiteness as the norm.

Addressing Race, Racism and Equity in the Teaching Performance Expectations

The most notable way the TPEs address issues of race, racism, and equity is through the importance placed on high expectations for all students and the emphasis

on culturally relevant instruction and classroom environments¹. In her seminal piece *But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy*, Ladson-Billings (1995) introduces the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as a method to be utilized throughout the curriculum. Culturally relevant pedagogy works to combat deficit framing of students of color, to go beyond celebrating diversity in the classroom and to advocate pedagogical methods necessary for students of color to thrive in schools. This approach involves teaching through a critical lens by providing “collective empowerment” (p.160) with which students are able to understand the systems in which they learn, rather than simply learning the content itself.

An example of high expectations can be found in TPE 2.5: “Maintain high expectations for learning with appropriate support for the full range of students in the classroom.” Some examples of attention to culturally relevant pedagogy include:

- TPE 1.1: Apply knowledge of students, including their prior experiences, interests, and social-emotional learning needs, as well as their funds of knowledge and cultural, language, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to engage them in learning.
- TPE 2.2: Create learning environments (i.e., traditional, blended, and online) that promote productive student learning, encourage positive interactions among students, reflect diversity and multiple perspectives, and are culturally responsive.
- TPE 4.1: Locate and apply information about students' current academic status, content and standards-related learning needs and goals, assessment data, language proficiency status, and cultural background for both short-term and long-term instructional planning purposes.

These examples illustrate recommendations by Villegas and Lucas (2002) to center the teacher rather than the pedagogy. Their suggestions on developing characteristics

¹ Present in TPEs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.5, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.4, 4.6

to become a culturally responsive teacher include: sociocultural consciousness, an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds, commitment and skills to act as agents of change, constructivist views of learning, and knowledge of students' lives to construct curriculum and instruction that is responsive and familiar to students. The example TPEs quoted above and in the footnote demonstrate how culturally relevant instruction is a valued part of preparing future teachers and promoting the academic success of students of color. For instance, by outlining “funds of knowledge and cultural language, and socioeconomic backgrounds” in TPE 1.1, the expectation is that teachers getting to know their students and what approaches will work best for them, rather than relying on a generalized one-size-fits-all approach to engaging students in learning. Similarly, in TPE 4.1, teachers are required to consider students’ “language proficiency status and cultural background” when planning short-term and long-term goals.

Closely related to culturally relevant pedagogy, another way the TPEs address issues of race, racism, and equity is through the attention to family and community involvement². Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasizes the need for a link between school and home cultures (specifically homes of students of color), where culturally relevant teaching involves empowering students to develop cultural competence and a critical consciousness that “allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (p.162). An important method of connecting school and home cultures for teachers is through valuing family

² Present in TPEs 1.2, 3.4, 4.4, 4.6, 5.4, 5.5, 6.4

and community knowledge and directly involving family in the activities of classroom learning. Some ways this development in teachers is emphasized is prevalent in the following TPEs:

- TPE 1.2: Maintain ongoing communication with students and families, including the use of technology to communicate with and support students and families, and to communicate achievement expectations and student progress.
- TPE 3.4: Individually and through consultation and collaboration with other educators and members of the larger school community, plan for effective subject matter instruction and use multiple means of representing, expressing, and engaging students to demonstrate their knowledge.
- TPE 4.6: Access resources for planning and instruction, including the expertise of community and school colleagues through in-person or virtual collaboration, co-teaching, coaching, and/or networking.

Specifically, maintaining “ongoing communication with students and families” outlined in TPE 1.2 and consulting “member of the larger school community” in TPE 3.4 prioritize family and community knowledge as a resource for teachers.

Another important way that the TPEs work towards addressing race, racism, and equity is through TPE 6: Developing as a Professional Educator wherein teachers are expected to be aware of and critically reflect on their own teaching practices, values and biases, as well as the context, structure and history of public education in California. Examples include that beginning teachers will:

- TPE 6.1: Reflect on their own teaching practice and level of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge to plan and implement instruction that can improve student learning.
- TPE 6.2: Recognize their own values and implicit and explicit biases, the ways in which these values and implicit and explicit biases may positively and negatively affect teaching and learning, and work to mitigate any negative impact on the teaching and learning of students. They exhibit positive

dispositions of caring, support, acceptance, and fairness toward all students and families, as well as toward their colleagues.

- TPE 6.7: Critically analyze how the context, structure, and history of public education in California affects and influences state, district, and school governance as well as state and local education finance.

The reflection activities deemed necessary in TPE 6 are recommended under the scholarship on teacher identity. Many researchers have outlined the benefit of exploring pre-service teacher identity in educator preparation programs. In her article on confronting the dilemmas of race, culture and language diversity in teacher education, Cochran-Smith (2004) frames interrogating teacher positionality as a consideration of assumptions in order to examine PSTs' "interpretive frameworks." Likewise, Gay and Kirkland (2003) discuss identity as it pertains to the practice of self-reflection for pre-service teachers in order to raise critical consciousness and be aware of their own beliefs and behaviors. They assert that this process is central to the tenets of critically responsive teaching which rest on the assumption that "teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors [and] teachers need to develop deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is to be taught, how, and to whom" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 181). In other words, self-knowledge and understanding the contexts in which teachers teach are just as important for their students as the instructional techniques teachers learn in teacher education.

Lastly, while it does not fit neatly in the categories previously mentioned, the attention to restorative justice and conflict resolution delineated in TPE 2.1 are necessary to achieve equitable learning opportunities for all students. In the United

States, Black and Latinx students are much more likely to be suspended or expelled from their K-12 school (National Center of Education Statistics, 2016), resulting in general disengagement with school and a loss of learning opportunities (Noguera, 2003). Teacher engagement with restorative practices rather than zero-tolerance approaches to discipline provides the opportunity for all students to maintain school engagement.

Whiteness as the Invisible Norm in the Teaching Performance Expectations

While there is some evidence in the TPEs that indicates attention to issues of race and racism and equity, there is no mention of whiteness, white privilege or the ways that institutions such as education systems have historically relied on tenets of white supremacy. Without explicit acknowledgment of the ways whiteness is structurally woven into our education systems, this omission reifies whiteness as the default and the norm, thwarting efforts at transformation in teacher education.

Evidence of maintaining white dominance in the TPEs is most noticeable in the description of the use of “all students” in the introduction and in TPEs 1.4, 2.1., 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 4.2, 6.2, 6.5, 6.6. These TPEs use terms or language which reference a norm or expectation that function as colorblind “code words” but could easily default to whiteness (Omi and Winant, 2014). Bonilla-Silva (2006) refers to these types of code words as “semantic moves” because “racial norms disallow the open expression of racial views” and so white people “developed a concealed way of voicing them” (p.57). Furthermore, in his analysis of education policies, Gillborn (2005) warns that

ignoring the consequences of this coded language implicates education policy as an act of white supremacy. He states that:

The patterning of racial advantage and inequity is structured in domination and its continuation represents a form of tacit intentionality on the part of white power holders and policy-makers. It is in this sense that education policy is an act of white supremacy (p.485).

The use of these code words in current policy does not necessarily signify blatant intent around using racialized language or preserving racial hierarchy, yet the purpose and the implications of their presence remain important for analysis.

Examples of “code words” that are present in the TPEs include *appropriate* (1.4), *positive* (2.1, 2.2, 2.6), *safety* (2.3), *intolerance* (2.3), *typical* (4.2), *biases* (6.2), *acceptance and fairness* (6.2). The question that arises with each of these terms is “for whom?” Is there a universal scale that denotes what is appropriate, what is safe, what is typical or positive for everyone? Given the role of whiteness as the invisible default, these terms could lead teachers to expect their students to perform in a way that reifies white supremacy and oppresses BIPOC students. Throughout this section, I will investigate each of these terms and unpack their relationship to maintaining whiteness as dominant.

As the first example, TPE 1.4 calls for beginning teachers to “use a variety of developmentally and ability-*appropriate* instructional strategies...” In fact, the word “appropriate” is used 40 times throughout the TPE document. In this current historical conjuncture, what is deemed “appropriate” is up for debate as federal and state legislatures engage in politically charged discourse over when students should

learn about racism and slavery (if at all) and which students are developmentally prepared to learn about the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals (as if school is the only place this would be introduced). Furthermore, Flores and Rosa (2015) outline a concern that “discourses of appropriateness involve the conceptualization of standardized linguistic practices as objective sets of linguistic forms that are understood to be appropriate for academic settings” and that these standards language practices are rooted in “raciolinguistic ideologies that conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects” (p.150). By assuming a traditional neutral understanding of the term “appropriate,” the TPEs rely on a white academic norm. This has the deleterious effect of suggesting that behaviors outside of the appropriate white academic norm are deviant and in need of remedy.

Relatedly, literature on the school-to-prison pipeline and carceral logics in schools aid in understanding how terms like safety, intolerance, and positive revert to dependence on a white norm. For example, TPE 2.3 states that beginning teachers should be able to establish inclusive learning environments that are healthy and *safe*, and appropriately address instances of *intolerance* and harassment among students, such as bullying, racism, and sexism. This is in fact the only time that racism is mentioned in the entire TPE document, however I argue that it does not go far enough. Without naming whiteness as a dominant organizing factor, it is unclear how systemically racist institutions such as schools that employ police as security can

provide safety to students of color. Similarly, without an explanation of how racism manifests, it is unclear as to what a teacher should be intolerant of. As Noguera (2003) points out, “the assumption is that safety and order can be achieved by removing “bad” individuals and keeping them away from others who are presumed to be “good and law abiding” (p.343). The use of the word safety suggests that teachers keep students safe who are acting appropriately and be “intolerant” of those who are not, which often means engaging in exclusionary practices where some students are provided the benefit of an education and others are not. As Noguera (2003) and many others have pointed out, it is historically Black and Brown students who are more likely to be removed from classes, thus the white norm of appropriateness is upheld and students who comply within those norms are kept safe. Similarly, a definition of who “all students” refers to throughout the TPEs is outlined in the introduction. While this definition is keen to acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds in any given classroom, there is no reference to the overwhelming presence of white supremacy and its role in organizing, sorting and ranking these different backgrounds, which ultimately creates an uneven playing field for “all students” (Varenne & McDermott, 1999).

As a last example of the use of “code words” in the TPEs, TPE 6: *Developing as a Professional Educator* delves into reflection on the positionality of future teachers and urges a deeper understanding of one's values and biases, specifically in TPE 6.2:

Recognize their own values and implicit and explicit *biases*, the ways in which these values and implicit and explicit biases may positively and

negatively affect teaching and learning, and work to mitigate any negative impact on the teaching and learning of students. They exhibit positive dispositions of caring, support, acceptance, and fairness toward all students and families, as well as toward their colleagues. (p.13)

First, the use of the word “fairness” again lacks context and suggests an unnamed subjective position that deems what is fair and what is not. Fairness insinuates equality, which can be antithetical to the goals of justice. In his study on colorblindness, Bonilla-Silva (2006) states: “the notion of equal opportunity in an abstract manner” can be used “to oppose racial fairness” (p.31). He goes on to posit that “if minority groups face group-based discrimination and whites have group-based advantages, demanding individual treatment for all can only benefit the advantaged group” (p.36). Bonilla-Silva refers to this phenomena as “the fallacy of racial pluralism- the false assumption that all racial groups have the same power in the American polity” (p.36). If the position of the subject who decides what is fair or not is unclear, it is again in danger of defaulting to the status quo, where minority groups face discrimination and whites have advantages.

Second, this TPE presents the question of how and to what end values and biases are examined. Research on examining teacher identity suggests most activities unpacking biases and privilege are geared towards white women teachers, who make up the majority of teacher education programs (Hambacher and Ginn, 2021; Jupp, Berry, & Lensmire, 2016; Sleeter, 2001). Recognizing the presence of implicit bias and privilege in their lives might be helpful for white teachers in understanding that they may have a different lived experience than their peers and future students of

color, however, the process of bringing awareness to values without identification of social context or racial hierarchy does not interrogate the systemic nature of whiteness embedded in the laws and institutions of the United States. Furthermore, the language harkens back to the discussion earlier in this section regarding who is it fair for? What ruler is being used to measure fairness and who is it in service to? Although recognizing one's values and biases could be one step towards awareness of the pervasiveness of white supremacy, it does little to dismantle the oppressive nature of whiteness and may actually do the opposite by maintaining and reproducing the notion of racial hierarchy.

This section examined the Teaching Performance Expectations as a way to illustrate the structure that teacher education programs are expected to work within. The reliance on whiteness as an unspoken norm in the standards further emphasizes the efforts necessary for the teacher education programs in this study to engender a commitment to antiracism and equity in their pre-service teachers.

Teacher Education Programs Centering Justice and Equity

Each of the teacher education programs in this study were selected for their stated emphasis on social justice and equity in their mission, vision, and values statements. These priorities were listed on the program websites and, while the statements varied in detail and accessibility, the dedication to developing justice-oriented educators was similar across all the programs. In this section I briefly describe the content and representation of each of these mission statements in order to

make clear the commitments each program espoused to and illustrate the ideological structures that the teacher educators worked and pre-service teachers learned within.

Monarch University presented the most detailed description of their mission, including a wheel image representing their values, a list of their guiding principles, and the research base for the program design and curriculum. The wheel consists of 6 spokes corresponding to their values (Consciousness, Community, Connections/Perspectives, Experiences, Critical Lens, Advocacy/Activism), which are all connected to their central goal to “Raise academic expectations and performance for *ALL* students.” Following the wheel, four guiding principles of the program are listed which attend to enacting pedagogies that 1) take into account students’ varying abilities, 2) use innovative approaches to classroom practices, 2) engage students with challenging content that addresses the standards, and 4) engage students in critical analysis of social justice issues. Lastly, Monarch then lists the scholarly support for their program design, which includes a strong curriculum tied to extensive clinical practice, the cohort model, and teaching as inquiry. This information was posted within the program overview in the section for prospective students. Notably, this program mission echoes the ethos of the whole education department and the university at large, all which have historically touted social justice themes and encouraged activism.

While Golden State University’s teacher education program website clearly states the mission and vision on the main page, the central purpose of the website seems to be to guide students to program expectations and descriptions of the various

pathways to the credential. The mission states “The Teaching Credentials Branch prepares teachers and leaders to be agents of change, committed to social justice, equity and inclusion in culturally and linguistically diverse schools and communities” while the vision outlines a similar message around preparing educators to develop inclusive, equitable educational environments that optimize access and ensure student success. Like Monarch University, the mission of the University heavily emphasizes diversity, equity, and belonging and outlines campus initiatives that address antiracism and inclusion.

Similar to Golden State, El Dorado State University’s website for the teacher education program placed the descriptions of each of their program pathways front and center with links to program overview, learning outcomes, eligibility requirements and curriculum given the primary focus. In order to locate the mission statement, I had to use the search bar on the university’s website. Eventually, I found a PDF that outlined the program’s mission and vision, which included their core principles: 1) Equity, social justice, and care, 2) Justifiable student-center pedagogy, 3) holistic education and advocacy for all students, and 4) Lifelong learning through reflection and critical inquiry. This mission also emphasizes the importance of developing the following “professional dispositions” in their teacher candidates: skilled, introspective, and knowledgeable; collegial, responsive, and responsible; caring and equitable; reflective agents of change. This is followed by a list of references that support the mission, vision and principles outlined in this statement.

In short, the mission statements of the three programs in this study reflected very comparable messages regarding centering equity and justice in the development of teachers with each represented by varying levels of detail, accessibility, and depth. Due to the stark similarity in the values and goals as well as the approaches of the teacher educators in each program, throughout this study I do not differentiate between programs, but rather unpack the experiences of the PSTs who reflected similar perspectives across rather than within their programs.

Teacher Educator Perspectives on Antiracist Pedagogy

Each of the three teacher education programs in this study purported to have social justice and equity at the center of their practices. I interviewed teacher educators and administrators in order to understand how they put the mission of their programs into action. Our interviews were geared towards examining how teacher educators utilized the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) and other program learning outcomes and policies, specifically how they worked within these expectations and outside of them regarding the integration of race, racism, and equity. The focus group and interview protocols are included in the Appendix. All of the administrators I spoke with also worked as teacher educators in the program, thus throughout this section I will refer to them simply as teacher educators. Importantly, each of the teacher educators I interviewed spoke passionately about the ways in which they infused social justice into all parts of their work, primarily in terms of their pedagogy but also where they could, at the structural and program policy level. Importantly, all teacher educators identified including anti-oppressive pedagogies in

their courses that went beyond the expectations of the standards. The main challenge identified by teacher educators in accomplishing this work was instructor isolation and the siloed nature of each facet of teacher preparation from adjunct faculty brought in to teach one class, to full-time education or content area faculty whose main focuses are elsewhere, to supervisors and cooperating teachers. In this section, I will unpack teacher educator responses, particularly regarding the paths to providing social justice-oriented instruction while working within and outside of state and program policy structures.

Teaching Performance Expectations and Program Outcomes

In my interviews and focus groups with teacher educators, I asked directly about their knowledge of and interaction with the Teaching Performance Expectations and how these standards contributed to their social justice directed instruction. Their awareness of the TPEs widely varied depending on their position in the program. For example, the program director and coordinators I interviewed knew the TPEs intimately and spoke at length about the usefulness (or not) of the TPEs and how their own program policies reflected and built off that foundation. Kate, the field experience coordinator at El Dorado State outlines the connection between the TPEs, the pre-service teachers' field guide, and their program outcomes:

Our field guide is written to be connected to the TPEs. So we're clearly defining what we're doing and why we're doing it so they can reach the goals. And that's covered in the program. And then along with that is our focus on humanistic pedagogy and emancipatory teaching. So they really just go hand in hand. We made sure that all the syllabi had the TPEs in them, that they were focused on teaching and meeting and growing and the Program Learning

Outcomes. (*Kate, Field Experience Coordinator at El Dorado State, March 22, 2022*).

In this quote, Kate emphasizes the way the program has integrated the standards in with the program's learning goals around humanistic pedagogy and emancipatory teaching by connecting them to their learning outcomes and centering them in each syllabus. Faculty at each of the institutions indicated that while the TPEs provided a foundation, they were insufficient at attending to the broader issues of antiracism, equity, and asset-based practices. Faculty discussed rectifying this by expanding their program policy expectations. For example, as a social foundations faculty member and head of the assessment committee, Lucas brought up concerns from faculty and students that a student teacher could pass the TPA (which serves as the assessment that measures the TPEs) without sufficient knowledge of students' linguistic and cultural assets:

So you could pass the TPA without doing those things that felt inadequate to our mission as a program and our stated values. And so what we did, starting in the assessment committee, but then in consultation with the whole faculty, was we devised the program learning outcomes. And so we have five program learning outcomes that subsume the TPEs but that arrange them differently. So instead of having the six TPEs with all their sort of sub bullets, right, like we have these five program learning outcomes or plots and, and they include sort of all the sub pieces of the TPEs, but the heading itself foregrounds antiracist, anti-sexist, anti-classist, anti-ableist approaches to education. Right. So the emancipatory critical orientation is the starting point (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado State, February 24, 2022*).

Lucas described how the teacher education program at El Dorado State went beyond the expectations of the standards that were represented in the edTPA by incorporating “antiracist, anti-sexist, anti-classist, anti-ableist approaches” that were central to the

mission of their program in to their learning outcomes, because they were lacking in the state assessment. Similarly, Sofia, the program director at Monarch University described using a rubric based directly on the TPEs and finding that the data it provided ended up being “meaningless” for them as faculty and as a program and instead developing a rubric that was true to their own values.

And so we spent a year actually breaking down all the teacher performance expectations and defining them. But we did it in a way where we thought, what are our program priorities? Our program priorities are “equity, social justice, making a difference, teacher leadership.” And so we actually created definitions for each of the teacher performance expectations of what they mean to us and the direction that we wanted to steer students. And we turned it into a nine point rubric with very different levels and different expectations for each corner of the program. *(Sofia, Program Director at Monarch, April 13, 2022)*

Sofia goes on to describe how the teaching performance expectations can function as a “constraint” and discusses how “they don't tell us what they mean and they don't tell us how to define it, and they don't tell us how to come up with the scores that were required to come up with” and in order to work within those constraints, teacher education faculty worked together to create the rubric that aligns with both the TPEs and their own values. While some faculty discussed how the TPEs were integrated into the program policies, many of the social foundations and methods teachers I spoke with indicated that they paid very little attention to the TPEs, some even admitting that they didn't know what they were. At Golden State, the university made a commitment to include TPEs in writing on each course syllabus in the program,

however the attention paid to them was up to the instructor. The social studies methods instructor at Golden State stated:

Our evaluation of student teachers is, you know, boom, all of the TPEs, so I think it shows up pretty explicitly. Still a mouthful, it's a lot to handle. I tend to personally kind of shove it into the background because it's like 700,000 words, all of which have something to do with what I'm doing already, but. That's just me, that's more of my personality, my style. But some people are much like some of, you know, the colleagues when they do a lecture boom, the first slide is what the TPEs are. I mean, we do try to align and we try to elevate what's in those TPEs because, you know, they are valuable guidance (*Melissa, Social Studies Methods Faculty at Golden State, November 8, 2021*).

Melissa illustrates how some faculty center the TPEs in their coursework while others, like her, keep it in the “background” and depend on their expertise to cover the expectations less explicitly. Similarly, Diana, the social studies methods instructor at Monarch University, discussed how she works within and around the standards but also uses this navigation as an opportunity to teach pre-service teachers how to work within particular policy contexts:

Again, I think that it really depends on where you are and what context you're in as to how free you can sit within these policy contexts, whether they be the TPEs, TPAs or whatever. But I don't think of them as negative. I just think that the program and for me, they don't dictate what I do because I have a lot of experience and knowledge about teaching and they aren't contradictory. But if we're going to put them into decontextualized little bits, I worry. Yeah. So like I can work within those, but I think it's something that the teacher candidate should learn too is like, how do you work within policy contexts? And even so, many of them have unintended consequences. But to know kind of where they come from and how they can move within them (*Diana, Social Studies Methods Faculty at Monarch, March 29, 2022*).

Diana emphasizes that while teacher educators have to work within the constraints of specific policy contexts such as the TPEs and the edTPA, it is important for pre-

service teachers to also understand how to function within policy contexts that they might not necessarily agree with. An important takeaway from all of the teacher educator responses regarding the TPEs is that all of the faculty are pushing beyond the boundaries of what is offered to them through the standards in order to provide a comprehensive, anti-bias liberatory education for the pre-service teachers in their programs. The development of a critical consciousness and social justice practices are the top priorities for these teacher educators, which I expand upon further in the next section.

Social Justice Instruction

The responses from the teacher educators illustrated that providing pre-service teachers with the tools to become agents of social change was paramount to them. It wasn't necessarily more important than addressing the standards, but more prevalent in their pedagogical goals. Teacher educators at both Monarch University and Golden State mentioned the pedagogical use of a different set of standards: the Social Justice Standards developed by Learning for Justice, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. While not state sanctioned, these standards offer another structure for preservice teachers. Based in an anti-bias framework, these standards are "Comprised of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes" and "provide a common language and organizational structure educators can use to guide curriculum development and make schools more just and equitable" (Learning for Justice, 2014). The teacher educators used various terms and concepts when considering how their work addressed issues of race, racism, and equity. Some of these include anti-racist,

anti-oppressive, anti-bias, racial and social justice, pro-Black, addressing whiteness and white supremacy, diversity, equity and inclusion, using critical pedagogy, emancipatory and humanistic pedagogy, critical literacy, problem-posing, student-centered, community-engaged, culturally-situated and culturally-sustaining practices. I include all of these terms as a note to the varied ways that the programs conceptualized teaching about justice and equity and developing that knowledge and skill set for pre-service teachers. One teacher, Shara, a social foundations instructor at Monarch University, described some discomfort with the term anti-racist in particular:

I know that, like, antiracism is the term we're kind of using now across different spaces. But I was having a conversation with a colleague that was like, you know, even anti racism is weird to me because I was educated in a pro-black space, right? Like even that's different, right? Or when we say anti-racism, we're still not naming white supremacy and whiteness being centered, right? So I think the work of language is important, like unpacking what the different terms mean (*Shara, Social foundations faculty at Monarch, March 29, 2022*).

Doing what Shara suggests and sorting through the many terms encompassed under the umbrella of “social justice” could fill an entire dissertation, and while that is not the focus of this study, I do want to acknowledge the complexity and significance of the use of different terms for this work.

The teacher educators interviewed in this study spoke in depth about the pedagogical methods as well as the structural ways that they sought to address social justice in the teacher education programs. Chorel, at Golden State, delineates how she integrates issues of justice into her science methods course:

So like this year, our first class was all about COVID, and I showed them some video clips from the news of violence right across against Asians and violence against each other at school board meetings about mask mandates and vaccines. And like, this is why your job is so important. This is what happens when people don't understand science and this framing everything from that perspective like this is why we need you. And this is the importance of your work (*Chorel, Science Methods Faculty at Golden State, November 8, 2021*).

Chorel provides an example here of how pre-service teachers can include racial justice into the content of science courses, where PSTs often struggle to find connections. Similarly, Lucas at El Dorado State, describes an assignment common across social foundations courses that calls on students to engage in critical reflection and interrogate essentialist conceptions of race and culture:

So in the educational sociology class, the signature assignment that the students put together is this kind of iterative writing assignment. And so it starts by sort of putting together their own educational autobiography. And we start by doing a couple of activities in class that really sort of get them thinking about culture through this anthropological lens, right? So understanding culture not as some sort of static characteristic of like race or ethnicity or language or something like that. But culture is like a repertoire of practices and as dynamic and contextual and all that, right? And so helping them see that a lot of the things that they perceive as normal or some are, in fact, very culturally situated (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado State, February 24, 2022*).

He then details the reasons for implementing such an assignment as a way to aid students in situating their own racial and social positioning in the broader social context:

And so then after those activities and readings and stuff that they put together this educational biography and they sort of reflect on like, well, how did my experiences, the good and the bad shape, my beliefs about what education

should be and what the role of a teacher should be and things like that. And so then from that initial reflection, they pull out a moment that they want to dive deeper in, especially as they get kind of closer to student teaching. And so they take sort of that moment. And in the next component of the writing assignment, they put it in like a historical and political context, right? Like what are some of the historical and legal factors that have made the school system the way it is so that incidents like this happen? (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado State, February 24, 2022*).

In this quote, Lucas illustrates how this specific assignment functions to further the program's pedagogical goals of centering justice and equity. Many of the teacher educators talked at length about ways that their programs have wrestled with and responded to state policy changes and political sentiments regarding antiracism in the past 10 years. Teacher educators at Golden State University discussed a program overhaul in response to funding changes that eliminated their multicultural education course. Juan, the social foundations instructor posited:

We went to war with a lot of folks because the Commission for Teacher Credentialing had mandated a reduction of courses. And ironically, the one course that they cut as a requirement, not surprisingly, but ironically, they cut the multicultural education class and all the white liberals in the college decided that they could "infuse" what was at the time the required 15 week course into all of their courses... So we lived with that for many, many, many years. It will come as no surprise to you that the overwhelming majority of the candidates in teacher prep programs, including ours, are white men and women... You had generations of mostly white candidates who graduated Golden State, this revered and hallowed and respectable teacher ed program without taking that course (*Juan, Social Foundations Faculty at Golden State, November 8, 2021*).

Juan expressed great concern about the lack of a course that explicitly addressed issues of race, racism and antiracism. Over the course of almost three years of concentrated advocating work, the teacher educators were able to reconstruct the

program to reinstate the multicultural education course but because the program had been limited from three semesters to two, the inclusion of this course intensified the amount of coursework for Golden State PSTs.

Both Lucas at Golden State and Sofia at Monarch University discussed efforts to make their programs more diverse. In response to how the program has shifted since the pandemic and “racial reckoning,” Lucas stated that:

I think it has required us to be more concrete and more committed to action around our anti-oppressive values. I think there are some programmatic elements and sort of institutional elements that have... So like the waiving of the entrance exams and the admissions as part of the admissions requirement. Like, I think that has without a cost to our candidates' success, has helped us diversify our teacher candidate pool. Like, I think a lot of [our bilingual candidates] are candidates who would have otherwise been sort of screened out by the CBEST. And yet once they're in the program, like they're indistinguishable from their peers. So I think that has been something that has really caught the attention, is like the barriers to entry that we put around teaching (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado State, February 24, 2022*).

Through this quote, Lucas illustrates how the ability to waive entrance assessments has allowed their program to become more racially and economically diverse.

Similarly, Sofia described changes in their admissions process:

We're just much more aware of who's out there and we're trying to be to make the process more welcoming. And so I've changed the language. I mean, the language on our website was really harsh... I'll change it to well, the grad division requires a 3.0 GPA. However, if you have extenuating circumstances, possibly you worked while in college, possibly you had family, possibly you had a difficult transition year... Give us an explanation on your application and we will certainly consider that. So we sort of looked at everything to try to make our language less intimidating and more like come talk to us (*Sofia, Program Director at Monarch, April 13, 2022*).

Sofia acknowledges here that changing the language on their website helped facilitate a more diverse applicant pool for their program. Furthermore, Julian, the science methods instructor, and Sofia described the development of an antiracist taskforce that focused on putting their values and mission into practice. An important part of evaluating this process was listening to feedback from pre-service teachers and being sure that the program enacted the values that it sought to embed in its teachers. Diana, the social studies methods instructor at Monarch University emphasized this during a focus group:

I just want to say that that's another strength of the Monarch program, is that even in Sofia talking, you can hear how leadership listens to how students respond to different things and their concerns and actually tries to think programmatically about it, and also listens to instructor input (*Diana, Social Studies Methods Faculty at Monarch, March 29, 2022*).

Sofia, the program director at Monarch, described an example of this:

And then the other thing that we did is hearing from students. In the feedback from students we started a few years ago, we started doing focus groups just with our students of color. At the end of the year, and they talked about their feeling of, not quite sure how to say this, but less valued in the classes among peers, less so from instructors, but more so among peers. And they said, Oh, we're just used to it. We've lived as students of color all our lives. We don't expect any differently. And so what came out of that is us wanting to have affinity groups (*Sofia, Program Director at Monarch, March 29, 2022*).

Sofia indicates here how feedback from students of color led to a change in programming as a way to figure out how to provide better support. In a following interview, foundations instructor Shara acknowledges the intention of these shifts by program administration but also indicates that “deeper work” is needed in order to truly engage in social justice work.

Great, we need to have wheels or we need to have statements and things. But I think like part of what I want to get at is it's like deep work and it's complicated work, right? If it were easy and simple, we would all be doing it right now. And so I think, like, um. You know, I hear that impulse. You know, and it's not just in this program, but I think across programs of the solutions, the fixes, we need to be anti-racist. We need to do this work. And I think that, you know what? What we really need is the deep work. And we also need that to be even more integrated and supported. Right? Because students left my class and I was still getting texts, emails and phone calls from them because they were going into other classrooms and they were like, we all agree that we are all doing social justice work, but then they're seeing practices being modeled that they think are actually perpetuating damage and harm (*Shara, Social foundations faculty at Monarch, March 29, 2022*).

Just as Shara indicates in this quote, many teacher educators discussed the challenges of being on the “same page” across their programs in regards to providing antiracist pedagogy that sufficiently addressed issues of race, racism, and equity. In the next section, I delve further into how faculty meet these challenges and what work teacher educators see as still needing to be done.

Silos in Teacher Education Programs

The teacher educators I interviewed in this study were employed at different levels from full-time faculty and administrators to adjunct instructors hired to teach one course. These positions played a role in how instructors experienced themselves as a part of a coherent community of educators and their ability to give voice to concerns. Teacher educators across all three programs described contending with the issue of silos across their programs, particularly given the various different groups of educators that include cooperating teachers, university supervisors, full-time faculty and a large component of adjunct faculty. While this was the organizational structure

of the three programs in this study, it is also representative of programs across the United States where adjunct faculty tend to make up the majority of college and university faculty (New Faculty Majority, n.d.). Teacher educators at both Golden State and Monarch discuss the efforts to solidify a common agenda across the program. As a result of the restructuring at Golden State (described above), Juan, Melissa, and Chorel identify breaking down silos and building in collaboration across disciplines as a way to solidify their social justice mission in a systemic manner. Juan states that:

What I have found since that 2012 restructuring is that some of the old bullshit that we used to have in the college, some of the beef that faculty used to have when we were siloed into distinct departments has gone away. I think the structure of that took care of that particular element. The second thing that I've been able to witness is that you've got junior younger faculty members that have come in with some really unique ideas, Chorel and some of her other colleagues. I mean, it's a different vibe to use that word. Uh, they're very collaborative (*Juan, Social Foundations Faculty at Golden State, November 8, 2021*).

Chorel reiterates this sentiment, speaking from her experience as a junior faculty teaching science methods and noticing the influence of collaboration across disciplines on the PSTs in the teacher education department:

It's pretty cool because [the PSTs] learn how to talk across disciplines and plan across disciplines and thinking across disciplines as opposed to like, "I'm a science teacher", "I'm a math teacher," because I think those silos are not just for faculty. Our candidates get put in those silos as well. (*Chorel, Science Methods Faculty at Golden State, November 8, 2021*).

The teacher educators at Golden State see these efforts at breaking down silos and collaborating across disciplines as examples of how they can provide a cohesive educational experience aimed at developing antiracist teachers.

The director of the teacher education department at Monarch University named similar challenges around silos and described initiatives that centered the encouragement of a social justice mission across the program. When asked about the greatest challenges to embedding social justice work into the program, Sofia stated:

Well, for me, it's really getting everybody on the same page. We have lecturers that come in to teach one class that are not part of the program, and then we have supervisors who come to us as practitioners who are very passionate about teaching, passionate about equity, but they're for the most part the older generation (*Sofia, Program Director at Monarch, April 13, 2022*).

Sofia identifies the differences between teacher educators in the program and how that has the side effect of creating silos. In terms of strategies to get everyone on the same page, Sofia outlined:

We started this two years ago. For each of our cohorts of students, we put together all the people that work with that cohort. So [Diana] was with the cohort of all the instructors who worked with the social science students, and they really pulled all the syllabi together and looked at what's the experience of those students across the year? What should it look like? How can we get rid of redundancies? How can we ensure that we're addressing the larger topics? But we were able to make some pretty significant changes just by putting the people together. So Diana was talking about leadership and it's like we really do have a true distributed leadership model. It's like the supervisors have a lot of say in our program and we have a teacher education committee that has a lot of say and people are very responsive to one another (*Sofia, Program Director at Monarch, April 13, 2022*).

While she identifies that these end-of-the-year debriefs have been helpful, the adjunct faculty or lecturers aren't usually involved in the general planning process.

It's sad, but we don't include the lecturers, who come in to do one class. They're not really part of the whole planning process. So the groups that I have that think about the program holistically are the supervisor group. We have a teacher education committee, which is sort of more management, and then we have the anti racism task force. And so these are the folks that really sort of step back and look at or the groups that will look at the program holistically (*Sofia, Program Director at Monarch, April 13, 2022*).

Despite these efforts, there is still a recognition by adjunct faculty that their voice may not hold much weight, especially when they notice discrepancies in the goals of the program. In a focus group with Diana and Cheyenne, Shara expressed concern about what PSTs reported to her in terms of a lack of consistency in the social justice mission across courses in the program and what was necessary to address it.

The wheel is a start. But that's not, you know, what's underneath that. Let's also have those hard conversations amongst ourselves because if we can't call colleagues in and say, you know, students are being harmed by this or whatever, then that's an issue, right? So where is the relationship and trust? And another thing I'll add to that is labor conditions inflect in that power matters in that right as a person who's a lecturer in the program. What power do I have? I do and will try to advocate for students. But it's different, right? So I think if the program is serious about those commitments then those are the kinds of things that need to be talked about. Like, how do we even think about the power dynamics amongst people who are teaching? (*Shara, Social foundations faculty at Monarch, March 29, 2022*).

This point was reiterated by the other adjuncts in the focus group. While they acknowledged the focus on social justice and the incremental changes regarding coherence across the program, they also expressed concern about their ability to contribute to the hard conversations given their position in the academic hierarchy.

In conclusion, teacher educators in these three programs put an immense amount of energy and effort into providing educational environments that center equity and justice and aid teachers in developing a critical perspective on their positionality within the education system. Teacher educators expand beyond the expectations of the standards in several ways: through the creation committees, policies, and learning outcomes that more explicitly name objectives engaging with antiracism and critical reflection, utilizing expertise of critical scholars in their departments, listening to feedback from their students, and building in collaboration opportunities for teacher preparation faculty. Even with these structures in place, the teacher educators at these programs experience the standards or some of the expectations from the policies of their programs as barriers to engaging in the deeper work of interrogating systems of power, racism, and whiteness and sometimes as a representation of those flawed systems.

Pre-Service Teacher Perspectives on Antiracism in Teacher Education Program

In this study, pre-service teachers were interviewed throughout the course of their teacher preparation program and questioned repeatedly about their perspectives on how the program and their student teaching placements approached issues of race, racism, and equity. This inquiry deeply explored the effects of state and program policy and the pedagogical practices of teacher education faculty on how pre-service teachers developed a racial consciousness and practiced antiracist teaching. In Chapter 5, I delve deeper into the pre-service teachers' sensemaking around race, racism, and equity and their own antiracist engagement, however in this section I

specifically focus on how the PSTs interpreted *the program* as antiracist and what that meant for their development as teachers. Three themes emerged in their responses in consideration of how the programs enacted their justice and equity frameworks: 1) Selection neutrality: PSTs indicated that the social justice mission of the programs played little or no role in their selection of the program, and yet 2) Identity Shifts: many PSTs described identity shifts particularly around issues of race and racism that occurred as a result of engaging in the program, and as a result they developed a 3) Critical Lens: as PSTs awareness grew they became concerned with the way in which programs did or did not “practice what they preached” in terms of antiracist and culturally responsive pedagogy. This section explores each of these themes in further depth.

Selection neutrality

As described above, the teacher educators and administrators of these teacher education programs go beyond the expectations of the state by putting extensive thought and effort into creating programs that promote consideration of social and racial justice, equity and encourage educators to be agents of social change. This effort is illustrated in their mission and vision statements and throughout their classes. However, every one of the 11 PSTs in this study indicated that the social justice framework played little to no role in their selection of the program. The majority of the PSTs noted that they chose the program based on its geographical location and its convenience to where they already lived. This aligns with research on the geographical ambitions of teachers who tend to go to school and then work within

100 miles of home (Boyd, 2005). For many of the teachers, the program was the only one they applied to. Teachers mentioned that the mission of the program was not necessarily the draw, but was a welcome aspect of the program. Rupert, a PST at Monarch University, stated that “I like the mission just because it's something that I agree with, but I'm like the mission was like... It definitely did not play a factor in me applying or not.” Similarly, Shane, a PST at Golden State, mentioned that “It wasn't necessarily the selling point for me, but it definitely added on to like, oh, this isn't just a regular teaching program.” For Jean at El Dorado State, the incorporation of the mission in teacher preparation classes was almost a surprise:

I only applied to El Dorado State. I didn't shop around at all. I had probably had just heard that it was a good school and didn't bother to do any more research. Convenience was a big factor for me. I didn't know that El Dorado State's program had such a huge mission in their equity teaching. I didn't expect that at all. So when we started, I was like, Oh, wow, like we're talking about [it] in every class. Great. *(Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, December 9, 2021).*

Many of the PSTs had the same reaction as Jean; while the mission was not the main impetus for their application to the program, it provided affirmation in their goal to become a teacher.

While the majority of teachers were bolstered by the inclusion of social justice and antiracist frameworks in their teacher education programs, three of the PSTs expressed concerns about the validity of a social justice mission, presenting an ‘I’ll believe it when I see it’ attitude about the actual practices of the program. Elliot described this by differentiating Golden State’s program with others’ that merely focus on “diversity” rather than antiracist issues.

They would just be saying... we think that students of all racial backgrounds should have equal access to becoming... Anyone could become the president, anyone could become the next top engineer somewhere. And we want to make sure that we have equal representation of different racial and ethnic backgrounds on our board or on our management team. But this class [at Golden State] took it a step further in terms of saying like, well. What about people who are entering into oil and gas extraction industries, you know, that disproportionately affect Third World countries in these really negative ways, you know? Or what about industries that are directly associated with weapons manufacturing that gets again exported to developing countries and results in massive racial and social unrest in those countries, you know? And so it was kind of making the bigger picture connections between race and class and caste, I guess, too (*Elliot, Science PST at Golden State, November 23, 2021*).

Elliot identifies that recognition of the engagement with a “deeper” level of analysis of race facilitated his buy-in to the program such that he *believed* the mission after engaging in classes that illustrated this commitment to antiracism. Maggie was more skeptical about the program living up to its mission. She states that while the mission of Monarch University’s TE program provided her with evidence that her values would align with, she remained cautious:

I just feel like sometimes I am a little distrustful of institutions advertising like that just because I just feel like they also need to acknowledge that academia and graduate school [are] clearly very privileged places. So it's just like, I don't know, sometimes I get a little uncomfortable when academic institutions are like, ‘Oh yeah, we're so social justice oriented’ when there are so many structural problems. So it's like before I entered the program I was like, Okay. Yeah. Like I hear you. I just like I had to see it to believe it. I guess I wasn't like yes, I know for sure they're going to be social justice oriented (*Maggie, Social Studies PST at Monarch, November 9, 2021*).

These responses from PSTs illustrate that although they may begin with various levels of literacy on issues of antiracism and social justice, the program’s mission was

not necessarily a component that determined their selection process, which was mainly driven by geographical convenience. Additionally, the mission presented an opportunity for PSTs to question their own engagement and the commitment of the program to antiracism. It also provided an affirmation for PSTs that by participating in this program, they would receive a credential that could serve as proof that they as individuals and teachers were indeed antiracist. In the next section, I unpack how PSTs consider shifts in their identities specifically as a result of their teacher preparation program.

Identity Shifts Regarding Issues of Race and Racism

While not all pre-service teachers associated the program as playing a role in how they considered their social identities, for some of the PSTs, they directly identified the pedagogical frameworks of the program as influencing their relationship to how they saw themselves as agents of social change. For many of the PSTs, the social justice framework of the program strengthened or confirmed their commitments to antiracist engagement, yet highlighted different areas for growth.

Maggie noticed a shift in realizing the importance of letting her students take the lead:

And what's coming to mind is like the idea of deficit thinking that kind of stood out to me. I mean, I guess it's just like something I hadn't ever put language to, but just, like, making sure that you see your students as, like, whole, just as they are... Those ideas were added on to my conception of being anti-racist, [it] is not like approaching people from a perspective of their lacking something. (*Maggie, Social Studies PST at Monarch, July 7, 2022*).

Similarly, while Heather had entered the program aware of the social justice issues in education, she felt more passive and now recognizes the need to step out of her comfort zone and become more active.

I think before I was aware of a lot of this stuff, but I was just very passive. Like I wouldn't speak out on things. I wouldn't really engage very deeply with things or try to do my own research. I would just kind of, I guess like ignore some of those things just because it is uncomfortable to confront some of those. And I feel like now I'm like really trying to educate myself and really trying to look deeper into issues and kind of finding things that I'm like, Oh, I can do something because I think any action is better than just doing nothing, which is what I was doing before. So I think just now I'm trying to be more active, I guess (*Heather, Science PST at Golden State, June 20, 2022*).

For Rupert, the experience of learning about equity in the program merely confirmed his own experiences of inequities in the school system.

I've learned a lot of great things, but really, I'll say like. I think most things about equity, I kind of already had an idea of. Like, I mean, just because of my background, I knew that, like, my friends and I, when we were in high school, we didn't really have access to tutors or things of that sort. So I just knew that, like, students obviously coming from different backgrounds I think have a much different likelihood of being able to get their homework done or being able to get help outside of class if they need it. Like just because of the way I grew up, I just kind of knew that that was already true (*Rupert, Social Studies PST at Monarch, June 24, 2022*).

In other words, Maggie and Heather, two white-identified teachers experienced some shifts in their awareness of race, racism, and equity in the classroom where as Rupert, a teacher of color, felt that the instruction around equity in particular reflected issues he was already aware of due to his own schooling experiences. Diego and Liz directly referenced their racial identities as being brought to the foreground in their experiences in the program. For Liz, she was made very aware of her white identity

while teaching in a classroom of primarily Latinx students and was concerned that she was not given the proper tools to navigate cultural differences appropriately.

Yeah, and, and there's all this discourse about inviting prior knowledge and relevant cultural experience. And I don't have the same cultural experience as my students. And I don't even live in the same town as them. And my professors are like, Oh my gosh, you're teaching about photosynthesis, That's great. Think about how much prior knowledge they bring because a lot of their families work in the fields. And yeah, it's true. I've had all these interviews with my students about their family life and a lot of their families do work in the fields around us, but I don't want to be a white person in front of the classroom saying, Oh, how many of your families work in the fields like oh I bet they know a lot about photosynthesis. It just feels, it feels wrong in my gut and I don't know where that gut feeling is necessarily coming from, but I don't know. It's really difficult (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, October 11, 2021*).

In this quote, Liz reports discomfort with her identity as a white person providing the culturally responsive pedagogy encouraged in her program. On the other hand, at Golden State, Diego was a part of a Latinx cohort that helped affirm his identity and prior experiences, and with the guidance of his professors, helped him to see the importance and inherently political nature of his role as a Latinx, male-identified teacher in the public school classroom.

I think the Latinx cohort was extremely valuable, and it is an experience that will probably never happen again as I go, if I continue education, my educational career of being in the majority of my classes, being classroom environments where I am with students who have similar experiences. It made it a lot easier in those classes to discuss anti-racist themes and topics because there was so much we could relate to as a group and we didn't feel like we had to watch what we said in fear of upsetting those in the group who would be white students. So I'll just emphasize the importance of that, I think, for me personally (*Diego, Social Studies PST at Golden State, June 30, 2022*).

For Diego, it was the intentional community of the Latinx cohort that furthered his commitments to antiracist teaching and topics. Alternatively, two pre-service teachers posited that the heavy attention to social justice in the program created some distance to antiracist frameworks. For Kenzie, it made her question her involvement in social justice teaching and promoted a desire to primarily emphasize content, considering antiracist or social justice work as secondary or separate from her content area.

You know, I think looking forward, I'm wondering how much I should be like looking for a district or a school that has a social justice focus... Whether or not, like what I've learned in the program, [if] I still want [that] to be my focus, because it's hard. But I realized as a white person I can just choose out of it and that's the privilege that I've been given. And I'm trying not to take that for granted (*Kenzie, Science PST at Golden State, March 15, 2022*).

Given that concerns about equity that emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic were some of the main reasons Kenzie was inspired to become a teacher, she struggles with whether incorporating social justice and equity will be possible when teaching as a first year teacher will be difficult on its own and with the knowledge that as a white teacher she could potentially just opt out of it.

So I'm wondering now... Teaching in general will be a challenge in itself. Adding on addressing social injustice in my classroom or at the school. How am I going to be a part of that? Kind of a big question for me in the future (*Kenzie, Science PST at Golden State, March 15, 2022*).

Kenzie really struggled with the challenges of social justice work and wondered if she was able to do it “on top of” being a teacher which will be difficult and inherently will involve a great amount of responsibility. Shane recognized his white identity as a

prevalent aspect when considering antiracist frameworks and was grateful that he wasn't meant to feel guilty because of this privileged identity:

But I feel like the program, it was actually really good about not attacking my whiteness. And was really good about holding a lens up to curriculum and the purpose of teaching and how I can use that and not making me feel guilty for being white (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

However, even though he felt safe in the program, Shane was concerned about how too much of an emphasis on social justice could sow division:

But people, young people my age and my generation right now who are very social justice minded, kind of put blinders on. It works as blinders to me. And then like I said, it makes me feel guilty for being white. Instead of using my whiteness, my perspective. I mean, for fuck's sake, I just went through a yearlong intensive social justice teaching program. And I still say I feel like I'm not doing enough or I'm not an ally. And I'm getting lectured by these people who've taken one or two courses in their undergrad and read some books by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Okay. You know? What does that mean? Like, I'm doing everything I can here and I still feel attacked. I can't imagine people who are uneducated living in rural areas hearing this. How they feel. I don't empathize with them, but I can see how this constant attack when it should be mending, healing and finding ways to educate. I think it's starting to do the opposite, the more extreme it's touted (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

These examples suggest that the social justice frameworks presented in the programs provide the PSTs with opportunities to question, negotiate, and feel affirmed in their identities, particularly regarding antiracist teaching practices. As they engage with this material, they not only bring this critical eye to themselves, but also to the program. In the next section, I explore how PSTs consider the programs as living up to their mission statements.

Developing a Critical Lens

All eleven of the pre-service teachers specified that their teacher education programs *did* provide connections to learning about race, racism, and social justice work, however one of the PSTs thought it was taken too far, while the majority of the teachers felt that the programs did not go far enough. Shane had some reservations about the degree to which they were taught to integrate social justice work into their teaching. He stated that while he identified as an antiracist teacher, the program took it too far at times, which he indicates comes at the cost of learning about how to be a teacher:

How many people are going to Golden State going... I'm going to push some racist shit in the classroom. I'm going to teach these kids anti-CRT curriculum... You're already telling us what we already know. I'm wasting 3 hours on Zoom talking about how to not be a racist. When we get into breakout rooms, we're like, Yeah, so I'm not a racist, you know? And again, I see the need for it, but it gets so repetitive and in a sense slammed down your throat. I'm not learning anything at this point. We're just discussing racism or inequality or things like that (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

Shane was in the minority with this view given that the rest of the PSTs I interviewed saw the program as doing a sufficient job in the integration of antiracist pedagogy and insinuated that there could have been more material or pointed attention to antiracist practices within the program itself. Rupert and Tomas both reported wanting more emphasis on social justice work throughout the program, rather just in certain courses primarily offered in the beginning of the program. Similarly, Jean suggested that the program was being too nice in its antiracist approach: “I didn't feel like it was talked

about enough or loudly enough. Like the responses to students wasn't sufficient, wasn't up to my expectation of what it means to be an anti-racist program.”

Alternatively, Maggie, Liz, Kenzie, and Diego agreed that the program provided the proper material to align with their missions, yet they were concerned with specific programmatic policies or practices that did not align with their view of what it meant to be antiracist. Specifically, Diego, Maggie and Kenzie each brought up issues around the teacher education programs providing equitable treatment to its students.

Diego stated:

I think the program teaches an anti-racist curriculum. I think the program has a lot of work to do in making sure that the actual teaching is anti-racist, if that makes sense. I think [it] just has to do with a lack of support. I feel like in an actual anti-racist program you will not treat all your students the same, essentially. But we are all treated as if you've all gotten your bachelor's, you all come, you're all educated. So now you are going to all go through this program that is intensive and will not account for your familial responsibilities. Even though we tell you to acknowledge the familial responsibilities your students of color might have because of their cultures. But we don't acknowledge that here because you're a college student (*Diego, Social Studies PST at Golden State, June 30, 2022*).

Diego identifies in this quote that the program teaches them to consider the outside circumstances of their K-12 students, yet he does not think the pre-service teachers receive this same consideration in the program. Similarly, Kenzie indicated that she was troubled by the potential lack of accessibility of the program:

But reflecting on some of what my fellow candidates felt like were flaws with the program... It made me realize that maybe it wasn't as anti-racist as I thought. One of my fellow candidates was just plain and simple, like accessibility to the program, like the cost of the program, availability of scholarships. For example, the cost of my edTPA was covered through a

science scholarship. Whereas the history, social science, the humanities people heard about that. They're like, cool, I had to pay for mine. Like, that's weird. So that's just one example of how it may not be as anti-racist as I thought (*Kenzie, Science PST at Golden State, June 21, 2022*).

Kenzie concludes that the program may not be as antiracist as she thought because of its lack of accessibility given the experiences of others in her program, particularly teachers in the social sciences and humanities. Kenzie went on to describe a similar scenario as Diego, which suggests that they may have been a part of the same program-wide discussion around equitable opportunities for PSTs as a way to provide feedback to program administrators and teacher educators. Additionally, Maggie recognized specific actions which she took to be discriminatory and posited that her program tended to favor white students over BIPOC students.

I think that they teach all the right things. But I've seen some pretty upsetting behaviors from people in the program, like definitely favoring white students over the teachers of color. There were multiple instances where like students [of color reported that] they were way harder on them. And this happened a lot. So, I do think that they're like, yeah, we'll have social justice. They're saying all those things and we're learning about how to be social justice teachers and like we did some really cool readings. Like, that's all true. But I think that, yeah. The teachers of color, kind of had it harder (*Maggie, Social Studies PST at Monarch, July 7, 2022*).

She goes on to name a particular teacher educator that she identified as engaging in consistent discriminatory practices even following conversations to address it. As a reminder, Maggie was also skeptical about the program's ability to live up to its mission from the very beginning. Lastly, Liz wished for more inclusive practices within the teacher preparation classrooms, especially around topics of social justice.

She indicated that there were a handful of students who tended to dominate the conversation, which left her feeling unable to speak up:

I think sometimes I felt like we're talking about inclusivity, we're talking about all this stuff. And then I never felt like, I could speak up in that conversation. So in that way, and that's probably a lot of it, just my personality and like the, again, the culture of my master's classes where we had a couple of students that were extremely passionate and knew a lot, and it felt like I was hearing their voices a lot around these topics. And I think, maybe the program could have maybe helped like have a bigger conversation about it with like, I don't know if I'm making sense with more people. But in terms of the literature, I think, yes, the program lived up to its mission. I loved all the readings that we had, and I thought that they covered a lot of stuff. I feel like I read a whole library. I think in the classroom space it could have been a little bit more inclusive and maybe a little more critical (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, July 5, 2022*).

In addition to these pedagogical practices, Liz also took particular issue with the CalTPA as an example of the program going against their approach to high-stakes testing for K-12 students.

It's like this assessment, this really high-risk assessment. And it feels like the program is like, don't ever give your kids a high-risk assessment and make it phenomena-based and all this stuff. And then the TPA is like so the opposite of what that is (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, July 5, 2022*).

Liz felt that the use of the TPA went directly against the program's pedagogical values and emphasis on equity.

Taken together, these responses indicate that while the program's social justice frameworks do not necessarily provide the draw for PSTs, the programs do have the ability to engender important concepts and values in their teachers related to developing as a racially conscious teacher dedicated to social change. However, as

the programs build on and develop this critical perspective, the PSTs turn this attention towards the program and are extremely vigilant to the ways the program itself enacts the pedagogical strategies and structural frameworks that they are being taught to endorse.

Chapter Conclusion

The racial reckoning of the past three years has brought to the forefront the need for institutions across the country to examine their contributions to creating a more equitable and racially just society. This chapter dives deeper into how the three teacher preparation programs in this study engaged in this antiracist work. In addressing the Teaching Performance Expectations as standards for the institutions, Gillborn (2005) posed the question “*Who and what is education policy for?*” through identifying the priorities, beneficiaries, and outcomes of the policy. The document analysis of the TPEs revealed that while many expectations for future teachers pay mind to cultural responsiveness and equity, the elusive presence of whiteness and tenets of white supremacy remains an underlying norm in the guidance from education policy and teacher education programs. Teacher educators at each of the programs moved far beyond the standards in terms of centering issues of race, racism, and equity in order to develop teachers that engaged deeply with antiracism and providing an equitable education to all students. While the TPEs were acknowledged, teacher educators considered them required boxes from the state to be checked off, but concentrated their energy and attention to developing their own policies and pedagogical practices based on critical faculty expertise. Lastly, even with the

pronounced signaling of the intentions of the programs, the pre-service teachers were not necessarily drawn in by the social justice missions and values, but once engaged, PSTs were heavily invested and transformed by their teacher educational experiences. Pre-service teachers reported shifts in their thinking about race, racism, and equity, and at the same time, they became increasingly aware of the way their programs enacted antiracism. Pre-service teachers indicated a desire and need to move beyond the theoretical understanding of antiracism and observe examples of antiracism in practice, which is perhaps why they turned an inquisitive and critical eye to the program. The next chapter explores how a specific policy requirement of the state, the edTPA and CalTPA, drew pre-service teachers' criticism and created confusion around actively engaging in antiracist work as an educational system.

CHAPTER 4: Orientation to and Impacts of the edTPA

This chapter examines teacher performance assessments, the edTPA and CalTPA, as teacher credentialing requirements in the state of California from the perspectives of policy makers, teacher educators, and teacher candidates. Specifically, I examine responses from teacher educators and pre-service teachers about the usefulness of the edTPA and CalTPA as well as how it addresses issues of race, racism, and equity in the context of the current debate between policy makers and teacher educators around the continued use of TPAs as a high-stakes assessment in California. This chapter argues that the pre-service teachers studied received mixed messages between their social justice-oriented programs and the edTPA regarding

conceptions of a competent teacher. While the teacher education preparation programs placed a strong emphasis on critical reflection and antiracist engagement, the pre-service teachers describe the edTPA as mostly devoid of a commitment to social justice and equity. The preservice teachers reconciled this conflict by choosing one source as a touchstone to measure themselves from, either their program or the edTPA. While some of the teacher educators at these social justice-oriented programs attempted to subvert the edTPA by framing it as a procedural rather than a formative step, for some of the pre-service teachers interviewed, the material consequences of passing the edTPA (receiving their credential) led them to question or deprioritize the antiracist or equitable practices emphasized in their preparation programs. Because they are not a part of the assessment, these pre-service teachers deemed antiracist practices as non-essential to their pedagogical approach.

This chapter unfolds in four parts. First, I examine the content of the edTPA and the CalTPA and what they purport to be assessing. The second section provides an overview of a town hall I attended, held by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing in which policy makers and teacher educators debate the usefulness of maintaining TPAs as a high-stakes assessment in California. Third, I discuss the responses from teacher educators at each of the programs regarding how they integrate preparation for the TPA into their programs and fourth, I describe responses from the PSTs about how the TPA contributed to their teacher preparation and how it addresses issues of race, racism, and equity

The edTPA and CalTPA

Successful completion of either the edTPA or the CalTPA is a requirement for pre-service teachers to obtain their credentials at each of the three teacher preparation institutions in this study. While completing a TPA is a requirement for credentialing in the state of California, teacher education programs may select which one to use. Programs may choose to have their students take the edTPA (the national teaching performance assessment), the CalTPA (TPA adapted for California) or a TPA developed by and for a specific program. The three California programs studied each gave different, and sometimes oppositional, rationales for the TPA they utilize. Golden State University uses the edTPA for all of their PSTs because it is used across many states, not just in California. Conversely, El Dorado State chose the CalTPA *because* it is specifically for teachers in California. Lastly, Monarch University's choices are guided by financial incentives. The science PSTs take the CalTPA, due to funding support for science teachers to take the CalTPA, while social studies PSTs take the edTPA.

The edTPA

The edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment used by teacher preparation programs across the United States to measure the skills and knowledge of new teachers based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (About edTPA, 2023). It focuses on three tasks, 1) planning, 2) instruction, and 3) assessment. The portfolio includes written lesson plans, descriptions of students, videos of unedited teaching, and personal reflection on teaching practices and opportunities for improvement. The edTPA was developed by Stanford

University faculty at the Stanford Center of Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) with input from teachers, teacher educators and university faculty.

The edTPA is a performance assessment, thus teachers submit original materials rather than answers to specific questions. There is a handbook provided to teacher candidates through their programs that aids in guiding PSTs to successfully complete the assessment. The handbook includes very specific instructions on what to submit along with rubrics that represent how their submissions will be scored. There are three main tasks, planning, instruction and assessment, each include between 4-9 steps suggested in the handbook along with 15 rubrics to refer to. Each rubric represents a question and displays five levels of completing the task. For example, as a part of Instruction Task 2, the 6th rubric measures how the PST attends to the learning environment in their classroom by evaluating their materials in response to the following question: How does the candidate demonstrate a positive learning environment that supports students' engagement in learning? Each level is represented in the following Table 3.

Table 3: EdTPA Rubric 6: Learning Environment

Rubric 6: Learning Environment

How does the candidate demonstrate a positive learning environment that supports students' engagement in learning?				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
<p>The clips reveal evidence of disrespectful interactions between teacher and students or between students.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Candidate allows disruptive behavior to interfere with student learning.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates respect for students.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate provides a learning environment that serves primarily to control student behavior, and minimally supports the learning goals.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates rapport with and respect for students.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate provides a positive, low-risk learning environment that reveals mutual respect among students.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates rapport with and respect for students.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate provides a challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect among students.</p>	<p>The candidate demonstrates rapport with and respect for students.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate provides a challenging learning environment that provides opportunities to express varied perspectives and promotes mutual respect among students.</p>

The handbook outlines that Level 1 represents the “knowledge and skills of a novice not ready to teach” while Level 5 illustrates the “advanced practices of a highly accomplished beginner.” There are 25 points available in each task, resulting in 75 points total in the assessment. In the state of California, a score of 41 is necessary to pass in the social studies and science content areas, meaning that a pre-service teacher must score approximately a level 3 on each rubric.

From a critical pedagogical perspective, there are several concerns with the way the edTPA is presented and its contents. First, in terms of presentation, when searching for resources and support materials for the edTPA, it is notable that the official handbook is only available through Pearson, which supplies it to accredited teacher education programs. However, there are a plethora of options of fee-based services such as tutors and YouTube tutorials that offer to help teacher candidates craft their responses and videos in order to get a “high score” on the assessment. In their examination of these entities Dover and Schulz (2016) critique the market-

driven opportunism of TPA coaching, particularly “the ways in which the outsourcing of teacher evaluation undermines local accountability and invites the exploitation of both candidates and of teacher evaluation systems overall” (p.100). The quality of these supports vary greatly and emphasize a decontextualized, narrow perspective on good teaching as a series of specific, standardized tasks. Given the fee-based system of these coaching options, there is little opportunity for these outside players to create a meaningful, evaluative experience and rather encourage teacher candidates to simply provide the scorers with a product that will be satisfactory instead of considering the merits and areas of growth in their own teaching practices (Dover & Schulz, 2016). Furthermore, “scorers have no way of determining whether candidates’ portfolios are authentic representations of candidates’ daily practice, artifacts that have been shaped in response to generic recommendations found online, or products of interactions with fee-for-service TPA tutors” (Dover and Schultz, 2016, p.102). In addition to the handbook provided by the program and the tutoring available from outside parties, the edTPA website guides pre-service teachers to a candidate support resource entitled “Making Good Choices.” This document further emphasizes the dichotomy that there are broadly accepted “good” and “bad” choices, rather than considering teacher candidates’ experiences in their localized context.

Second, in terms of content of the edTPA, the instructions for each task and the rubrics measuring the responses are extremely specific, suggesting that the conditions need to be just right in order for pre-service teachers to capture moments on their videos that would receive an adequate score. As noted above, the fact that

these assessments are scored by outside entities divorces the opportunity for perceiving the lessons in their situated context. Similarly, as Tuck and Gorlewski (2016) note, “it disincentivizes teacher candidates from seeking student-teaching placements in high-needs schools” (pp.201-202) because classrooms that don’t represent the ideal conditions for a pre-service teacher to illustrate their ability to facilitate learning could result in the PST failing the edTPA. Consider the example of Rubric 6 in Table 1 above. The rubric addresses the learning environment and if the pre-service teacher’s video represents a “disrespectful interactions between teacher and student or between students,” they would score at a Level 1, ultimately failing this rubric. What is deemed “disrespectful” harkens back to my analysis of the “code words” (Omi and Winant, 2014) present in the Teaching Performance Expectations in Chapter 3 as it is rooted in white supremacist logics of “appropriate” (Nelson and Rosa, 2015). Furthermore, without a deeper understanding of the circumstances and position of the pre-service teacher, an “objective” scorer may not be privy to the local and cultural norms present in a video where students could be regarded as disrespectful. This underscores Tuck and Gorlewski’s (2016) point that the race neutral content of the edTPA and its scoring could “communicate to teacher candidates that they cannot get certification if they work in classrooms with students of color, English language learners, and/or students living in poverty” (p.202). Relatedly, the word equity never appears in the edTPA handbook and the words race and racism only appear once in the social studies handbook glossary as a description of a “social studies phenomenon” which is described as an “Observable

occurrence, circumstance, or behavior within the discipline of history/social studies (e.g., civil war, racism, revolution, civic engagement, rationality, crime, peace, poverty)” (Assessment Handbook, 2019, p.50). Instead, the word “cultural” is mentioned frequently. For example, in Rubric 3 illustrated in Table 4 measures how teachers use knowledge of their students to justify instructional plans.

Table 4: EdTPA Rubric 3: Using Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching and Learning

Rubric 3: Using Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching and Learning

How does the candidate use knowledge of his/her students to justify instructional plans?				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Candidate's justification of learning tasks is either missing OR represents a deficit view of students and their backgrounds.	Candidate justifies learning tasks with limited attention to students' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior academic learning OR • personal, cultural, or community assets. 	Candidate justifies why learning tasks (or their adaptations) are appropriate using examples of students' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior academic learning OR • personal, cultural, or community assets. <p>Candidate makes superficial connections to research and/or theory.</p>	Candidate justifies why learning tasks (or their adaptations) are appropriate using examples of students' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prior academic learning AND • personal, cultural, or community assets. <p>Candidate makes connections to research and/or theory.</p>	Level 4 plus: Candidate's justification is supported by principles from research and/or theory.

Referring to culture rather than racial or ethnic background provides a colorblind and more palatable nod to racial difference, ultimately sidestepping any reference of racial hierarchy and white supremacy. The omission of attention to race, racism, and equity also highlights that the assessment is not interested in teachers’ racial literacy or knowledge of systemic oppression. The dangers of conflating culture with race is further discussed in the analysis of pre-service teachers’ sensemaking around race, racism, and equity in Chapter 5.

In conclusion, situating this analysis of the edTPA in the current literature on high-stakes performance assessments illustrates how it promotes a one-size-fits-all

approach to teaching and ultimately “favors those candidates willing to focus on narrow problems” (Dover and Schultz, 2016, p.103). Next, I will briefly describe the CalTPA, which is the adaptation of the edTPA in California and while slightly different in structure, ultimately adopts the same ethos and approach of the edTPA in its presentation and content.

The CalTPA

As the TPA developed in California, the content of the CalTPA is based on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s Assessment Design Standards and the California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) rather than the nationwide standards relied upon in the edTPA (California Educator Teaching Assessments, 2023). Because the CalTPA is an assessment of the TPEs analyzed in Chapter 3, this section will focus mainly on the differences from the edTPA, as much of the conclusions regarding the TPEs and the edTPA apply to the CalTPA as well. In terms of structure, the CalTPA includes two instructional cycles: Instructional Cycle 1: Learning About Students and Planning Instruction, and Instructional Cycle 2: Assessment-Driven Instruction. Each cycle reflects four steps: (1) plan, (2) teach and assess, (3) reflect, and (4) apply. In terms of content, rather than referring to cultural background as in the edTPA, there is much more emphasis on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Asset-Based Instructional Design for all students, and English Language Development (ELD). The words culture, race, racism, and equity show up in the CalTPA program guide for pre-service teachers as expectations taken directly from the Teaching Performance Expectations. For further analysis on how the TPEs

address race, racism, and equity and ultimately rely on whiteness as a norm, refer to Chapter 3. In its description of my attendance at a town hall meeting held by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the next section delves deeper into the history and development of the edTPA and CalTPA in California as well as illustrates the current debate over whether the TPA should continue in its use as a high-stakes assessment in California.

Stakeholder Debate over the edTPA in California

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing held a meeting on June 16, 2022 inviting public comments from the education community regarding the “Role and Function of Performance Assessment in Educator Preparation and Credentialing.” Currently in California there is a debate over whether the TPA should remain a requirement and this meeting revealed the conflicting positions of policy makers and teacher educators around the use of the edTPA in California teacher preparation. I attended this virtual meeting in order to gain insight into the broader conversation between policymakers and teacher educators regarding the edTPA and to provide context for how teacher educators’ consider their role in orienting pre-service teachers to the assessment. This section provides a summary of the public oral comments provided in the virtual meeting as well as a summary of the written comments. A recording of the meeting, written minutes and copy of the comments are available to the public on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s website.

The meeting was structured such that the executive director of the CTC began by providing a description of the reasoning behind the adaptation of the edTPA as an essential tool in credentialing teachers. Then two panels were introduced, the first included designers of and advocates for the edTPA, including Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Dr. Charles A. Peck who provided research on performance assessments; the second included preparation program directors and practitioners from around the state. The two panels were given time to introduce themselves and speak about the TPA and then the floor was open for questions and comments from the in-person and virtual attendees of the meeting.

Historical Perspectives on the Adaptation of the edTPA in California

The executive director of the CTC described that in the early 1990's, the commission was tasked with conducting a review of the requirements for earning and renewing a teacher credential in California. This came at a time when the K-12 schools shifted towards a "rigid and rigorous" standards and assessments approach and thus teacher education needed to adapt and be able to prepare teachers to instruct students in alignment with the standards. She described that at the time there was not much confidence in teacher education institutions to successfully and consistently prepare teachers to enter the workforce, specifically identifying that preparation was "uneven" across institutions. The TPA was a response to this unevenness and an attempt to provide stability to the teacher preparation system.

The first panelists then provided further context regarding the structure and validity of performance assessments. Linda Darling-Hammond identified herself as a

strong advocate for performance assessments, comparing them to other exams taken by professions on their way to licensure such as doctors, nurses, lawyers, accountants and architects. She described that the way teacher testing originated however was different from these other professions in that it was born from a distrust of teacher preparation institutions and assessments were developed through testing companies. Dr. Darling-Hammond then recounts the development of teacher testing from minimum competency and basic skills tests to the performance assessments used today (outlined in further detail in the Chapter 3 and the introduction of Chapter 6 of this study), emphasizing that performance assessments were developed *by* teachers *for* teachers and approved by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. She goes on to present that research has shown that board certified teachers (who had successfully undergone professional performance assessments) are more effective in supporting student learning, enhance the work of the entire school and as mentor teachers, enable student teachers to be more effective in student learning. The initial Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) used the NBPTS's performance assessment as a model when the teacher performance assessment became a requirement for graduation in 1998. For many years the PACT was scored within each institution, rather than by an outside testing company. Dr. Darling-Hammond described how the PACT helped focus programs, bringing coherence to the teacher education curriculum and bringing together faculty, supervisors and cooperating teachers around supporting pre-service teachers to understand connections between theory and practice and accomplish the goals of the performance

assessment. The edTPA grew out of the PACT as more institutions around the country began to use it and then, in California, a new version of a CalTPA was developed that included issues of culturally responsive practices and providing a representation of equitable values. She identifies that copious amounts of classroom experience, support from faculty and mentors who are knowledgeable about the content of the TPA, and consistent integration of the TPA goals in the program lead to more success for pre-service teachers in terms of enabling the assessment to be an educative experience in the way it was meant to be. Following Dr. Darling-Hammond's description of the development of the edTPA, commissioners were allowed to ask questions before she left the meeting. One commissioner asked Dr. Darling-Hammond to speak to the many comments left on the public forum regarding the concern that the edTPA disproportionately filters out teachers of color from the profession. In her response she argued that research illustrates very little disparity between teachers of color and white teachers and their performance on the edTPA, however the data from the pandemic represented a greater disparity, particularly in the preparation supports for Black teachers. She also notes that while there is not generally a gap in teacher scores on the performance assessment, there are large discrepancies on the standardized basic skills tests. Lastly, she states that while the CTC maintains the standards, the infrastructure for teacher education programs across the state is responsible for requiring supports to teachers to meet those standards.

The second panelist, Dr. Charles A. Peck, then spoke on implementation of the edTPA. He began his statement by drawing on his practical experience as a

teacher educator who has been a part of implementing the TPA for over 20 years and reflecting on how to do it well. He outlined three main lessons learned from the TPA. First, when the PACT requirement came into place, teacher educators at Dr. Peck's institution believed their program to be of high quality and thus expected students to do well on the TPA. However, as the teacher educators examined PST assessments more closely they recognized the ways in which teachers were not implementing what was being taught in their coursework. In this way, the TPA provided a record of what candidates were retaining (or not) from the courses and helped improve teacher educator instruction. Second, the TPA illustrated that the silos present in teacher education (e.g. university and K-12 contexts, faculty, supervisors, cooperating teachers etc.) presented an issue in holistically supporting teacher candidates across fieldwork and coursework. Dr. Peck posited that the TPA provided a common language of practice that all instructors could center on in order to provide a cohesive educational experience. Third, this common language also allowed for the gathering of teacher education communities across different programs to come together and share expertise in order to improve practice. Overall, Dr. Peck emphasized that implementation of the TPA brought people together in the teacher preparation program and P-12 school community, ultimately providing teachers with a more democratic and comprehensive education.

Following Dr. Peck's statement, some commissioners had questions and comments questioning statewide scoring of the assessments, different contexts in which teachers do their fieldwork, and concerns around who is a part of creating the

assessments and the need for attention to local issues of race and racism, particularly for teachers of color. With each of these concerns, Dr. Peck acknowledged their importance and agreed that local scoring of assessments are more beneficial than outsourcing to a testing company, particularly in terms of understanding what supports are needed for localized teacher and student populations.

Performance Assessments in Practice

Following the statements by Dr. Darling-Hammond and Dr. Peck, a panel of teacher educator practitioners and two current teachers and administrators provided statements overwhelmingly in support of the use of the TPA in teacher education. Examples of these statements included the benefits of the TPA's use in developing awareness and understanding of implicit bias and endorsed as a culturally-informed, anti-racist, anti-biased learning tool; the benefit of informing special education teachers of expectations in the general education classroom; the contribution to developing equity awareness, particularly for teachers who do not go through student teaching experiences and its function as a way to provide data to the program in order to improve.

The commission then opened for public comments from participants who joined the meeting virtually and those who attended in person. The majority of these comments represented concerns and some complete repudiation of the use of the TPA in teacher education programs. One professor noted that the entire discussion up until that point had largely seemed one-sided with all members in favor of the use of the TPA. Several teacher educators who commented, two of which represented the

Teacher Education Caucus of the California Faculty Association, cited research that high-stakes assessments do not improve education for teachers and students and that they play a central role in widening inequities. Some of the concerns echoed prior comments brought up by commissioners in the meeting, mainly around whose voices contribute to the improvement of the TPA (teachers of color, teacher candidates) and questions around its contribution to the teacher shortage and as a barrier to creating a diverse teacher workforce.

Following the public comments, commissioners were given the opportunity to ask final questions and provide comments given the overall discussion. Two main points that I drew from these comments were 1) the need for data to support claims regarding discrepancies in pre-service teacher TPA performance, and 2) the question of whether the performance assessment needed to continue to be a “high-stakes” assessment. The discussion of these two concerns suggested the commission’s position as not interested in eliminating the TPA as a requirement but committed to its improvement.

Teacher Educators and Program Orientation to edTPA

The teacher educators and administrators that I interviewed varied in their support of the use of the edTPA in their programs, yet all discussed how successfully supporting pre-service teachers in the implementation of the edTPA required that the goals of the assessment be intertwined with the curriculum of the program and the necessity for faculty and staff to routinely assess PST progress on their edTPA portfolios. For example, every program offered a seminar and/or weekend workshops

that supported PSTs in their preparation for the edTPA, which included instruction on the goals of the assessment, construction of lesson plans, facilitation of video recording their teaching and more. Throughout the program, PSTs are primarily supported by their supervisors, more than faculty members, on the ways to develop the materials needed for the edTPA and integrate them into their student teaching practices. While these aspects of each program's approach to the edTPA were similar, throughout the rest of this section I will outline how the program faculty differed in their perspectives on the necessity and implementation of the edTPA in their programs.

EdTPA as a High-Stakes Assessment

All program faculty I interviewed identified a concern with the high-stakes nature of the TPA as an assessment and wrestled with the tension between maintaining high standards and developing a diverse teacher workforce. At Golden State, Ben, the edTPA coordinator, described that before the edTPA was a requirement in their program, "everyone passed" and he saw the program as lacking in rigor. Ben explained that now that the assessments are scored by an outside institution (Pearson), PSTs are more motivated to pass, ask more detailed and interesting questions, and tackle concerns around integrating issues of social justice (e.g. funds of knowledge) into their practice. Ben describes a specific example when he as a math instructor tried to motivate PSTs with and without a performance assessment as a requirement. In this quote, he is discussing the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT), which was in place before the edTPA:

[Before the PACT] I was really struggling, motivating the candidates, doing mathematics because you probably know a lot of people are kind of math phobic, and even though they are, they're going to become [teachers] they want [you to] just tell them how to do it because they don't have that deep knowledge. I spent a lot of time just making them... Get out of that math phobia. And [when] the PACT first implemented... It changed their behavior... So when I discuss even like social justice, they hear one ear and go out the other a lot of times because they're so busy. But when I say this is funds of knowledge, there's a rubric related to this and you have to write about it, otherwise you're not going to get a good score. As soon as I say that, they listen to it (*Ben, edTPA coordinator at Golden State, November 8, 2022*).

Ben suggests that when the PSTs knew that math and social justice concepts (such as using the funds of knowledge of students in the classroom) would be on the test, they were more motivated to learn the material. Later on in the interview, Ben notes that he doesn't like that they have this high stakes test for teachers, however he sees how motivates PSTs in the program and ultimately this helps push them to develop the necessary skills to become a teacher.

The director of the teacher education program at Monarch University, Sofia, did not support the use of the TPA in their program, particularly given the stress it put on PSTs:

If they don't pass, they will not get a credential... Very, very stressful. And I think that even if it is a valuable exercise, I would still think that most people would say they would prefer not to have done it, even though it was valuable. Just the stress. I don't think they would feel that it was worthwhile. It's just a high stakes assessment that's just a necessary aspect of getting a credential in the state of California (*Sofia, Program director at Monarch, November 4, 2022*).

While Ben saw the outside scoring as a way to raise PST motivation and performance on the assessment, Sofia saw it as a detriment, preferring that they did not have a TPA

at all or that it could be scored by faculty in the program. Her reasoning and her concern about the scoring is illustrated in this response:

[The scoring is] kind of arbitrary, too. Yeah, you have a lot of scores and something. They don't get paid very much. Right. They get like \$30 per assessment. So. And then you get people some people are literally doing it for the money and just pouring through them as quickly as they can. Yeah. And some people are just slow and thoughtful and really look for what they're looking for. And I know they claim that they have really great integrator reliability and they do put in, I've gone through the training and they put trainers through integrator reliability exercises, but we all know how that goes. It's all a matter of interpretation. So a lot of the focus is on how to pass the test. Be really clear. What are they looking for? Tell them here is what you are looking for and describe it this way. So a lot of it is about how to pass the test, which is really I find the biggest shame is that (*Sofia, Program director at Monarch, November 4, 2022*).

While Sofia stated previously that it is necessary for aspects of the TPA to be integrated into the curriculum in order for students to successfully complete the test, she also indicates here her concern that the program may be teaching to the test.

Lucas at El Dorado State strikes somewhere in the middle, considering both the advantages of the assessment and its faults. He works through this thinking in the following statement:

It's like our policy gets written to prevent the worst actors, right? You know, like, policy sets the floor, not the ceiling. But it can often have the unintended consequence of lowering the ceiling. Right. You raise the floor, but lower the ceiling. And so if you didn't have some sort of assessment mechanism, then any program purporting to prepare teachers could prepare teachers (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado, November 9 2022*).

Lucas identifies here that if there is no accountability for the quality of teachers, then anyone can become a teacher. He goes on to describe the potential problems with that:

And because we're talking about children, because we're talking about families, because we're talking about an institution like school that has historically done so much harm to so many, like there needs to be some accountability that you are not sending people out there who are going to harm kids. Right. And harm kids in communities. We can debate to an extent how the TPEs and the CalTPA do that. But by having it be a performance assessment tied to the TPEs that do signal some of the practices and dispositions that we think of in terms of culturally responsive practice and things like that, then at least it is... It's better than kind of a more traditional GRE/Rica equivalent of test. *(Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado, November 9 2022).*

Lucas discusses in further depth that while he sees how distressed PSTs are by the TPA and how time consuming it is for them, his concern about eliminating the performance assessment is rooted in programs that do not share the same rigor and attention to social justice as El Dorado State and could be “the worst actors” who need a standard to be held accountable in order to produce high-quality, social justice-oriented teachers.

Influence of Teacher Educators’ TPA Perspectives on PST Orientation

Each of the program faculty I interviewed suggested that the perspective held by the teacher educators guiding implementation of the TPA had a potential impact on how PSTs then oriented themselves to the TPA and how well they performed on it. For instance, Ben described that at Golden State, the multiple-subject (MS) teachers were better suited to take the edTPA than the single-subject (SS) teachers because

MS teachers took all of their courses with Education faculty who emphasized what was necessary in order to pass the edTPA. Single-subject teachers on the other hand, took courses in their content areas outside of the Education department, where faculty were not necessarily tuned in to the requirements of the test. Furthermore, Ben suggested that because SS Education faculty did not necessarily support the use of the edTPA, they focused on the bigger picture, emphasizing social justice issues at large, rather than what would be needed to pass the TPA. Ben indicated that this potentially had an effect on the SS teachers' test scores, which tended to be lower than the MS teachers in their program. Similarly, Sofia gave examples of how different faculty approached curriculum that aided in the preparation for the TPA. She stated that:

If you were to talk to [supervisor 1], who's the primary supporter for the edTPA, she would say it's actually a great exercise to put students through, that if they actually do it, they really benefit from the actual process. So she sees a lot of intrinsic value in having students go through the edTPA. Our CalTPA folks are a little bit less enthusiastic and certainly some, like [supervisor 2], is the person who primarily supports students with the TPA and he is adamantly opposed to the TPA. He's just very, you know, he doesn't want to spend any time doing something that he doesn't believe in. And he just feels that the hoops that students have to jump through are arbitrary and not helpful... And I think that students struggle a little bit more. So I'm sure that comes across to the students however the supervisor frames it (*Sofia, Program director at Monarch, November 4, 2022*).

In this response, Sofia suggests that because Supervisor 2 is opposed to students having to take the CalTPA, his students may struggle a bit more with the test and she emphasizes that the orientation of the supervisor to the TPA comes across to the PSTs.

Lucas posits that at El Dorado State, teacher educators and supervisors tend to give PSTs specific feedback during their supervisor seminar and individual meetings around how to connect to concepts on the TPA while also emphasizing that the TPA is a box to check off and does not encompass all that is necessary in becoming a teacher.

We want them to focus on process over product, right? So we message the CalTPA as a summative assessment. It is a performance assessment of your teaching. It is a way for the state to determine to what extent you have developed the knowledge and the skills and the dispositions that you need to be an effective teacher. You know, making connections to their courses on assessment and their methods and stuff like that... And so, I guess what we want to do is not get them so focused on like, am I ready to take CalTPA, but rather get them to think about, like, am I developing as an effective teacher? And so if I'm developing as an effective teacher, then I just need to know how to show that on the CalTPA. And that knowledge will carry forward, even when I'm done with CalTPA (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado, November 9 2022*).

All of the teacher preparation programs are working within the constraints of the policy, which requires successful completion of the TPA in order to earn a teaching credential and while they integrate supports into their curriculum, the program faculty all acknowledge that individual faculty perspectives on the assessment may likely have an influence on PST performance on the TPA.

Social Justice and the TPA

As I spoke with the program faculty about the edTPA and CalTPA, I shared some of the concerns from pre-service teachers and teacher educators at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing meeting regarding how the assessment takes up issues of race, racism and social justice. Attention to social

justice resonated throughout our entire discussion but in this section I want to highlight some of the specific ways program faculty considered addressing social inequity both in the content of the TPA as well as in the implementation of it. Sofia at Monarch University echoed many of the comments from the CTC meeting stating that: “Our biggest issue is just that it's a high stakes assessment that doesn't, you know, the pass rates are not equitably distributed across different races and ethnicities, and it's just an unfair assessment.” Sofia goes on to describe how her program mitigates the lack of social justice focus in the TPA by emphasizing it in their own learning outcomes and program instruction. She also expressed a concern about the financial cost for teachers, which was waived in the years of the pandemic but has now been reinstated. Lucas also brought attention to the cost of the test indicating that one way they address this is by offering scholarships and financial help to cover the fees for PSTs. Similarly to Sofia, he also discussed how teacher educators as well as the program policies and structure encourage an emancipatory educational orientation in contrast to this approach as simply the “cherry on top” suggested by the TPA. Lucas describes:

Like if you look at the CalTPA rubrics, it's not until you get to a level four sometimes that things like incorporating students' cultural and linguistic background comes into the rubric and all you need is a three to pass. And so those are things we've talked about with the candidates. And we say like, you know, like. We think that having asset orientations towards your students, their families and their communities is integral to your teaching. It's not sort of a cherry on top. So I do think and we talk about them (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado, November 9 2022*).

Lucas goes on to include that the lack of attention to emancipatory practices in the TPEs is also discussed with pre-service teachers in the program and reiterated that this was a reason that their program created program learning outcomes that go beyond what is required in the TPEs.

We talk about that with the candidates with respect to why we have [Program Learning Outcomes] on top of the TPEs. And it is because we want to make more explicit some of these things that we feel are not sufficiently highlighted in the TPEs or in the CalTPA rubrics. And we message to them that, like the rubrics on the TPA, do not preclude you from doing these emancipatory practices. Like if you're doing these emancipatory practices, you're doing the things that are being asked of you on the CalTPA and more (*Lucas, Social Foundations faculty at El Dorado, November 9 2022*).

As described above, at Golden State, Ben indicated that he believed the PSTs learned social justice material *better* through the edTPA than without it because they were held accountable by needing to pass the assessment. He had also described that the single-subject teacher educators heavily emphasized issues of social justice and inequality, more so than what was required in the edTPA. Ben was also skeptical of claims of the discrepancies in performance on the edTPA between white teachers and teachers of color, stating that there is more of a difference between STEM teachers and social studies/English teachers due to the heavy writing component of the edTPA:

And those who fail they literally, they write one or two sentences. So there may be underrepresented groups, but it's not because they're underrepresented groups. They just did not write it because that's the most important thing about edTPA, no matter if it's math or science. So that's why a lot of math and science [teachers] tend to score lower or not as high as like a social studies and English [teacher]. We really have some fail because it's a lot of writing you have to write out, right? Whereas some classes, some content areas, they don't write as much. So [it's] difficult to put their thinking into their writing.

So it is a writing skill and I can see that (*Ben, edTPA coordinator at Golden State, November 8, 2022*).

Throughout all of their responses, the program faculty I interviewed about the TPA made it clear that they were thinking deeply about how to support PSTs in taking and successfully completing the TPA as well as being sure to emphasize issues of race, racism, and social justice absent in the assessment. One of the most salient points made throughout these interviews was that individual teacher educators have an impact on how PSTs may themselves perceive the edTPA and its usefulness (or not) in becoming a teacher. This sentiment comes through in the interviews with pre-service teachers examined in the next section.

Pre-Service Teacher Orientation to edTPA

At the outset of this study, I sought to explore how educational policy influenced teachers' perceptions of and engagement with antiracism and at first perceived the policy source to be the standards (TPEs), which were then interpreted, adapted, and disseminated by teacher educators in the teacher education programs. However, in my interviews with pre-service teachers, it became clear that for them, a very relevant and influential access point to policy was through the edTPA, which served as a high-stakes assessment of their teaching knowledge and performance, the successful completion of which was necessary in order to obtain a credential. The acknowledgement of the edTPA by the majority of PSTs I interviewed prompted me to include questions about it in the final interview and to follow-up with teacher educators and administrators to explore use of the edTPA further. The pre-service

teachers I interviewed started to bring up the edTPA in our second interview, half-way through the program. For all of the PSTs, this is when they were engaged in completing the materials for the assessment, supported by their programs with a seminar. The majority of the PSTs identified preparation for the edTPA as very stressful, taking up a lot of time and for some, reorienting what they saw as foundational for becoming a teacher. This section unpacks the responses from the pre-service teachers regarding the edTPA and explores their orientation to the assessment, how it informs becoming a teacher, how it aligned (or not) with their teacher education program, and lastly, how it addressed issues of race, racism, and equity.

TPA as Stressful and Time-Consuming

There was one aspect of the TPA that was acknowledged by all of the PSTs interviewed: the TPA was very stressful and time-consuming. Many of the PSTs discussed how they wished they could be using the time spent on preparing for the TPA to improve on teaching practices in their student teaching placements or on “anything else.” Elliot outlined this in his statement:

I think it was super distracting towards that entire spring semester. It seemed like it derailed a lot of my classes because everything became about preparing for it. And if it wasn't about preparing for it, it felt like it should be (*Elliot, Science PST at Golden State, June 30, 2022*).

Maggie expressed a similar sentiment:

I spent so many hours on the edTPA that I feel like I could have spent like working on interesting lessons and trying different things out in the classroom when in reality I was just like a worse teacher because I had to do the edTPA

for a couple of months, like I wasn't as present in the classroom (*Maggie, Social Studies PST at Monarch, July 7, 2022*).

These two statements encapsulate many of the sentiments expressed by the PSTs interviewed around how preparing for the TPA not only impacted their mental health through the high-stakes nature of the test but also actively took away from time they could have spent working on what they believed *would* contribute to bettering their teaching skills.

TPA as Complementary to Goals of the Program

Overall, pre-service teachers' perceptions of the edTPA fell into two large categories: identifying the assessment as complementary to or in conflict with the goals of the TE program. There were only three teachers who saw the goals of the TPA and the program as complementary. Two of those teachers, Alex and Heather, identified the assessment as an opportunity to reflect on what they had been learning and putting into action throughout the program. Alex stated:

It made me hyper focused on the details like, of teaching to a level that I had never thought about. It makes you reflect on why exactly are you doing this exact thing and why exactly are you doing this exact thing for this exact student or this exact type of student? So you actually taught that lesson and then you really analyze it and in the context not only of the whole class, but also these three focused students. And yeah, I never had to zoom in on those types of choices before. Why did you teach this? How did it go? What would you do different, in that kind of detail (*Alex, Science PST at Monarch, June 23, 2022*).

Similarly, Heather described the connection between the program and the edTPA:

I feel like most of the assignments, at least this semester, have all really been geared towards setting us up for success with like the edTPA. So I felt like everything's been super supportive and like I've never felt like, what was the

purpose of this assignment? Like I could always easily see, oh, this is going to help me with this (*Heather, Science PST at Golden State, March 12, 2022*).

The quotes from Alex and Heather illustrate how they saw the goals of the program and the edTPA as well integrated and beneficial. The third teacher who saw the goals of the program and edTPA as complementary, Jean, described the program as “teaching to the test” and posited that many of her courses and interactions with her supervisor were geared towards how to successfully pass the edTPA.

And so they have this like prep work for our CalTPA submission, but it just felt like overhead work that was not relevant. Like we had to prepare our lesson plans and then we had to write, like we had to write an analysis on our lesson plans. And I think it was designed to prep for the CalTPA submission, but it didn't... It just felt more like irrelevant at work because I think the practical aspects of teaching is that you don't write a fully fleshed out lesson plan for every lesson that you'll have. That is not a practical thing. And so having to do it for CalTPA, we can understand for CalTPA, but having to do more of them because the university is asking us to do it. It just seems like they don't, it seems like... Uh, this is the first time I'm realizing this, but it seems like the university program is preparing us to pass the test rather than gain the skills. Ironically (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, June 30, 2022*).

Both Alex and Heather identified the edTPA as an extension of their experiences in the program and offering an opportunity to further reflect on their teaching and deepen their understanding of how to support students in their classroom. Jean saw the program and the edTPA in alignment however perceived both to be inadequately preparing her to be a teacher. She found this ironic in that the program instructs teachers to teach more holistically, beyond the expectations from standardized tests,

and yet she concludes that in the case of its own students, the program is not practicing what it preaches.

TPA in Conflict with Goals of the Program

Over two thirds of the teachers (8 out of 11) perceived the goals of the edTPA as in conflict with the program’s goals, particularly regarding the approach to issues of race, racism, and equity. Because these eight teachers saw the program and edTPA in conflict, it was necessary for them to use one or the other as a touchstone in which to measure themselves against in terms of what it meant to be a good teacher. The responses from the teachers indicate that five of them used their program’s goals and values as a touchstone and the other three perceived the edTPA as the authority on defining what was necessary to becoming a good teacher. Table A indicates the orientations of each pre-service teacher.

Table 5: EdTPA Orientations of Pre-Service Teachers

Name	edTPA/program Complementary	edTPA/program Conflict	edTPA as touchstone	Program as touchstone
Alex	X			
Liz		X	X	
Maggie		X		X
Rupert		X		X
Diego		X		X
Shane		X	X	
Elliot		X		X
Heather	X			

Kenzie		X	X	
Tomas		X		X
Jean	X			

Of those five teachers that considered the program as the touchstone from which to measure themselves, Tomas, Elliot, and Rupert regarded the edTPA as a box to check off in order to be credentialed, but also a deterrent from their coursework. They acknowledged the time consumption and stress related to preparing for the edTPA but none of them indicated that they thought of the test as influential in their orientation to what was important in becoming a teacher. Tomas summarized his perspective on the edTPA as “I think it's just a hoop to get through, to be honest.” Elliot was irritated by how attention to the edTPA took away from what he found important in his courses:

I think it was super distracting towards that entire spring semester. It seemed like it derailed a lot of my classes because everything became about preparing for it. And if it wasn't about preparing for it, it felt like it should be. Because when teachers would try to teach you about other things, you're like, I can't learn about this right now. I'm preoccupied with trying to pass this exam, you know, and that's the more important priority. So yeah, I felt like it was really distracting and I felt like the actual EdTPA itself didn't, like studying for it and preparing everything for it, didn't feel like it was making me a better teacher. I really felt like it was more just kind of checking boxes (*Elliot, Science PST at Golden State, June 30, 2022*).

Rupert did not see the edTPA as providing an accurate portrayal of his teaching. He stated:

So I think my one big dislike about the EdTPA is that, like, I just don't think it's a very great way of evaluating someone as a teacher just because it's

essentially it's almost just like a mini snapshot of you in 2 to 3 days, maybe more if you have, like, a 45 minute class. But, I don't know. Like, I think everybody could have a good day or a bad day (*Rupert, Social Studies PST at Monarch, June 24, 2022*).

Rupert went on to describe how the edTPA shaped his becoming a teacher:

I'll say one thing is that it really showed me. Like kind of various boxes that you should kind of like be able to check off in terms of like what you're going to plan for your students. Like it should have this, it should have this. And it's not to say that I'll plan that in depth every single day, because I think that would be unrealistic. But it at least showed me, like in a perfect world, if teachers had all the time in the world, like how much planning or maybe care should go into making a lesson (*Rupert, Social Studies PST at Monarch, June 24, 2022*).

While Tomas, Elliot, and Rupert indicated that the edTPA was a distraction and a poor representation of their teaching abilities, Maggie and Diego found the edTPA to be particularly distressing and objectionable in its lack of attention to issues of race, racism, and equity. For Maggie, not only did the test essentialize approaches to teaching a diverse set of learners, it also was problematic in regard to equity in its scoring and financial requirements. She declared:

I hated the edTPA so much. Actually, mine got marked incomplete. Because of a clerical error. But I still had to pay again and resubmit. And they're saying it's my fault. But I don't, there's no proof, because once you submit it, it's like it's gone and no record. I mean, I took a shot, but I, yeah. I just feel like that took up a lot of time for nothing. I mean, it was so stressful and there was so much, it was like very high stakes assessment... And also just how the edTPA talks about students is really upsetting. Like how for the assessment category, it's like how will support for this one English learner help all of the English learners in your class? Like just kind of over generalizing students and have a super narrow view of success. And I don't know, I really didn't like that. I'm glad it's over (*Maggie, Social Studies PST at Monarch, July 7, 2022*).

Diego found that in its lack of attention to antiracism and disrupting the status quo, the edTPA was a racist assessment. He elucidated this in his third interview by stating:

Diego: The edTPA itself does not appear to me to be concerned with issues of equity and race, from what I can recall, which to me does say in some ways that it is racist.

Kim: Say more about that. What do you mean?

Diego: Just in thinking about the rubrics, it was all in how we were graded. There were elements of like the rapport and LCL in there, but we were not graded on our ability to be anti-racist. So in a sense, they were not assessing us on whether or not we could challenge the status quo of education, which implies that this assessment is not interested in disrupting the status quo (Diego, *Social Studies PST at Golden State, June 30, 2022*).

Given the emphasis placed on social justice and antiracism in the program, these teachers identified the edTPA as in conflict with those goals and chose to look to the program, rather than the assessment, as the ultimate model for becoming a teacher.

Conversely, the conflict between the goals of the program and the edTPA led three teachers to choose the edTPA as a touchstone from which to measure themselves in their ability to become good teachers. Although Liz, Shane, and Kenzie displayed a variety of sentiments towards the edTPA, they all indicated that they valued the results of the assessment more heavily than the evaluation from teacher educators and supervisors in the program. Liz's orientation to the edTPA was profoundly influenced by the fact that she did not pass the first time around. When she first found out, she reported in her second interview:

So I had been working on the TPA cycle one and I didn't pass the first round, which just like I've been feeling pretty down about it and really insecure and just kind of like, what does this mean? Am I a bad teacher? And you know, all

my mentors have been like, don't let this one test determine how you feel about your teaching, which I get that they are saying that, and I know deep down that it's true, but it's really hard to make myself believe that. And it's like this assessment, this really high-stakes assessment. And it feels like the program is like, don't ever give your kids a high-stakes assessment and make it phenomena-based and all this stuff. And then the TPA is so the opposite of what that is (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, March 9, 2022*).

Then, at the end of the program, Liz reflects on how the edTPA contributed to her experience in becoming a teacher:

It just felt so horrible. I was so down on myself and was really like, oh my God, the state of California doesn't think I'm a good teacher. Obviously, all my professors were like, no, it's okay. This happens. But still it felt horrible. And then the second time resubmitting, it was just so stressful. Yeah. I don't think it contributed to my education at all (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, July 5, 2022*).

Even though Liz states here that the edTPA did not advance her education, it is clear by the emotional toll of failing the first cycle that the test held a larger sway over what she considered the right way to teach, perhaps even more so than the words and sentiments of her professors.

Kenzie identified that the material for the edTPA represented her “best work.” She acknowledged the difference in expectations of the edTPA and her TE program, particularly in regards to the inclusion of aspects of social justice, and made a pragmatic decision in order to streamline her lesson plans. She described this process in the following statement:

[In the program] there is that social justice focus in our lesson plans. Unfortunately, it's not an aspect that the TPA graders are looking for. So in my lesson plan template, from this point forward, I've removed that section from my lesson plan. So it's unfortunate that it's not included in the TPA, but

it's still kind of a consideration that I make in my lessons, but not like on paper, more so in my head (*Kenzie, Science PST at Golden State, March 15, 2022*).

Kenzie illustrates here that she has deferred to the expectations from the edTPA rather than the social justice focus of the program. Similarly, Shane viewed the edTPA as “a necessary evil” and the authority on good teaching.

[The] edTPA is the idealized, perfect version of what being a teacher would look like. And you conform to that. And then you realize how much none of this is practical. It actually does help me. Whenever I'm struggling or whenever I need a template or a mind frame, especially for an interview. I think back to edTPA like, no. Not only did you pass the edTPA, you did very well. And when it comes to supporting a student, okay, this is what I need to do. If I need an idea or if when it comes to designing a lesson or a lesson sequence, refer to the edTPA, how I did my edTPA... You can kind of take like a zoomed out version boiled down, like, okay, just think of the edTPA if you want to be a better teacher, what is the edTPA asking for? (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

Not only did Shane value the goals of the edTPA, his positive performance on the assessment further bolstered his opinion of his own teaching. The perspectives of these final 3 teachers, Liz, Kenzie and Shane, are particularly concerning given that their conceptions of themselves as competent teachers is dependent on their performance on the edTPA, which they also describe as devoid of a commitment to social justice and equity.

Chapter Conclusion

The two main takeaways from this chapter illustrate that (1) the TPA does not merely function as an arbitrary assessment to check off on the way to becoming a teacher, but rather can function as a deterrent from centering an antiracist approach

for pre-service teachers and (2) that the orientation of teacher educators to the assessment plays a role in how the the PSTs perceive the importance of the TPA. While teacher educators may seek to subvert the importance of the TPA in order to guide PSTs towards a more justice and equity-oriented approach to teaching, the mixed messages that the PSTs receive between the goals of the program and the TPA regarding what is necessary to being a good teacher resulted in some PSTs abandoning their antiracist frameworks for the more race-neutral approach of the TPA. These findings have important implications for how teacher educators approach and prepare PSTs for the TPA and for how PSTs make sense of race, racism, and equity in their teaching, which is explored further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: Pre-service Teacher Sensemaking Around Developing Antiracist Teaching Practices

This chapter examines the pre-service teachers' engagement with issues of race, racism, and equity through their teacher education programs. Building upon the perspectives of PSTs of teacher education program as an environment to develop antiracist engagement (developed in chapter 3), and the contradictions and confusion sowed by the TPA (chapter 4), this chapter focuses on teachers' sensemaking of how justice and equity can be integrated into their teaching practices. It details how the pre-service teachers conceptualize and define antiracism, particularly how they see themselves as enacting antiracist pedagogy in their classrooms. Next, delving deeper into the experience of and challenges faced by specific groups of pre-service teachers,

namely by content area (social studies and science) and by teachers of color, the chapter suggests how teacher preparation can enhance commitment and remove barriers to engagement in antiracist teaching. This chapter unfolds in three parts, by: 1) exploring the differences and similarities among and between the social studies and science pre-service teachers in their conceptualizations and enactment of antiracist teaching; 2) discussing the role whiteness plays in understanding and developing a commitment to antiracist engagement; and 3) describing the perspectives of the POC pre-service teachers in the sample as a way of surfacing the lack of disruption of whiteness as a norm in the teacher education programs. Ultimately, these three strands support the argument that the failure to recognize, name, and counter whiteness as a norm results in teacher preparation programs and the edTPA undermining efforts to develop antiracist teachers. There is some indication that pre-service teachers of color may find it particularly challenging to receive the preparation they need from programs to develop and deepen their anti-racist teaching practices. Racial affinity groups, however, may be an effective method of creating a sense of belonging through effective learning spaces and critical communities that bolster pre-service teachers' ability to engage in antiracist teaching practices.

Conceptualizing Antiracism and Antiracist Teaching

When asked to define antiracism³, consider how it looked in practice and whether or not they considered themselves an antiracist teacher by the end of their

³ As a quick note, while building awareness around what antiracism *means* in teacher education is an important part of this project, I want to acknowledge that this analysis of pre-service teachers' definitions and conceptualizations merely grazes the surface of the exploration into how antiracism functions as a theoretical frame for these teachers. To reiterate, the focus of this study is to examine the

programs, the pre-service teacher responses reflected O'Brien's (2007) description of two distinct "ideal types" of antiracism, the first "functions largely at the interpersonal and micro-level interactions" and the second focuses on structural or institutional forms of antiracism (p.431). For example, Shane conceptualized antiracism as centering interpersonal interactions:

Zero tolerance for any sort of intolerance, but especially with when it comes to race or ethnicity. I would say anti-racism should be centered around information and education rather than confrontation, violence, even opposition. I think obviously the word anti inherently means opposed. But what I'm learning is that you catch more flies with honey than vinegar. And to have this open conversation and being educated enough to have that conversation is, I think, the route I'm going to go (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, November 14, 2021*).

Shane emphasized the importance of having an education and awareness of oppression in order to enact antiracism in his interactions. Rupert shares this micro-level perspective of antiracism:

So to me, I think antiracism should be the norm. It shouldn't just be okay to just be not racist, but I think to be like vehemently antiracist should be the standard. But yeah, I really would just see it as like an individual who is actively trying to educate themselves and broaden their perspective (*Rupert, Social Studies PST at Monarch, November 15, 2021*).

Similarly to Shane, Rupert is identifying educating oneself as an essential part of antiracism, focusing on the individual as the site to develop an antiracist commitment.

connections between policy, pedagogy, and practice in teacher education, and yet while not explored deeply here, delving into how antiracism intersects with other frames centering justice and equity for these pre-service teachers will be the topic of future papers.

More of a structural “ideal type” can be found in Diego’s definition: “Anti-racism is against racism, the abolition of power structures that have been perpetuated to favor white people in this country” (*Diego, Social Studies PST at Golden State, November 15, 2021*). Diego is clearly emphasizing power structures rooted in white supremacy as the focal point for antiracist work. Maggie, a social studies PST at Monarch, has a similar definition: “I feel like anti-racism... What it should capture is being able to recognize racist systems and actively, like divest from them. Or try to change them” (*November 9, 2021*). Maggie identifies racist systems as the reason for necessary antiracist action in the form of divesting from or changing the systems.

Some of the pre-service teachers represented a blend of these two types, seeing both micro-level and structural aspects as part of defining antiracism. For instance, Elliot wrestles with these two different levels and what is most important for him to focus on as a teacher:

I think there's different degrees to which you can attribute racism to personal biases and personal decisions versus more big picture structural relationships and power dynamics. I think being antiracist can factor into both of those things. But for me, my focus on that individual component of it is... that part of it feels less relevant to me, or maybe less impactful than it used to. And there are even today, it's still something I wrestle with a little bit, like how much should I attribute blame to an individual person for their racist attitudes or beliefs? Versus how much is that attributable to just their environment, you know? (*Elliot, Science PST at Golden State, November 23, 2021*).

The struggle exemplified by Elliot in trying to navigate the tension between individualist and structural sites of racism is an essential conflict for teachers to reckon with as they consider enacting antiracist teaching practices in their future

classrooms. Do pre-service teachers' understanding of antiracist work as individual or structural affect their commitment to antiracist engagement in the classroom? Especially given that they may question what power teachers have to influence systems of oppression. O'Brien (2007) provides some examples of how to connect the two ideal types of antiracism, offering, for example that "part of the white person's plan to interrupt white privilege in her life could be to consciously choose to move to a more racially integrated neighborhood, and begin sending her child to a more racially diverse school" (O'Brien, 2007, p.431). By taking structural action oriented steps, O'Brien argues, the individual's actions may influence the more systemic aspects of racism.

Similarly, teachers will largely be involved in micro-level antiracism through the interactions in their classrooms and yet it may be important for them to be aware of its potential systemic impact as a way to ward off any discouragement around engaging in social justice work, especially for those teachers who conceptualize antiracism as systemic. Importantly, all of the pre-service teachers in this study identified antiracism as "active" or as including an action, whether that be educating oneself or others or dismantling or divesting from racist institutions. The importance of a capacity to perceive and include a connection between subject content area and social justice emerged as an important aspect of teachers' navigation of individual and structural antiracism work.

Considering Race, Racism, and Equity Through a Content Lens

This study included secondary, single-subject pre-service teachers in the areas of social studies and science specifically due to the difference with which their content areas may or may not intersect with issues of issues of race, racism, and equity. While all of the PSTs completed a social foundations course together at each of the institutions, single-subject secondary PSTs took methods courses with other pre-service teachers in their content areas. The methods courses focus on teaching practices and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) specific to their content areas. Given the values of each program as well as the expressed pedagogical practices of the teacher educators interviewed for this study (see Chapter 3), considerations of justice and equity were infused into all of the methods courses. In my interviews with the pre-service teachers in this study, I asked explicitly how they intended to integrate race, racism, and equity into their teaching practices and there was a distinct difference between the responses of social studies PSTs and science PSTs. Each of the five social studies PSTs were equipped with examples from their teaching placement experiences in which they addressed an issue relating to racial justice and/or equity. In contrast, each of the six science PSTs described being challenged by a perceived disconnection between science content material and social justice issues along with a lack of preparation in science teaching methods. Even if connections between social studies content and issues of race, racism, and equity are more accessible given the process of unpacking historical events in social studies courses, it is still important that all courses, including science, are relevant to students

from all racial and ethnic backgrounds and reflect a diversity of epistemologies rather than relying on whiteness as an unnamed norm.

Social Studies Pre-Service Teacher Perspectives

The social studies pre-service teachers in this study provided a plethora of instances where they either were able to or outlined plans to delve into issues of race, racism, and equity in their classrooms. For example, Diego described a lesson he taught on “the atrocities of World War II” and he outlined wanting his students to not only learn the history itself but also to “reflect on how they felt about why this history can be hard to learn.” He shared, as an example, that he was proud of one of his students’ insights around identity, citizenship and historical awareness during this lesson.

She's coming from a perspective as a current American citizen or as someone whose parents immigrated from China. But she said she felt sad for those people who died during the bombings and during the war. [She said] “it's hard to learn that my country is the one who did that. People suffered due to country conflict that they can do nothing about. I'm glad I was born in a period of time of peace and that no war is happening right now in my country.” So... it's very close to having a little bit of a realization of her own identity and seeing herself as an American citizen. But also, I think in there, she's also getting the idea of a feeling of guilt in a way which isn't what I want, but also is important, I think not for students to feel guilty, but to feel a little bit uncomfortable when they're talking about history. And I think when you have students incorporate their own identities, when we're learning history, it's vulnerable, but I think that was very in depth. I was very impressed by that insight. And I think like, that's why it is uncomfortable to teach and well, it's uncomfortable to learn through that discomfort. I think it can lead to really great insight into ourselves and into why these things happen (*Diego, Social Studies PST at Golden State, June 30, 2022*).

This example illustrates how Diego was able to address racial and ethnic identity in a high school history class during his student teaching placement. He not only welcomed but cultivated opportunities for students to engage with and explore their own discomfort. Discomfort, in his pedagogical frame, is not something to be avoided but rather an opportunity to gain greater insight into the historical and contemporary topics he sees as integral to developing deep content area comprehension. And while Shane does not express a similar orientation to discomfort, he does share how much he enjoyed getting his students to consider issues of equity in his history classroom and how receptive his students were given the current political climate:

In my class, I love talking about it and I don't mean I love talking about it like it's fun, but I like to show them and have them come to the conclusions themselves... Especially regarding race, gender equality, equity in general, the lower class versus the upper class. And those are the stories that I present to them. And I love that. I love it. I feel great when I'm doing that, and especially when they get it, when they get the message, which again after BLM, the BLM summer, it's in the cultural lexicon, in the zeitgeist (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

In expressing his excitement around engaging his students in topics around race, class, and gender equality, Shane suggests that it brings him personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment to aid students in building connections between class content and current events. He goes on to describe giving his students real world examples about racism and inequity and trying to help them see the systemic racism at work as it relates both to their individual experience and as that seemingly individual experience is a result of structural inequity when it comes to educational opportunities in the U.S.:

But using [race and racism] and showing them real world examples of it, I think is the most important... Like, there is a whole swath of you in this room that not only are expected to fail, but are set up to fail. And they don't know that. You know, I didn't know that (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

Again, Shane emphasizes that real world experience and personal examples from his students are the best way to help them understand the ways race and racism are embedded in the social studies content of the class.

Social studies PSTs also noticed when other teachers avoided direct classroom discussion of race. Notably, they identified times when they noticed missed opportunities by their cooperating teachers to further delve into issues around race, racism, and equity. For instance, Maggie describes her cooperating teacher's (CT) race avoidant approach to teaching US history to middle schoolers and speculates that fear may explain his approach:

My CT is kind of an interesting person where I think that he is kind of afraid to talk about race, which I understand. Especially talking to like 12 and 13 year olds. I mean, he's teaching US history and I don't think that he's talked about race and racism enough at all. I mean, he's just starting to talk about slavery and it's March. But he's like the type of person he has, like. He's like, read all the right books and whatever. But I think he's, like, hesitant (*Maggie, Social Studies PST, Monarch, July 7, 2022*).

Maggie asserts that her cooperating teacher does not do enough to address race and racism by pointing out that it is more than halfway through the year and they have only just started to talk about slavery in US history, suggesting that this should have been addressed much sooner. She also indicates that even though her cooperating teacher has “read all the right books” he is still hesitant to engage in these tough

conversations with his middle school students. This is an important distinction that Maggie is making in the suggestion that educating oneself with the “right books” is not enough and further action in the classroom needs to be taken to engage in antiracist work.

Overall, social studies PSTs were easily able to provide examples where they did or would want to delve into issues of race, racism, and equity in their classrooms. The majority of social studies PSTs discussed justice and equity in terms of content rather than a methodological approach. This distinction between content that related to race, racism, and equity, as opposed to a justice or equity-oriented approach in the classroom also emerged as a theme in the responses from the science pre-service teachers.

Science Pre-Service Teacher Perspectives

All of the science PSTs discussed challenges integrating issues of race, racism, and equity into their middle and high-school science classes. A natural connection between the science course content and issues of race was not always evident to the PSTs and the press to cover curriculum sometimes felt like a barrier. It was noted that some areas of science offered more opportunity than others, with biology feeling more adaptable than chemistry or physics. While, It was possible to go outside of the curriculum to bring in s concerns around social justice, teachers expressed concern that such adaptations felt out of left-field to students. Overall, the lack of content curriculum articulation was an obstacle for science teachers; however, there is some indication that science teachers saw a clearer fit with pedagogical

methods known to increase access to science and facilitate a more equitable learning environment

Kenzie acknowledges her awkward efforts to insert attention to race and equity into her chemistry classroom curriculum that end up feeling superficial:

Those hard conversations about race and equity don't come up that often. And if they are, it's like here we're just trying to wedge this topic into science. And for me it doesn't feel authentic. It's like, okay, we're just going to sprinkle a little bit of like Black and Brown scientists, just sprinkle it in just for kicks and giggles or sprinkling in female scientists, for example, too. It just doesn't feel genuine, because it hasn't been a focus any other time (*Kenzie, Science PST at Golden State, March 15, 2022*).

“Sprinkle” and “wedge” are the verbs Kenzie uses to refer to how she has experienced the ways race and equity conversations fail to reach the level of “hard conversations.” Similarly, Heather acknowledges that the “difficult conversations” around justice and equity topics are not naturally part of the curriculum. To include it, she says, teachers have to both research the content and incorporate it into the curriculum: :

I know that sometimes it is hard to try and incorporate some of those difficult conversations at the high school level, especially in a science class. So because like most of it's not in the curriculum, it's all like you would have to do outside research as the teacher to try and incorporate that in (*Heather, Science PST at Golden State, March 12, 2022*).

For both Heather and Kenzie, teaching science was largely disconnected from issues of race, racism, and equity and required a divergence from the regular science curriculum to include it. There was also a differentiation between sciences such as chemistry or physics, which were identified as harder to associate with social justice

issues whereas a subject like biology lent itself more easily to conversations around race, racialization, and equity due to its connection to human processes. For example, Jean describes an article about genetic disposition shown to her by her mentor teacher suggesting a method of teaching to be more gender-inclusive:

Because gender doesn't exist at the cell level, right? But you would say like X, Y or X or whatever chromosome descriptions. And instead of saying like female male and the article was like, oh yeah, you should do this instead because it's more inclusive, because like generally the construct, but the chromosomal definitions are not. And I was like, Oh yeah, even biology, I feel like, has a little more relevance than physics (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado, March 25, 2022*).

Specifically, Jean suggests here that social justice topics are more relevant in biology than her chosen subject area of physics. She goes on to present one possible explanation for the disconnect between science and topics around justice and equity by suggesting that as a physics teacher she faces pressure to focus primarily on content and to not stray away from the teaching of scientific facts. In this example, Jean describes how she gets the impression that science comes before focusing on culturally relevant material. She states that:

I get the feeling that science teachers are always trying to cover a lot of science content. And so we feel the pressure to see scientists first and community members second. I don't know. I guess science has a certain expectation to it. Cultural norms [of science], maybe (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, March 25, 2022*).

Jean implies in this example that in the sciences (perhaps more so than in social studies and English), there is pressure to get through scientific content suggesting it is separate from issues of racial justice and equity.

Despite this perceived distance between science content and social justice issues, some of the science pre-service teachers sought to employ just and equitable *methods* in their classroom rather than relying on science content. Alex outlines this when he discusses how he can integrate issues of race, racism, sexism, and equity into his future teaching practices by ensuring equitable access to science learning, breaking down the barriers that have stood in the way of students who have been historically marginalized:

Like, I'm not a history teacher. Right? So I'm not teaching, you know, students the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow in America. That's the history teacher's job. But I can help. I can help students from all different backgrounds. You'll sort of access different parts of our society that they might not feel like they could or have felt, you know, oppressed in that way (*Alex, Science PST at Monarch, June 23, 2022*).

Liz described a similar focus on justice-oriented teaching techniques that she learned in the program, specifically her use of equity cards, a tool to ensure turn talking and prevent a few from dominating discussion, in her classroom.

It's a fact that teachers call on male students more if they don't have equity cards. And I told my students about that article. I said, like, I read this article and this is a fact. And so I'm not going to take volunteers anymore. And I want to be really good about using the equity cards. And if you catch me calling on a raised hand, call me out for something like that (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, March 9, 2022*).

Alex and Liz's equity oriented pedagogical practices are evidence of how teachers can still integrate social justice into their methods even though the science content in their courses might not lend itself directly to focusing on areas of race, racism, and equity. For Alex, this was exemplified in how his science instruction will open doors

for students who did not think careers in science were possible for them and for Liz, her use of equity cards allows her to pay attention to the needs of all the students in her class, rather than relying on those who feel most comfortable raising their hands. While each of the six science PSTs were able to provide some examples of how to integrate racial justice and equity issues into their teaching, all of them expressed a lack of science-specific pedagogical practices represented in their programs and the desire to have more strategies around putting antiracist theory into practice in their classrooms.

Taken together, the social studies and science pre-service teacher perspectives mainly considered integration of issues regarding race, racism, and equity as related to *content* rather than as a *methodological* approach to teaching. The social studies PSTs felt more confident given their content topics that often included teaching historical events where race and equity were salient issues, whereas science PSTs discussed struggling with making a connection between their lesson content and issues of race, racism, and equity. It therefore seems necessary in antiracist approaches to prepare teachers to both address race, racism, and equity as topics that are relevant to content, but also prepare teachers to consider justice and equity-oriented approaches in their classrooms. The following two sections consider how justice and equity-oriented approaches were present in the teacher education programs and what that meant for how pre-service teachers engaged with antiracist teaching practices.

Whiteness and Antiracist Teaching Practices

Throughout the interviews with the pre-service teachers over the course of their programs, there was little direct attention to or mention of whiteness and white supremacy, even though we were consistently engaged in conversation around race, racism, and equity. This does not mean that whiteness as an organizing structure was not present, but instead it largely goes unnamed throughout the interviews. Notably, this was not the case for the PSTs of color in this study, each of whom at some point over the course of the year discussed whiteness and white supremacy in plain terms. Some of these examples are noted through Diego's definition of antiracism and Rupert's recognition of histories of white supremacist groups in the next section of this chapter. Jean, a PST who identifies as Taiwanese-American, identified that the program catered to white people's perspectives, often leaving problematic views and statements unchallenged. She indicates this in the following statement:

None of the teachers call out the students and say like, maybe you should think about this from a different perspective. It's never like that, right? It's always like, that's nice. Like, that's your perspective. We respect that and then we move on. Whereas I think to be really, kind of going back to being antiracist, I think calling certain practices out would maybe bring about more conceptual change, but I don't know for sure, like.. It's complicated (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, June 30, 2022*).

Jean suggests that by not addressing or problematizing certain perspectives, teacher educators in the program are effectively *not* engaging in antiracism. She provides an example to illustrate this point:

One of my classmates was like, 'Oh yeah, sometimes I can tell that I'm judged for living in [a wealthy area] because everyone thinks the kids from [this wealthy area] are spoiled but I work. I have a real job.' And I was like, that's not the point. That's kind of like the types of conversations that people

will bring up in our discussions as like a ‘Yes, me too. I have experienced bias,’ but it's kind of to me as a minority whose race has been like, you know, shot in the street. It's like, you're missing the point, right? That's not something that is as important as what we're trying to discuss (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, June 30, 2022*).

Jean indicates that a classmate makes a connection to “experiencing bias” that Jean finds to be shallow and not relevant, specifically as an Asian-American person living during the pandemic when there were an exponential rise in violence against Asian-Americans. Although she does not name the classmate as white, it is implied given that she is differentiating from them as “a minority.” Furthermore, she is looking towards the teacher educators in the class to “call out” this distinction and yet it does not happen, which she finds discouraging and goes against the program’s stated antiracist values.

As an example of a similar experience from a white person’s perspective, Shane identifies whiteness in his evaluation of his teacher education program’s approach to antiracism. This quote comes from a conversation in which he described that the “current zeitgeist on social justice has put a sour taste in my mouth” and that “when taken to the extreme, social justice kind of divides more than it heals wounds and brings people together.” He juxtaposed this perspective with the program’s approach to social justice by stating:

I feel like the program, it was actually really good about not attacking my whiteness. And was really good about holding a lens up to curriculum and the purpose of teaching and how I can use that and not making me feel guilty for being white. But young people my age and my generation right now who are very social justice minded kind of put blinders on. It works as blinders to me. And then like I said, it makes me feel guilty for being white. Instead of using

my whiteness, my perspective (*Shane, Social Studies PST at Golden State, July 18, 2022*).

In this example, Shane reports feeling relieved about not having “his whiteness” attacked in the program, thus making it easier to bring people together and “heal wounds.” This statement suggests that it is because the program has not directly named whiteness that it was palatable and accessible for Shane. Although there were not many instances of PSTs discussing how whiteness intersected with their conceptualizations of antiracism, these two examples show us different sides of the same coin in terms of how interrogating whiteness might engage or or disengage PSTs with the antiracist values of their teacher education program.

As a way to bring whiteness into the conversation for more of the PSTs in the study, in the third interview I asked if there would be differences in how they might address issues of race, racism, and equity in a classroom of predominantly white students versus a classroom of predominantly students of color. The rest of this section considers some of their responses particularly given how whiteness plays a role in antiracist and culturally responsive pedagogy.

When asked about how they approach issues of race, racism and equity in their teacher education programs and placements, some of the PSTs conflated race with cultural relevance, associating this instructional approach with students of color but not with white students, who were seen as not having a culture that issues of race would be relevant to. The PSTs were not specifically asked about culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), however they often referred to CRP in discussions around race and

racism in the classroom. Specifically, the PSTs were concerned with how to provide culturally relevant content to students when their perceived racial identities differed from that of the teacher. For example, when asked about how approaching issues of race may differ in a predominantly white classroom vs a classroom of predominantly students of color, Kenzie wrestled with how taking a visibly anti-oppressive approach in the classroom may be received by a conservative, white school population like the area that she grew up in. She describes how another teacher at her placement put up Black Lives Matter and other posters that are “associated with everyone is welcome here, like, no matter what you look like or what you come into the classroom with, your struggles, like you belong here” and she considers the potential reactions of the community.

And those are things that I would love to put up. But if, like, I were teaching at the middle school like that I went to where parents lean conservative, they might see something at an open house or back to school night and be like, oh, you're supportive of the LGBTQ+ community or something like that. Or even the phrase Black Lives Matter, they probably would not... So there were a couple of instances like that, for example, that I thought about, like if I am teaching in the predominantly white community with parents who lean conservative, would it fly? And my conclusion was no, probably not (*Kenzie, Science PST at Golden State, June 21, 2022*).

For Kenzie, this introduced some hesitation around engaging in antiracist or culturally responsive approaches explicitly and she reported that she would rather take note of them “in her head”, so as to continue to be inclusive but not to have to deal with community conflict. Jean had similar concerns about providing culturally relevant material to her students. She stated:

Yes, my student teaching classroom was predominantly white... And I didn't know how to bring up conversations of race and equity in a place where it's not culturally relevant to those students... In a more diverse classroom. I would do that and I would feel like it's very relevant and the students would be engaged in a conversation... But in the classroom that I was in, I didn't think they would get it. So I felt like it wouldn't be like setting up for success (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, June 30, 2022*).

Jean indicates that issues of race and equity are not relevant to her white students and that ultimately by engaging in topics of race, the lesson would be unsuccessful because of her students' lack of racial literacy, based on their whiteness. This suggests that her white students are raceless, without a culture that is associated with a racial identity.

In another example, when asked about how she might incorporate issues of race and racism into her future classroom, Liz, a white PST, was feeling apprehensive about engaging in culturally responsive teaching practices when she did not share the same background as her largely Latinx student population. Liz described:

There's all this discourse about inviting prior knowledge and relevant cultural experience. And I don't have the same cultural experience as my students... I don't want to be a white person in front of the classroom saying, Oh, how many of your families work in the fields like oh I bet they know a lot about photosynthesis. It just feels, it feels wrong in my gut (*Liz, Science PST at Monarch, October 11, 2021*).

Liz indicates that the program encouraged her to engage in culturally relevant teaching practices, and yet she is uncomfortable with bringing in cultural knowledge and experiences of her students. As a white person, she lacks the necessary “culture” to connect with her students, which is in tension with providing the culturally relevant material necessary to be a socially-just teacher.

The responses of Kenzie, Jean, and Liz indicate a tension around providing culturally relevant instruction to and from white people. The purpose of CRP according to Ladson-Billings (1995) is to bridge school culture, a historically white space (Anderson, 2015), with the home cultures of students of color, specifically African-American families. However, what if the students are white? How does the teacher provide a culturally relevant classroom that addresses issues of race and racism? In a lecture, Dr. Bettina Love argues that “white schools do have culturally relevant pedagogy. When you are at a school where the teachers look like you and the curriculum looks like you and everybody sounds like you, you are getting a culturally relevant curriculum. And that curriculum propels you to think that school is safe and school is normal and learning is what you should be doing” (The City Club of Cleveland, 2019). Love is describing how in predominantly white schools, the traditionally Eurocentric curriculum and white norms are culturally relevant to white students and thus go unnoticed, ultimately protecting whiteness.

Given the responses from the PSTs in this study, the role whiteness plays in their programs fall into two categories. The first is around whether interrogating whiteness and white perspectives is an essential part of developing antiracist engagement in the teacher education program. Second, some of the PSTs in this study focus on the racial make-up of the classroom, whether the students or the teacher is white, and which pedagogical method is most culturally appropriate. When issues of race are seen as primarily related to demographics and specific cultural practices are thought to be embodied by racialized groups, CRP is the tool teachers reach for in

order to provide a socially-just and equitable education. However, if issues of race are seen as epistemological, presenting different ways of knowing, then challenging hegemonic white disciplinary knowledge becomes “relevant” for all students in a justice-oriented classroom. Warren et al (2020) suggest three political and social commitments for creating a just learning environment:

The critique and refusal of settled forms of disciplinary knowledge and practice (Tuck, 2009); epistemic delinking from colonial matrices of power (Mignolo, 2009); and the collective imagining, articulation, and enactment of alternative possibilities for human learning and relations (Espinoza, 2009). (p.278).

While CRP is an important pedagogical method for teachers to learn, it is essential for teacher education programs centering social-justice to prepare teachers to disrupt white supremacist epistemologies rather than seeking for essentialized cultural practices to match the racial demographics of their classrooms.

POC Pre-Service Teacher Perspectives

The experiences of the teachers of color in this study further surface the reliance on whiteness as an unnamed norm in either their teacher education programs or the edTPA. The majority (72% or 8 of 11) of the pre-service teachers interviewed in this study identified as white or as white-passing⁴. There were three (28%) PSTs that identified as pre-service teachers of color; two PSTs identified as Hispanic/Latinx and one identified as Taiwanese-American. In this section, I unpack the experiences and expressed practices of each of the three POC pre-service teachers

⁴ One PST identified as multiracial but indicated that she mainly experienced the world as a white person.

regarding justice and equity. The perspectives of these teachers help to illuminate how the program can address and interrogate whiteness as a norm because as people of color, they are more likely to recognize it and be othered by it. Profiles of each POC pre-service teacher include descriptions of their program experiences and an analysis of their general conceptualization of work that centers antiracism and equity. The experiences of the three indicate varied program success, with affinity groupings offering the most promising effects of developing antiracist engagement. Two of the POC pre-service teachers did not find the program material emphasizing racism and equity to enhance or expand their understanding of antiracist teaching. The third pre-service teacher specifically referenced his inclusion in a Latinx cohort in the program as having a profound impact on his sense of his identity and its centrality to being an antiracist teacher.

Rupert: Antiracism through representation

Rupert perceives his role as a male, Latinx teacher as very important in terms of representation and cultural connection to students who are like him, given that his educational experiences before graduate school included very few Latinx teachers. Rupert identifies as a Latin American, Mexican and El Salvadorean, cis-man, pre-service social studies teacher. He grew up in the same area as Monarch University, where he is a pre-service teacher, and in general considered himself as an average, "run of the mill" student. He loved history in high school and while there was a teacher that made him believe in himself and his academic potential, encouraging him to go to college, he also identified a teacher from high school who engaged in some

pretty racist behavior. Rupert posited that he did not have any teachers who looked like him until he went to college. He started at a local community college and then transferred to a university in a major metropolitan area to complete his undergraduate degree (not Monarch) once he felt that he had focused on history and was doing better in school.

Rupert sees his racial identity as the most important part of his identity, or at least the most prominent. He connected his experiences of racism while in high school, specifically from teachers, to not having any teachers who looked like him throughout his K-12 education. Now as a pre-service teacher in the same town, he frequently discussed historical knowledge of different schools and their "history of racism". For example, he noted the involvement in forming white supremacist groups by one of the school's he was placed in to student teach and described how he could see how that continues to play a role at these schools today.

Rupert is very easy going, easy to talk to, laughs easily and is thoughtful and methodical in his answers. His conceptualization of antiracism focuses on education building awareness, and speaking out against racism. He quotes Freire in that being neutral is to be on the side of the oppressor and sees it as essential for teachers to educate themselves in order to not be neutral. He emphasizes the need to be "actively vocal" and not to "shy away" from calling out instances of racism. He indicated that Monarch University did little to further develop his understanding of race, racism, and equity. It just affirmed some of his own K-12 experiences, particularly when it came to inequitable educational opportunities and the potential for teachers to engage

in racism towards their students. On the whole, Rupert saw the program as living up to its mission of antiracist engagement in terms of providing an introduction to structural oppression (which he felt he was already aware of). However he indicated that he wished there was more practical application of antiracist theory throughout the entire program rather than just centered in the summer before student teaching. Lastly, while not a fan of the edTPA, he reports that it didn't have much impact on him and how he thought about teaching. He saw it as attending to some issues of equity but not really to race and racism. Ultimately, he reported that the edTPA was complementary to the program and didn't seem too bothered by the experience of preparing for it.

Overall, Rupert's responses indicate that he understood the program and the edTPA as compatible, particularly in their reliance on whiteness and lack of attention to delve deeply into issues of race and racism. While Rupert saw Monarch as providing an introductory awareness of racial justice and equity to its teachers, this knowledge was already apparent to Rupert given his own experiences as a Latinx man. Thus, Monarch did little to expand Rupert's understanding of structural inequity and did not provide him with the tools to develop antiracist teaching practices in his classroom. However, this dearth of preparation did not seem to discourage Rupert, as his main association with engaging in antiracism was to represent his students as a teacher of color and be the role model that he did not have as a student of color. Rupert felt rooted in his racial and teacher identity and supported by his community, in which he planned to teach.

Jean: Reliance on whiteness in program dilutes antiracist development

Unlike Rupert, who didn't expect to gain much antiracist teaching development in his program, Jean entered El Dorado State University feeling she had a lot to learn. Jean identifies as a 2nd generation Taiwanese-American, female (she/they pronouns), science pre-service teacher. Born to Taiwanese parents in the US, she grew up in the Bay Area and sees one of the most salient parts of her identity as being a woman in STEM rather than her racial identity (given that she grew up in a community with a large Asian population). Teaching is her second career as she got an undergraduate and graduate degree in mechanical engineering and worked in tech for several years before deciding to go into teaching. She described her disenchantment with the tech industry, particularly the labor of being a part of the female representation. Jean switched to teaching because she wanted to make a difference in the lives of young girls, specifically in terms of inspiring them to go into STEM.

Jean posits that issues of race and equity did not appear at all in her former training as a mechanical engineer and thus felt there was a lot to learn in the credential program. She conceptualized antiracism as acknowledging that racism exists and plays a role in the system and that being antiracist means having an agenda about actively eliminating racism. She struggled with identifying opportunities to "be antiracist" in the classroom because she worked mainly with white students and found it difficult to integrate issues of race/racism into the STEM curriculum.

Although optimistic at the beginning of the program, Jean grew dissatisfied with her program's attention to social justice work, positing that teacher educators in the program did not tout antiracist values "loudly enough", did little to interrogate other pre-service teachers' racist beliefs, and operated mainly as an environment to churn out teachers without challenging their beliefs. She said:

The El Dorado State University program doesn't seem to do anything to change who you are already. Maybe that's a strategy, but I guess it feels more like a support system than a creation system. . . Like it doesn't feel like it's a program that's creating teachers, but more like allowing teachers to become who they are (*Jean, Science PST at El Dorado State, June 30, 2022*).

Supporting someone to become the teacher they are already is not transformative. This seemed especially apparent to her in the utilization and preparation for the edTPA, which she also saw as skirting many of the issues related to race and equity. In this way she saw the edTPA and the program as complementary, particularly given the program's agenda to "teach to the test" and get teachers to pass. This was disconcerting to her and by the end of the program, Jean outlined several issues with how the program only did surface level work to address issues of racism and inequity. In this way, it seems that neither the teacher education program nor the edTPA really served as a touchstone of good teaching for her.

Both Rupert and Jean understand their teacher education programs as a support in becoming the teacher they already are, rather than transforming their teacher perspectives. However, Rupert is supported by his community in his own experiences and foundational understanding of structural systems of inequity, whereas Jean looked to the program to provide that community support and antiracist

development. While Rupert seems to have little expectation that the program or the state exam would have offered him a different experience, Jean was seeking guidance and was disappointed by both her program and the state exam.

Diego: The promise of affinity cohorts

An all Latinx cohort created much more positive learning conditions for Diego. His experience at Golden State University was largely informed by his cohort experience. It was apparent that as the year went on, the Latinx cohort became an increasingly more important aspect of Diego's development as a teacher. Diego identifies as a white, Hispanic, cis-man, pre-service social studies teacher. Diego grew up in northern California with a teacher as a father and parents who had high expectations of his academic success. As a K-12 student, he described himself as not doing well in math and science and being drawn to history as one of the only subjects he really loved, in part because of really good history teachers. Although he had taken AP courses, he felt very unprepared for college and it took a lot of adjusting to "buckle down" and become a good student. After a period of uncertainty, Diego eventually decided on majoring in history and minoring in museum studies, going on to work as a museum educator. Then the pandemic happened and museums shut down. During this time, Diego decided to pursue a teaching credential as a possible "fall-back" career although over time, Diego became more and more invested in teaching.

The Latinx cohort ended up having a profound effect on how he considered his own identity. The majority of his courses were taught with the other members of

the Latinx cohort and were instructed by primarily Latinx faculty. Diego discussed never having had the chance to be in an educational space with only others of Latin descent and found it to be empowering and affirming of his experiences and identity. This shift in awareness of his identity influenced his conceptualization of antiracist engagement in the classroom, where he saw his positionality as a Latinx male teacher as inherently political and "not neutral" when it came to disrupting the status quo and "typically racist and discriminatory educational settings". He conceptualizes antiracism as "the abolition of power structures that have been perpetuated to favor white people in this country" and saw his role as a teacher as interrupting the status quo.

Diego found the edTPA to be stressful and unhelpful as a way to measure his ability as a teacher. He saw a conflict between the program and the edTPA, identifying the edTPA as a measurement from the state whose interest was in maintaining the status quo while the teacher education program was adamantly instructing him to disrupt the status quo. He identified the fact that the edTPA does not measure a teacher's ability to engage in antiracist pedagogy as evidence that the edTPA is not concerned with race or equity and thus inherently racist.

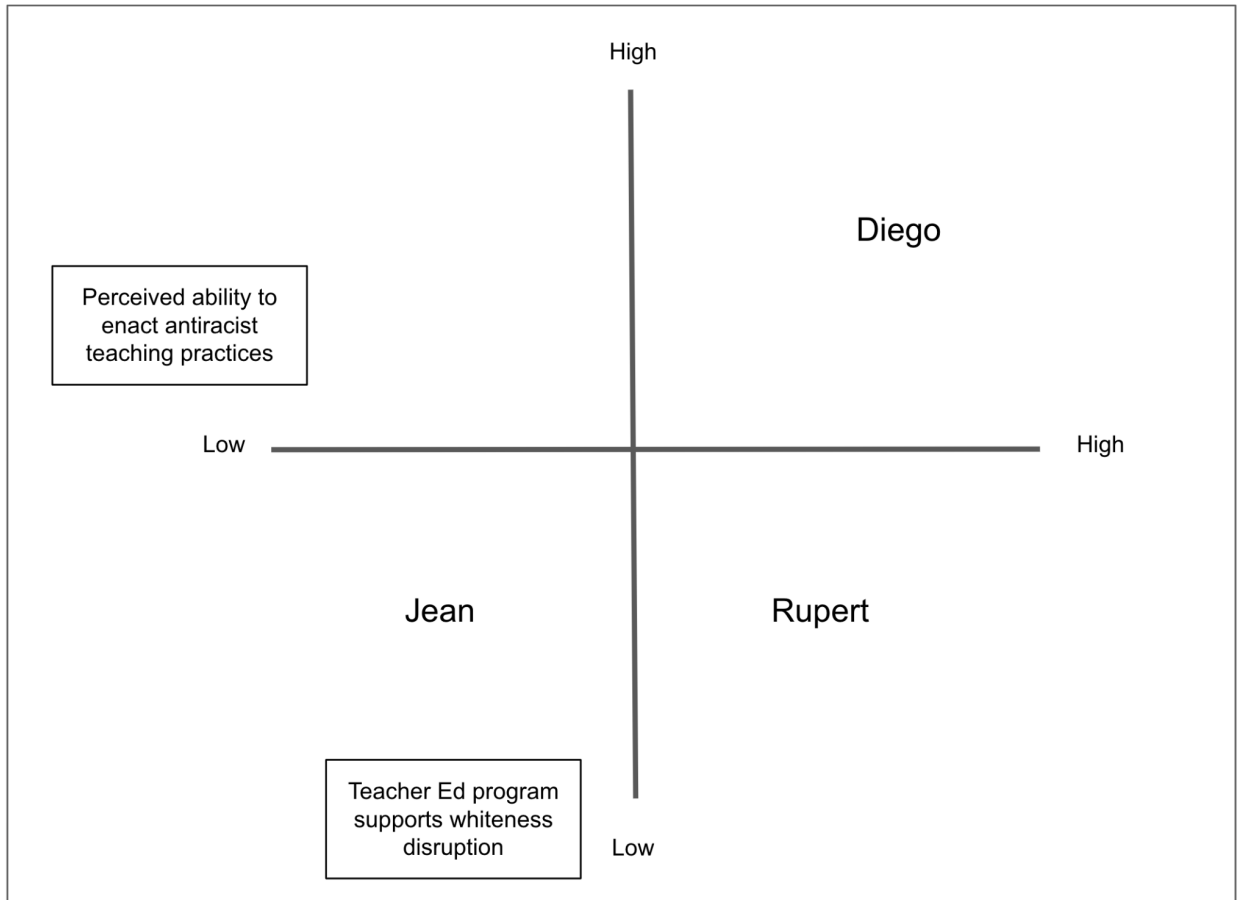
Like Rupert, Diego can marginalize the importance of the edTPA because he has found a strong source of support and certainty in his identity through the Latinx cohort in the Golden State program. The Latinx cohort has allowed Diego the space to develop greater awareness and pride in his racial identity and, unlike Rupert and

Jean, has encouraged a transformative experience for Diego in which he is strongly committed to an antiracist teaching framework.

Taken together, the experiences of the three POC pre-service teachers indicate significant shortcomings in their teacher education programs' capacities to challenge racist norms across all students, address the specific needs of pre-service teachers of color, and develop antiracist teaching practices for all. Rupert indicated that his experiences were merely confirmed by the program and desired more instruction on how to put the antiracist perspectives into practice. Similarly, Jean also wished for more application of antiracist theories, particularly in the STEM classroom and was especially deflated by teacher educators' limited actions around critically guiding other (white) pre-service teachers in her program given her prior career's lack of attention to justice and equity. Promise to significantly advance POC teacher perspective on antiracism and justice, however, is suggested by Diego's powerful experience of his racial/ethnic affinity group.

In tandem with the individual cases of each POC teacher, it is important to consider again the findings from the first section of this chapter regarding the pre-service teachers' perception that engagement in antiracism must include action. For pre-service teachers, this means enacting antiracist teaching practices in their classrooms. As a visual representation of these integrated findings, consider where each of the three teachers of color are situated in Figure 3 in terms of their perceived ability to enact antiracist teaching practices and their teacher education programs' support of a disruption of whiteness as a norm.

Figure 3. Antiracist teaching practices and disrupting whiteness as a norm



These cases suggest that on the right side of the central line, PSTs with a higher perceived ability to enact antiracist teaching practices are more resilient to programs that do not disrupt whiteness as a norm. Both Rupert and Diego on that side of the line are able to see the edTPA as a functional part of becoming a teacher rather than disorienting from their antiracist framework. Rupert’s perception of antiracist action is rooted in representation as a teacher of color and providing racially just education, the confirmation of which largely takes place outside of the program. While he does not experience any further antiracist development from the program, he also does not

report feeling derailed by the shortcomings of it or the edTPA. Alternatively, Jean is less resilient to the program and edTPA shortcomings as she is reliant on the program to guide her towards antiracist action and the program does not offer her this opportunity either through the form of an affinity cohort or otherwise.

Although a limited sample, these findings resonate with critical scholars' recommendations to create healing, affinity spaces for BIPOC pre-service teachers in teacher education programs (Dillard, 2019; Kohli et al., 2021) In the words of Diego:

It made it a lot easier in those classes to discuss anti-racist themes and topics because there was so much we could relate to as a group and we didn't feel like we had to watch what we said in fear of upsetting those in the group who would be white students.

Both Diego and Rupert were afforded this support through the affinity cohort (Diego) and the local community (Rupert), whereas Jean felt isolated due to her lack of a critical community and by her program's prioritizing of white comfort (Matias, 2016). As Diego indicates in this quote, whiteness played a role in how PSTs were able to engage in topics around antiracism and equity in their teacher education classrooms and ultimately, reliance on whiteness as a norm inhibits Rupert's but especially Jean's growth as antiracist teachers.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explores how the pre-service teachers in this study make sense of addressing race, racism, and equity particularly through the lens of creating an antiracist teaching practice. Through examining the responses from science versus social studies teachers, pre-service teachers of color, and considering the role of

whiteness in antiracist pedagogy, a common theme was identified: a lack of attention to how to put antiracism into *action* in the classroom, the very thing that each of the pre-service teachers included as an essential aspect in their definitions of antiracism. Furthermore, a lack of interrogation of whiteness as an underlying norm in teacher education programs and the edTPA led to diminished antiracist teaching commitments. While it was clear that the PSTs were engaged in being educated around issues of deficit frameworks, prejudice and structural racism in their programs, each group discussed in this chapter struggled with how to translate that knowledge into antiracist pedagogy in the classroom, whether it was a science classroom, making a social studies classroom more just or equitable, progressing POC pre-service teachers' knowledge of antiracism beyond their own experiences, or addressing whiteness in antiracism. The pre-service teachers were all committed to being "antiracist teachers" and yet directly addressing whiteness and the actual methods of creating just and equitable classrooms seemed to elude them.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion and Conclusion

This study sheds light on the connections between teacher education policy, pedagogy, and practice as it relates to pre-service teachers' development of a commitment to antiracist engagement in their future classrooms. The research used a nested case design to analyze 1) California state policy mandates regarding teacher standards and assessments, 2) teacher educators navigation of those policies in relation to their preparation of pre-service teachers in three California teacher

education programs, and 3) the situated experience of the pre-service secondary teachers at those teacher education programs.

My findings indicate that state policies largely sidestepped addressing issues of race, racism, and whiteness directly. Despite this omission, teacher educators in these three programs sought to provide teacher preparation that centered justice and equity-oriented education. Often they were successful, but sometimes the disconnect between the state policies and the teacher education programs created confusion and internal conflict for the student teachers. For some pre-service teachers in this study, the social justice approach in their programs was largely effective, resulting in an expanded awareness of oppression and inequity in the education system. They described shifts and negotiation of teacher identity and enhanced critical perspectives on what an antiracist, equitable education looks like, both in their teacher education programs and in the K-12 classroom. Other pre-service teachers, however, felt pulled between the priorities expressed and omitted in the state credential assessments versus those communicated in their preservice education. This disconnect revealed several potential barriers to developing teachers committed to antiracism, notably (1) the reliance on whiteness as a norm in the teacher education state standards, (2) the dominance of the edTPA, an assessment that does not attend to race and racism, among teachers educators and pre-service teachers (3) isolating silos of teacher educators in teacher preparation programs, and (4) the dearth of antiracist teaching methods that interrogate whiteness provided to pre-service teachers. Critical whiteness studies and the theory of racialized organizations aid in the interpretation of

the logics and mechanisms at work that function to create confusion around expectations of teachers. This results in a reliance on the status quo and maintenance of whiteness as a norm, which ultimately thwarts antiracist efforts. As Ansley (1997) outlines in their chapter in *Critical whiteness studies: Looking behind the mirror*, rather than considering white supremacy to be an overt ideology of political extremists, it is necessary to unveil the elusive apparatuses that perpetuate whiteness as dominant.

[By] ‘white supremacy’ I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings (Ansley, 1997, p. 592).

There is evidence of how “whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources” and “conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread” in the way that the Teaching Performance Expectations and the edTPA and CalTPA function as gatekeepers to the teaching profession and yet do not acknowledge the role whiteness plays in our education system nor do they attend to the values of racial literacy and culturally responsive teaching practices. Thus, by achieving the learning outcomes outlined in the standards and successfully completing the TPA, teachers in this study not only obtain a teaching credential in California but also “whiteness as a credential” (Ray, 2019) in that they have illustrated that their teaching knowledge and practices rooted in whiteness are

sufficient enough not to threaten the status quo. Ray (2019) describes racialization and credentialing such that:

Whiteness is a credential providing access to organizational resources, legitimizing work hierarchies, and expanding White agency. This credential helps organizations appear racially neutral in principle, while in practice institutionalizing the property interest in Whiteness. Credentials are allegedly objective, organizationally-generated statuses showing suitability for employment and legitimating modern stratification systems (p.41).

The emphasis on satisfying the state standards and assessments entrenched in whiteness are in conflict with the preparation programs' stated values and the efforts of teacher educators to prepare teachers committed to antiracism and equity. This undermines pre-service teachers' trust in program authority and limits program capacity to produce teachers able to reckon with the ways whiteness shows up when engaging in antiracist and culturally responsive classroom teaching practice. The organizational structures of teacher education programs exacerbate the challenge by siloing teacher educators primarily responsible for addressing issues of race, racism, and equity (foundations or sociology of education instructors) from the rest of the faculty and program. Often the race focussed faculty are adjunct professors or lecturers with limited say and power in the hierarchy of the teacher education programs. Taken together, while teacher educators and many pre-service teachers in this study illustrated their ardent commitment to teaching practices that center justice and equity, state policies and program structure can work to undermine endeavors to develop antiracist teachers.

Whereas previous research on interrogating whiteness and developing antiracist frameworks in teacher education has primarily focused on transforming individually held prejudices of pre-service teachers (Hambacher and Ginn, 2021; Jupp, Berry, & Lensmire, 2016; Sleeter, 2001), this project brings attention to the structural policies and practices that can contribute to confusion and ultimately limit teachers' efforts to enact antiracist pedagogy. Before turning to the implications of this work, I will discuss three main findings in the context of the theoretical framework of this study: (1) Teacher education programs matter in that the programs in this study functioned as a mediator of antiracist engagement and critical reflection for pre-service teachers, (2) Policy and organizational structure can undermine teacher educator efforts, and (3) Antiracist teaching practices and how to address whiteness in the classroom get lost in the theories. Following this discussion, I will provide implications and recommendations for teacher education, education policy, and education research.

Teacher Education Programs Matter

From the perspectives of the pre-service teachers interviewed in this study, the justice and equity-oriented values of their teacher education programs made a difference in how they considered teaching in their future classrooms. Even though the pre-service teachers were drawn to their programs for geographical reasons more than ideological ones, the PSTs reported shifts in understanding and questioning their positionality in relation to their students, greater awareness of deficit frameworks for students of color, and increased use of equitable teaching practices. These shifts were

particularly prevalent for white teachers in the study, whose negotiation with their whiteness aligns with Crowley's (2016) conceptualization of "transgressive white racial knowledge" and "negotiated white racial knowledge." Crowley describes transgressive white racial knowledge as "racialized knowledge that went beyond the structured blindness (Mills, 1997) of typical White racial knowledge (Leonardo, 2009)" and teacher engagement in "race discourse that runs counter to established norms of White racial knowledge (Leonardo, 2009), [such that] they cross tacit boundaries and risk marginalization from the White community (Thandeka, 1999)" (p.1019). Examples from this study include social studies PST Maggie's recognition of deficit framing and science PST Liz's interrogation of her positionality as a white teacher in a primarily Latinx school. Crowley defines negotiated white racial knowledge as instances when teachers "drew conclusions that allowed for a measure of comfort and distance from the implications of racism" or teachers "calling for safe spaces to discuss race and through their minimizations of how race structures society" (p.1022). Examples from this study include science PST Kenzie's desire to distance herself from an antiracist approach and focus on content and social studies PST Shane's relief at not having his whiteness attacked in the program. These examples of transgressive and negotiated white racial knowledge illustrate that PSTs in this study were questioning their identities and considering the ways in which their positionality would play a role in their future classrooms.

Teachers of color in this study reported less of a transformative experience in terms of programs enhancing their knowledge of systemic oppression. Rather, the

programs confirmed what they already knew to be true about the inequities of the school system. Notably however, Diego described how his inclusion in a Hispanic cohort at Golden State bolstered his sense of belonging and invigorated his commitment to engaging in antiracist pedagogy, due to an enhanced sense of the political nature of his role in the classroom as a Latinx teacher. His experience reflects research on race-based caucuses in teacher education, defined as “intentionally organizing groups along the lines of particular identity formations and engaging in critical and intentional analysis of the differential consequences of those identities” (Varghese et al., 2019, p.4). In their study on race-based caucuses (RBC) in university-based teacher education programs, Varghese et al. (2019) posit that RBCs “can encourage teacher candidates to examine their varying relationships to school-based processes of racialization (and therefore racism) and to examine how race figures into their own teacher identities” (p.7). Indeed this was Diego’s experience when he indicated that inclusion in the Hispanic cohort allowed him to speak more freely about experiences of racism, discrimination, and challenges of enacting antiracist practices without the potential of white teachers’ reactions of fragility or guilt. This example serves as an important indicator that

White teachers and teachers of Color need to deepen their exploration of their racialized selves as developing teachers—albeit in different ways. White teachers (who still disproportionately represent the teacher workforce in the United States) can only authentically, ethically, and effectively teach in an asset-based and equity-oriented way when they have critically engaged their own racialized identities and relationships to broader systems and structures of Whiteness (Daniels & Varghese, under review; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). At the same time, a consideration of their racialized selves for teachers of Color

seems to be especially critical for their own development and persistence in the profession (Varghese et al., 2019, p.2).

In order to provide critical experiences in teacher preparation that challenge and transform both teachers of color and white teachers, it is imperative to provide spaces where teachers of color are able to grapple with issues in teaching that differ from the concerns faced by white teachers.

Lastly, as a sign that teacher education programs shifted pre-service teacher perceptions, the PSTs in this study became increasingly critical of the ways that the programs “practiced what they preached.” Pre-service teachers demonstrated selection neutrality in their decision of where to attend a teacher education program, reporting that the justice and equity frameworks of the program played little to no role in their selection process. However, by the end of the program, most of the pre-service teachers in this study utilized their more developed critical framework to critique their programs and the legitimacy of its antiracist and equitable practices. These examples illustrate that teacher education programs have the potential to shift teacher orientations towards justice and equity-oriented frameworks and function as mediators of racial identity (Philip & Benin, 2014) and antiracist engagement.

Policy and Program Organizational Structure Can Undermine Teacher Educator Efforts

The pre-service teachers’ identity shifts and broadened awareness of oppression suggest the positive influence of the social justice mission and values of the teacher education programs, combined with the focused intentions and efforts of

teacher educators, facilitated a teacher preparation environment focused on justice and equity. However, there were also barriers embedded in the policies and organizational structure of the programs that sowed confusion around the expectations for pre-service teachers and for some pre-service teachers, hindered their commitment to antiracist engagement.

First, many of the factors necessary for the successful completion of the edTPA and CalTPA led some pre-service teachers to feel disengaged with the antiracist framework of their program. The pressure to pass the assessments oriented them, instead, to those requirements when considering what was necessary to be a good teacher. Even as pre-service teachers identified the TPA as mostly bereft of issues pertaining to race, racism, and equity, the high-stakes nature of the test, the fact that it was necessary to pass in order to gain a teaching credential, pushed some teachers to consider it as the main template and guide for how they should teach. This reliance on the test comes into conflict with the values of the teacher educators and the stated missions of the programs in this study, whose pedagogical frameworks intended to push beyond the boundaries of what was required in the TPA. The literature on the use of the edTPA in teacher education presents several concerns around the responses of pre-service teachers in this study. For example, in their article *Troubling the edTPA: Illusions of objectivity and rigor*, Dover and Schultz (2016) discuss their concerns with the role played by high-stakes, standardized teacher performance assessments in the dramatically shifting landscape of teacher preparation:

It is not the idea of performance-based assessment in and of itself that we wish to critique, but rather the ways in which TPAs narrow and standardize the definition of “good teaching,” equate task fidelity with competency, and artificially decontextualize teaching and teacher education. Unlike local evaluations of candidates, which promote learning through regular feedback and dynamic, ongoing assessment, high-stakes TPAs glorify external accountability at the expense of candidate growth (p.97).

Dover and Schultz emphasize that rather than emphasizing teacher candidate growth, the TPA promotes task fidelity. The authors go on to identify the problematic nature of external scoring from private companies such as Pearson, who are removed from the local contexts of the learning environments of the pre-service teachers and lack the developed expertise of teacher educators in preparation programs. It also raises concerns around racialized assumptions made by the scorers of the TPA as noted by Dover and Schultz (2016):

Because Pearson has not provided any data regarding the demographic profile of its scorers, one can only assume the scoring pool reflects the overwhelming Whiteness of teaching and teacher education writ large, suggesting scorers may inadvertently reproduce culturally hegemonic—and thus inherently subjective—constructions of teaching and learning (p.98).

As Dover and Schultz along with Tuck and Gorlewski (2016) and the critical scholars involved in the California Alliance of Researchers for Equity in Education (CARE-ED) suggest, pre-service teachers’ reliance on the TPA as a touchstone for what is meant by good teaching can lead to a disassociation with antiracist pedagogical frameworks and ultimately enforce a reliance on hegemonic norms of whiteness.

A second barrier for pre-service teachers in developing a commitment to antiracism is evident in the silos created through teacher education program structural

organization. Teacher educators at each program acknowledged the challenge posed by the fractured organizational structure and presented ways that they were attending to bridging the gap between full-time faculty, adjuncts, cooperating teachers, and supervisors. Each of the teacher education programs in this study employ adjunct faculty who only teach one course in the program. Some adjunct teacher educators reported this separation from core faculty made them question their power to influence structural aspects of the program, as they are removed from program policy creation and decision-making. This distance from key decision-making opportunities by adjuncts was also confirmed by one of the program directors in this study. The over-reliance on short term contract faculty, consistent with neoliberal academic hiring priorities of cost savings over program quality, also affects the inclusion of faculty of color in teacher education programs. Statistically, full-time university faculty are disproportionately white men, while adjunct faculty are more likely to be faculty of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Organizational power differentials are discussed by Ray (2019) in his consideration of how racialized organizations shape agency. He states that “The concentration of people of color at the bottom of organizational hierarchies influences a host of extra-organizational outcomes, including health, job access, political power, and life expectancy” (p.36). He goes on to posit that agency is exercised to different extents depending on the position in collective organizations because “those at the top of organizational hierarchies can ‘bind the collectivity with their actions’” (Ray, 2019, p.36). In other words, those at the top of the organizational hierarchy have the ability to decide for

the collective, while those at the lower end of the hierarchy have almost no power in shaping the collective and limited power over their own domain. Bringing this to the context of teacher education, if full-time faculty at the top of the organizational structure of the program are more likely to be white, and adjuncts at the bottom of the organizational structure are more likely to be faculty of color, it raises a concern that teacher education programs and policies are relying on hegemonic white norms. At the very least, while teacher education programs in this study were aware of this organizational barrier to adjunct inclusion, the issue remains that it serves as a way to keep teacher educators of color out of key decision-making roles in teacher preparation.

Beyond the influence of the organizational structure on contributions from teachers of color in program policy, the fractured structure of teacher preparation also plays a role in the way the justice and equity-focused mission and values of the program are communicated to pre-service teachers. The next section discusses further how pre-service teachers make sense of antiracist pedagogy, particularly around bridging the gap between building educational awareness through critical theories and providing antiracist teaching methods.

Antiracist Teaching Practices Get Lost in Theories

The pre-service teachers in this study were intent on and committed to continuously becoming antiracist teachers. Pre-service teachers emphasized “action” as a defining characteristic of antiracism and yet also reported having trouble figuring out what antiracist action looked like in the classroom. While their programs

presented helpful material around theories that centered issues of justice and equity, when it came to translating those theories into teaching practices, PSTs were often at a loss. Science pre-service teachers were the most likely to discuss the lack of antiracist material in their classrooms. They found it a challenge to bridge the gap between science content and issues relating to race, racism, and equity.

Comparatively, in their descriptions of how they attended to equity and justice, social studies teachers mainly discussed instances when their content addressed historical events pertaining to race, rarely bringing up antiracist methods utilized in their classrooms. In contrast to the science teachers, social studies PSTs were more easily able to make content connections due to historical topics mapping onto issues of race and racism. However, all of the PSTs were unclear about how to employ antiracist pedagogy in the classroom and emphasized not having an adequate model, due to their reports that this was also lacking in their programs.

This disconnect between theories centering racial justice and equity and the methods of enacting those theories can be put in conversation with Philip et al.'s (2019) critique of teacher education's shift towards emphasizing practice as "core" and decentering justice. Philip et al. argue that the core practices movement is grounded in market-based reform efforts geared towards churning out teachers to satisfy teacher shortages and yet "to the extent that core practices reforms collude (knowingly or otherwise) with market-based, neoliberal reforms— they contribute to the obscuring of deeper, systemic, structural injustices in education and in society" (p.2). The authors call on Lilia Bartolomé's (1994) notion of the "methods fetish" in

which pre-service teachers seek a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching that will work with a variety of diverse student populations. This is exactly what many of the PSTs in this study sought: specific teaching methods that could be antiracist, culturally responsive, and achieve their content standards and goals. Philip et al. (2019) address this by stating:

Determining what practices work, for whom, and in what contexts cannot be performed a priori; it must happen in dialogue with key actors—teachers, students, and community members—and requires a co-configuration of teaching and teacher education that is rooted in and responsive to the histories and horizons of people in place (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015). Anything else stands to erase the humanity of teachers and their students, to the detriment of both (p.7).

The authors emphasize that teaching methods must be situated in their local context and in response to the specific configuration of teachers, students, and community members in that classroom in that school. With this in mind, how do teacher educators prepare pre-service teachers in antiracist pedagogy so that PSTs feel competent and confident enough in their classrooms without resorting to the status quo? This question is explored further in the section on implications for teacher educators.

Along with their concern of whether they would be able to enact antiracist teaching practices in their classrooms, the PSTs were also quite critical of the way their programs did or did not utilize antiracist pedagogical methods. Many PSTs posited that readings and material often centered topics addressing race, racism, and equity, however they reported that some teacher educators in their programs behaved in ways that aligned with maintaining racial hierarchy and the status quo. Examples

of this include prioritizing feelings of white PSTs in group discussions as described by Jean in Chapter 5 and Kenzie's assertion in Chapter 3 that the program was not accessible to teachers from various backgrounds, including those who have families and limited financial resources. This concern around whether the programs practice what they preach recalls Ahmed's (2006) theorization of the nonperformativity of antiracism, where she provides a warning regarding institutional declarations of antiracism:

It is as if the university now says, if we are committed to antiracism (and we have said we are), then how can we be racists? Declarations of commitment can block recognition of racism. Paradoxically, the recognition of racism can be taken up as a sign of commitment, which in turn blocks the recognition of racism. The work of such speech acts seems to be precisely how they function to hinder rather than enable action. In other words, the failure, or the nonperformativity, of antiracist speech acts is a mechanism for the reproduction of institutional authority, which conceals the ongoing reality of racism (p.110).

Ahmed suggests that the declaration of antiracism itself could end up being the excuse, either intentionally or not, to assume that participation in racist action is no longer occurring in the institution. This warning rings true according to the responses of the PSTs as well as some teacher educators in this study, where they suggest that while the programs were successful in providing antiracist material, some of their actions reflected upholding a racist system.

These insights offer formidable implications for the field of teacher education, education policy, and the realities of teachers' work. I conclude this dissertation with implications for teacher education and education policy and for those dedicated to

education as a source of liberation and social change.

Contributions & Implications

This dissertation study examined the connections between state teacher education policy, teachers education pedagogy, and secondary teacher practice, specifically in regards to teacher attention to race, racism, and equity. While previous work investigating how race is taken up in teacher education focuses primarily on the individual transformation of pre-service teachers, this study documents the *structural* barriers to developing antiracist teachers that function to inform pre-service teacher prejudice and resistance to learning about race and racism. By identifying barriers such as state teacher assessments that lack an antiracist frame, teacher educator silos, disconnects between racial justice theory and practice, and the uninterrogated undercurrent of whiteness, this study provides a way of understanding how individual pre-service teacher transformation is mitigated by the organizational and policy context that it is embedded within such that these structures can inhibit or enhance pre-service teacher commitments to antiracism and equity. In highlighting the power held by policy and organization systems to encourage or dissuade an antiracist orientation to teaching, this study presents sites for transformational change that have the potential to empower a myriad of future teachers to embody a justice and equity framework in their classrooms.

Our current political climate has indicated potential interest in using a justice and equity-focused approach to policy in education. President Biden has outlined in his education plan that he will “ensure that no child’s future is determined by their zip

code, parents' income, race, or disability” (Biden/Harris Democrats, 2021). He goes on to state that part of accomplishing this goal is ensuring that teachers have a competitive wage, increasing teacher diversity through supporting various approaches to recruiting teachers of color, and investing in teacher mentoring and professional development. This development, however, is shaped by the demands of education policy at every level, both in terms of the practical implications and the values embedded in each. As the colorblind approaches to policy described in this study have illustrated, implying the intention to address racial inequity in education policy is not enough. In order to progress towards a more equitable education system, racism and white supremacy need to be combatted at every level of implementation, as to avoid paying lip-service to racial justice while in reality maintaining and perpetuating the status quo of racial inequity. If education policy is committed to preparing teachers who are diverse, high-quality agents of social change as President Biden suggests, it is imperative to name and interrogate the role of whiteness in education policy to involve community activists working for racial justice and teacher educators in policy making in order to ensure that teacher education policy requires future teachers to be prepared to enact just and equitable educational practices.

As racial violence and white supremacist extremism grows in the United States, it is literally a matter of life and death that teachers are educated and taught to educate with an antiracist framework predicated on love, justice, and equity. We can no longer afford to only focus on transforming individual teachers one at a time, but must also attend to the larger structures that uphold values embedded in white

supremacy and inequality so that as many educators as possible can be prepared to be racially literate and justice-oriented. The findings from this study uncover the sites in need of transformation and provide important implications for teacher education and education policy preparing teachers to be justice and equity oriented change agents.

Implications for Teacher Education

This study has a number of implications and recommendations for teacher educators and teacher education programs. Importantly, I would be remiss to not acknowledge and honor the dedication and persistence of teacher educators in this study to prepare justice and equity-oriented teachers, which is commendable and laudable. The following recommendations are by no means meant to be a criticism of their important work but rather to build on their foundation and partner in their goals of providing a liberatory education to future teachers.

First, teacher educators need to take active steps to counter and address the mixed messaging resulting from the disconnect between state policy and teacher education programs. State policy constraints, as illustrated in Chapter 4, can disrupt the social justice and equity mission of teacher educators. The requirement for pre-service teachers to complete state mandated assessment tests decoupled from the core commitments of teacher educators presents a conflict for teacher educators who also instruct PSTs to avoid “teaching to the test.” These research findings reveal that a high-stakes state assessment can hold greater authority than a teacher education program over defining what is essential theoretical and practical knowledge for new teachers. This has implications for teacher educators’ consideration of the edTPA as

not just an arbitrary assessment tool, but one that has the potential to reorient and disincentivize an antiracist and equitable approach to teaching. Furthermore, teacher educator orientation to the TPA matters and how teacher educators choose to present the TPA has implications for orienting PSTs to the test, particularly in terms of keeping an antiracist framework and teaching approach intact. While antiracist, justice-oriented teacher educators may seek to relieve PSTs of the stress involved in completing the assessment by deprioritizing its importance, some PSTs in this study responded to the mixed messaging between program and assessment by dropping their antiracist framework, choosing instead the TPA's more neutral representation of good teaching. Teacher educators may be able to help PSTs more effectively negotiate this structural pitfall by acknowledging and highlighting the TPA as an example of how educators must work within policy constraints. They can explicitly instruct pre-service teachers on the problematic nature of the assessment's politically neutral status. If teacher educators represent the TPA requirement in the context of the standards and accountability reform movement and the distrust of teacher educators to be the experts of teacher quality, it may provide them an opportunity to engage in critical pedagogy that allows PSTs to further understand their positioning. It could encourage rather than suppress an activist teacher perspective within the education system. Additionally, as key stakeholders, teacher educators can voice their concerns about the edTPA to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Opportunities, much like the town hall described in this study, can be used to urge policymakers to disband its use as a high-stakes assessment in California.

Second, to fully benefit from faculty expertise, teacher education programs must attend to the limits of running programs with provisional adjunct instructors and actively seek to diversify the pool of full time tenured faculty. Educators across the three programs in this study discussed the challenge of silos within teacher preparation, given the many factions of educators and instructors that prepare new teachers. Within this challenge, there is also an opportunity to gain varied localized perspectives and build on community cultural wealth. Many of the teacher educators in this study mentioned ways they work to combat silos and these efforts could be even more efficacious if all faculty, including adjunct instructors, were able to voice concerns and participate in decision-making processes around effective methods of developing pre-service teacher commitments to antiracism and equity. Preferable, however, is for higher education to move away from the faculty marginalizing and program fracturing practice of contingent labor practices.

Third, teacher education must bridge the gap between critical theories and antiracist practice, while naming and interrogating the role whiteness plays as hegemonic norm. It is not enough to understand theories of racialization and systemic oppression, teachers need to know how to operationalize classroom practices that emphasize justice and equity. The response from PSTs in this study illustrates that *all* PSTs need greater access to antiracist teaching practices, not just science teachers and not just white teachers. While science teachers were more likely to struggle with making connections between their subject content matter and issues regarding race, racism, and equity, both social studies *and* science teachers reported lacking antiracist

and equitable teaching methods that they could use in their classrooms. Furthermore, the teachers of color in this study highlighted the importance of racial affinity spaces and the disruption of hegemonic white norms in developing a commitment to enacting antiracist teaching practices. These responses emphasize the importance of teacher educators working collectively and collaboratively in cohesive programs to develop a commitment to antiracism and equity in pre-service teachers. As teacher educators, we cannot stop at providing an awareness of deficit framing, culturally responsive pedagogy, and oppressive structures within education. The “action” piece of antiracist engagement that pre-service teachers identified needs to be taught and exemplified in our own practice as teacher educators. In order to engage in teacher preparation that centers justice and equity, it is essential to nurture relationships across the factions of teacher education programs, particularly between social foundations and methods faculty, and into the community in order to prepare teachers to consider the localized needs of the school districts they will be entering.

Implications for Education Policy

Given the constant attacks on the influence of critical race theory and "woke" politics, this is a fraught landscape and historical conjuncture in which to introduce and push policy that centers antiracist education and unabashedly works to dismantle white supremacy. However, what other choice do we have? It is essential to continue emphasizing that systemic racism and inequities in schooling are facts, not opinion, and naming them as well as the ways whiteness undergirds and informs education policy is a crucial part of that effort. The findings from this study suggest two main

recommendations for education policy. First, if we are to continue to have state standards and assessments for teachers, then those standards and assessments should require that teachers be racially literate and aware of the role whiteness plays in the continued maintenance of systematic oppression. With the same rigor as other aspects of “good teaching” that are represented in the standards and assessments of teachers, beginning teachers should not only illustrate their knowledge of issues surrounding race, racism, and equity in schooling, but should be able to demonstrate how to engage in antiracist actions in the classroom and school community. Second, the teaching profession should be centered in assessments of teaching practice. The edTPA should not be a high-stakes assessment scored by outside scorers at a for-profit company and directly tied to the ability of beginning teachers to obtain their credential. Instead, teacher educators who are experts in the field of teacher’s work, should be responsible for deciding who is qualified to become a teacher. This is especially necessary for developing justice and equity-oriented teachers where pre-service teachers are evaluated in their local communities. Ultimately, policies and teaching standards premised on trust and respect for teacher educators will better support those educators in preparing just and equity-oriented social change agents.

Conclusion

This dissertation underscores the significance of teacher education policy as a constraint, and possible facilitator, to developing antiracist teachers. While past research has primarily focused on unpacking individual pre-service teacher prejudice and resistance to antiracism, this study uncovered the ways teacher education

standards and assessment policy reinforce whiteness as a dominant norm that disincentivizes an antiracist teaching approach. This study focused on three teacher education programs in one of the most politically liberal areas of the country where “teaching for social justice” is an accepted norm. Yet, even in programs where justice and equity are ardently attended to, assessments such as the edTPA led some pre-service teachers to disregard the antiracist approaches of their programs in favor of the edTPA’s race-neutral approach.. These findings have implications for how policy influences teacher education programs far beyond the politically liberal boundaries of the Bay Area. Given that antiracist and equity-oriented approaches were disrupted in a context favorably inclined towards those commitments, the effects of race-neutral policy is likely to hinder an anti-racist orientation even more severely in communities less favorably inclined toward addressing institutional racism. While significant, the findings of this research provide only a sliver of insight into the ways teacher standards and assessments influence pedagogy and pre-service teacher practice and further research is both necessary and urgent. Research pursuing a similar line of inquiry in different contexts, especially in places less favorably inclined toward antiracism, is imperative. Three ways further research can explore this variation include: (1) Examining teacher preparation programs that do *not* center issues of justice and equity in their mission but operate under the same policy context and standard expectations as programs that *do* emphasize justice and equity. This could include engaging with teacher education programs across the state of California to examine a broader spectrum of program methods used to meet the Teaching

Performance Expectations and develop competent teachers. This work would provide a comparison to social justice-oriented teacher education programs and allow for exploration of how programs in markedly different social and political environments approach the same state standards. (2) Expand beyond the state policy context of California and explore teacher education programs in a state(s) where the standards for beginning teachers do not attend to issues of race, racism, or equity (as they do in California), and (3) examining teacher education programs that do not value social justice in their missions in a state that also does not support these goals. Specifically, this research would attend to how teachers in teacher education programs approach issues of race, racism, and equity when it may not be expressly a part of state standards and program mission. These strands of research would further illuminate the role played by education policy and teaching standards in highlighting or disregarding issues of race, racism and equity in teacher education. Taken together, this research will contribute to the emergent field of critical policy analysis, as well as ongoing debates on teaching standards, and issues of diversity and justice in teacher education.

In conclusion, systemic racism and reliance on whiteness as a norm in American educational practice cannot be framed as only the problem of individual teachers, even though the action of many individual teachers can be part of the solution. Structural racism must be dismantled structurally. Developing the many individual antiracist teachers needed requires attention to the policy and organizational structures that govern teacher education and this dissertation study

provides the roadmap to the sites in need of that transformational change.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol (Pre-service teachers)

First interview

Focus: The first interview will focus on getting to know the pre-service teacher, understanding their motivations for becoming a teacher and what drew them to this particular teacher education program.

Interview Questions for Science and Social Studies Pre-service Teachers

Recording consent: Is it okay with you if I record our conversation via zoom? I will be the only one who listens to it in order to transcribe our interview for the research project. In the transcript, I will change your name to the pseudonym of your choice in order to preserve anonymity.

I'm interested in hearing about how you decided to go into teaching, a bit about the role race and equity places in your life and why you chose this teacher education program.

I. Introduction

- A. To start, I'd like to know a little about your background. Let's start with some basic information. Where are you from?
- B. What is your education background?
- C. What kind of student would you say you are?
- D. Tell me about your professional background
- E. Please tell me about how you came to be a teacher?

In this study, I'm particularly interested in teachers' experiences and reflections on racial identity, racism and learning about equity. So these next few questions are asking about some of your thoughts in these areas.

II. Race, racism and equity

- A. Could you tell me a little about what role your racial identity plays in your life?
- B. What does equity mean to you?
- C. What does being "antiracist" mean to you?
- D. How do race and equity play a role in your becoming a teacher?

Next, I want to hear a little about your teacher ed program and why you chose this program.

III. Teacher Preparation

- A. What are some examples of things you considered or felt really mattered to you in selecting a teacher education program?
- B. Did you apply to other programs? Can you please tell me about other programs you applied to?
- C. I'm going to read the [program vision and guiding principles](#) of your teacher education program. To what degree did the mission of this program play a part in your program selection?
- D. What are you most looking forward to as you embark on this journey?
- E. What are you most concerned about as you start this program?

Second interview

Focus: The second interview will focus on the PST's impressions of the messaging they receive from the classroom in comparison to their university courses.

Now that you have had some time in your placement, I want to ask you some questions about how that experience has been going and how it relates to what you have discussed in your courses.

I. General

- A. How is the program going so far? How are things going with your placement?
- B. What are some ways you see the program and placement aligning or not?
- C. What has made you excited?
- D. What has been most challenging?

Next, I am hoping to learn a little bit more about what you've noticed regarding race and equity in your student teaching experiences.

II. Race, racism and equity

- A. How have issues of race and racism and equity shown up in your classes or placement? Give specific examples.

- B. Are there ever times when you think race/racism/equity should be a part of the discussion and it is not? Give specific examples.
- C. Could you describe some of your feelings or reactions when in discussions around race and equity?
- D. Could you describe any differences between how race and equity is discussed in your placement and in your courses?

III. Teacher preparation program

- A. In what ways did your program courses help prepare you for your placement?
- B. In what ways have you felt unprepared?
- C. Could you describe some of your biggest sources of support during your placement so far?
- D. Could you give a specific example of a time when you felt you successfully put something you learned into action?

Third interview

Focus: The last interview will focus on the PST's overall experience in the program, how it drives their decision-making on where to look for a job and what their expectations are for themselves in their future classrooms.

Now that the program is over, I want to hear more of your thoughts around your experiences in the program and your plans for the future. Some of these questions may be similar to those I asked in previous interviews and feel free to reflect on how your perspective may have changed or stayed the same.

I. General

- A. Now that the program has concluded, tell me some of your impressions and greatest takeaways.
- B. What are your plans for next school year?
- C. What are some of the greatest influences of this plan, program or other?
- D. Was there a pivotal moment or experience that pushed you to learn more about yourself and teaching?

II. Race, racism and equity

- A. Do you consider yourself an antiracist teacher? What does that mean to you?

- B. What are some ways your perspective on race, racism and equity have shifted (or not) over the course of this program?
- C. Are there differences in how you might approach issues of race and racism and equity in schools that are predominantly white vs. schools made up primarily of students of color?
- D. How do you see yourself incorporating issues of race, racism and equity in your work as a teacher in the future?

III. Teacher preparation program

- A. Do you consider the program antiracist? What does that mean to you?
- B. Do you believe that the program lives up to its mission regarding social justice and equity?
- C. What would your ideal program look like?
- D. How did the EdTPA contribute to your becoming a teacher?
 - 1. Does the EdTPA intersect with issues of race/racism/equity?
- E. Which aspects of the program do you think have helped you grow/learn the most?

Appendix B: Interview/Focus Group Protocol (Teacher Educators)

Focus: The primary objective for this project is to understand how teacher education programs address issues of race, racism and equity in their programs through their pedagogical practices, particularly in relation to the teaching performance expectations.

Focus Group Questions for Science and Social Studies methods teacher education faculty, social foundations faculty and teacher education administrator

Recording consent: Is it okay with you if I record our conversation via zoom? I will be the only one who listens to it in order to transcribe our interview for the research project. In the transcript, I will use pseudonyms in order to preserve anonymity.

Thank you for being here. I'm really looking forward to learning more about your programs from you today. My name is Kim Vachon, I am a PhD student in the Education department with a designated emphasis in Sociology at UC-Santa Cruz.

The primary objective for this project is to understand how teacher education programs address issues of race, racism, and equity in their programs through their pedagogical practices, particularly in relation to the teaching performance expectations. I am primarily interested in single-subject science and social studies teacher candidates but will also be asking questions about the program as a whole. I am mainly interested in gathering examples of your expertise and your local best practices as a way to reflect on the state standards and TPEs.

Our discussion today will include questions about the pedagogical practices utilized in your program, particularly those regarding race, racism, and equity. I am also interested in the role you see the teacher performance expectations playing in your program, the relationship between the TPEs and your own program policies, and how you might work within the standards structure of the TPEs to address issues of race, racism, and equity.

Introduction

To begin, it would be helpful to outline who we have in the room today. Could you each describe a little about your role in the program?

Now, I'd like to know a little more about your program and its mission.

1. Could you tell me a little about the organization of the teacher ed program? What does your program look like, both demographically and organizationally?
 - a. Some programs separate teacher candidates by area of study - could you tell me about how it works here? Which classes do teacher candidates take all together and which do they take separately?
2. What would you say is something that your program does really well?
3. For this project, I specifically wanted to talk with teacher education faculty working in programs that center issues of social justice and equity. What are some examples of how your program does this?

Teaching Performance Expectations

In this next section, I'd like to ask some questions about the teaching performance expectations. I've shared a link to the pdf in the chat if you'd like to use it for reference. I'm aware that it is not necessarily a part of everyone's job to be super familiar with the TPEs, but included in this conversation can be a reflection on the policies and standards of your program in general.

4. Could you describe how you utilize the standards and TPEs in relation to your program standards?
 - a. How do teacher education faculty engage with the TPEs and/or program standards?
 - b. Do they inform your pedagogy, curriculum, and instruction? How?
5. What are strategies and practices that you have developed that go beyond the standards and TPEs in regards to race, racism, and equity?
6. Are there parts of the TPEs/program standards that you find engaging or challenging?

Pedagogy

I am really interested in how program standards translate into pedagogical practices. I have pulled some specific concepts mentioned in the TPEs and I'm wondering if you could provide some examples of how you might address these issues in your classrooms. I have copied these into the chat but feel free to go beyond what I've included here.

1. As a way of getting this conversation started, could you share an example of when you felt that you did a good job of addressing issues of race/racism/equity in one of your classes?

2. What are some examples of...
 - a. Encouraging critical self-reflection, “recognize implicit/explicit bias”
 - b. Addressing the political nature of schooling and its roots in white supremacy/exclusion
 - c. Encouraging the development of cultural sensitivity and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches

Conclusion

Obviously, this has been a really challenging 2 years. As a way of wrapping up this conversation today, I’m wondering about some of your reflections on what lessons have been learned from the last year, given the pandemic and racial justice movements across the country.

7. How did these events make you think about what is required for teachers before they enter the workforce?
8. What am I missing? What is something you want to bring up that I have not asked about?

Follow up Interview RE: EdTPA

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me again. To catch you up from when we last spoke, I have wrapped up data collection with the teacher candidates - I interviewed them 3 times over the course of their program last year. One thing that kept coming up, even though I hadn’t planned to ask specific questions about it, was students' thoughts and feelings about the EdTPA. Because of that, I wanted to share with you some of what I’ve been hearing from all the teachers I’ve been talking to and learn more about how the EdTPA functions in your program.

Before we get started I have two requests.

- First, *Is it okay with you if I record our conversation via zoom? I will be the only one who listens to it in order to transcribe our interview for the research project. In the transcript, I will use pseudonyms in order to preserve anonymity.*
- Second, I am putting a link to the informed consent in the chat. For the purposes of my dissertation research, I need to have an informed consent on file. Mainly it just outlines that I will keep our conversation anonymous and confidential. Feel free to read through it and please let me know if you have questions about it.

1. First, could you describe how the TPA is situated in the program?
 - a. What types of supports are in place for students taking the TPA?
2. How do you see the goals of the EdTPA and the program aligning or not?
3. I've heard from teacher candidates at the 3 different programs that they see conflicting messages between what the program encourages them to include in their teaching and what the EdTPA requires, particularly around issues of social and racial justice. Programs like _____ instill a sense of social justice, which many teacher candidates didn't see in the EdTPA and wrestle a bit with that tension. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that, if you've heard this from students and how you manage this tension.
4. You are probably aware that there's a move to eliminate the EdTPA in California. What are your thoughts on that?

Appendix C: Field Notes for Commission on Teacher Credentialing Town Hall

Adaptation of the edTPA in teacher preparation in California

The executive director of the CTC described that in the early 1990's, the commission was tasked with conducting a review of the requirements for earning and renewing a teacher credential in California. This came at a time when the K-12 schools shifted towards a "rigid and rigorous" standards and assessments approach and thus teacher education needed to adapt and be able to prepare teachers to instruct students in alignment with the standards. She described that at the time there was not much confidence in teacher education institutions to successfully and consistently prepare teachers to enter the workforce, specifically identifying that preparation was "uneven" across institutions. The TPA was a response to this unevenness and an attempt to provide stability to the teacher preparation system.

The first panelists then provided further context regarding the structure and validity of performance assessments. Linda Darling-Hammond identified herself as a strong advocate for performance assessments, comparing them to other exams taken by professions on their way to licensure such as doctors, nurses, lawyers, accountants and architects. She described that the way teacher testing originated however was different from these other professions in that it was born from a distrust of teacher preparation institutions and assessments were developed through testing companies. Dr. Darling-Hammond then recounts the development of teacher testing from minimum competency and basic skills tests to the performance assessments used today (outlined in further detail in the Chapter 3 and the introduction of Chapter 6 of this study), emphasizing that performance assessments were developed *by* teachers *for* teachers and approved by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. She goes on to present that research has shown that board certified teachers (who had successfully undergone professional performance assessments) are more effective in supporting student learning, enhance the work of the entire school and as mentor teachers, enable student teachers to be more effective in student learning. The initial Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) used the NBPTS's performance assessment as a model when the teacher performance assessment became a requirement for graduation in 1998. For many years the PACT was scored within each institution, rather than by an outside testing company. Dr. Darling-Hammond described how the PACT helped focus programs, bringing coherence to the teacher education curriculum and bringing together faculty, supervisors and cooperating teachers around supporting pre-service teachers to understand connections between theory and practice and accomplish the goals of the performance assessment. The edTPA grew out of the PACT as more institutions around the

country began to use it and then, in California, a new version of a CalTPA was developed that included issues of culturally responsive practices and providing a representation of equitable values. She identifies that copious amounts of classroom experience, support from faculty and mentors who are knowledgeable about the content of the TPA, and consistent integration of the TPA goals in the program lead to more success for pre-service teachers in terms of enabling the assessment to be an educative experience in the way it was meant to be. Following Dr. Darling-Hammond's description of the development of the edTPA, commissioners were allowed to ask questions before she left the meeting. One commissioner asked Dr. Darling-Hammond to speak to the many comments left on the public forum regarding the concern that the edTPA disproportionately filters out teachers of color from the profession. In her response she argued that research illustrates very little disparity between teachers of color and white teachers and their performance on the edTPA, however the data from the pandemic represented a greater disparity, particularly in the preparation supports for Black teachers. She also notes that while there is not generally a gap in teacher scores on the performance assessment, there are large discrepancies on the standardized basic skills tests. Lastly, she states that while the CTC maintains the standards, the infrastructure for teacher education programs across the state is responsible for requiring supports to teachers to meet those standards.

The second panelist, Dr. Charles A. Peck, then spoke on implementation of the edTPA...

- Discussed practical experience as teacher educator implementing the TPA over 20 years, reflection on how to do it well
- Recommends Teachers for a Nation's Schools - John Goodlad - best description of how we do teacher ed in the US
- Chopped up, siloed, different factions, faculty, supervisors, CTs - weak organizational connections/setting, makes it hard to learn about collectively
- Not on board with the TPA at first, but then needed to make the policy work for them
- What they learned...
 - Thought they had a really good program, expected students to do really well on the TPA, looked at work more closely and noticed that teachers weren't implementing what was being taught in coursework – needed to find out why, TPA provides a record of what candidates take up in the coursework and then implement

- TPA showed that silos were an issue in supporting teacher candidates, have to work together across fieldwork and coursework - TPA provides a common and complete language of practice that everyone could center on
- Common language also allowed for conferences and community across programs in order to improve practice
- **Ultimately brought people in the program together, more democratic, brought more connection to P-12 community
- Makes the case that the content is much more personal and closely tied to the coursework and the classroom
- Questions from commissioners
 - policy about providing appropriate leadership to do program improvement work
 - Is statewide scoring a good call if assessments should be personal, real democratic and attentive - particularly given the many written comments.
 - Concern around the time it takes to score the TPA, agrees with concern about outsourcing scoring as it takes away the opportunity for teacher ed faculty to learn about candidates and themselves
 - Question about the differential effects of contexts that teachers are teaching in regarding the TPA
 - Teachers who don't student teach, finding the "best" placements for teachers, - doesn't feel that we know enough about the effect of different contexts on the experience and performance on TPA
 - A question/comment about who is at the table creating the assessments - concern about differential in performance of teachers of color and white teachers on TPA, institutional attitude towards people of color affects performance more than anything else, TPA does not address local issues of race and racism on the day to day
 - Peck responds with respect and affirmation and acknowledgement that this is a conversation that needs to be had, encouraged by the "strategic effort" made by the new CalTPA.

Second panel - practitioners in person and online speaking to the TPA

- Asst Professor- believes CalTPA helps teachers from non-marginalized backgrounds to develop awareness and understanding of implicit bias, well supported by faculty, used as a learning tool - anti-racist, anti-biased, culturally responsive
- Digital media arts teacher - did not receive student teaching, developed equity awareness and would not have received this information elsewhere, held a standard in order to enter into teaching, helpful tool for reflection
- Assoc. Professor- issues for special ed teachers in general ed classrooms, lots of teachers failed, harder for interns, helps teacher educators know what teachers know, reflection tool, teachers in the field didn't have to go through TPA/UDL - hearing from teachers that it doesn't really matter "real life is performance assessment"
- EdTPA Coordinator and professor - look at data to improve program, acknowledge stress, suggest need to look at program - "if its a good program, the teachers will do well on the TPA"
- Professor – FAST, Fresno State has their own performance assessment, own faculty and coaches score the assessment - informs the work they do, helped teacher faculty know what to focus on
- Professor - CalAPA, leadership standards and practices, CalTPA helps develop what leaders need to do - administrators
- Recent teacher candidate who completed the CalAPA
 - APA helped set candidate up for what was needed in terms of collectively constructing school environment
 - Brought awareness of identity and bias

Open up for public comment

- Professor - disheartened by one-sided comments represented thus far, survey shows majority of teachers in program wanting to the eliminate the TPA, framework is flawed, particularly given the effects of the pandemic, cultural taxation - only Latinos in the whole school attending to needs of students of color and the work of the TPA
- TPA helps look at performance of the candidates - full support of TPA
- Professor and representative of the teacher ed caucus of California Faculty Association asking CTC to reconsider use of edTPA - research shows that high-stakes assessments do not improve education for teachers/students, widen inequities, 4 areas of concern - 1) design, validity and reliability, 2) impact on curriculum and candidate performance, 3) barriers to diversity, 4)

impact on teacher shortage. Asking that CTC reflect on the embedded requirements in program that eliminate the need for the edTPA

- Professor representing the teacher ed caucus and K-12 working group of California Faculty Association - demand immediate end of high-stakes testing, (similar to last comment) - perspectives on panel do not match with perspectives of students and colleagues
- CalTPA assessment developer - created an assessment that speaks to California context, focus on equity and develop an equity gap analysis, in support of CalTPA
- “TPA survivor” - whose voices are CTC listening to, why aren’t more teacher candidates represented and given weight to contribute to improvement of TPA. Asks why certain states have moved away from using the edTPA

Additional questions/comments from commissioners

- Question about the data regarding use of edTPA teaching effectiveness of teacher performance - “objective measure”
- Acknowledgement that there is work to be done, need to make the TPA better rather than eliminating it
- Concern about effects on curriculum in program and teacher candidates health
have we convinced others that teachers are being held accountable so can we go back to not having this assessment be high stakes? also *really need data to back up what is being said- people are making research claims on both sides of this argument, particularly around the discrepancies in performance between white teachers and teachers of color

Appendix D: Pre-Service Teacher Profiles

Pre-Service Teacher Profiles

Alex identifies as a **white, second-career/older, cis-male**, pre-service **science** teacher who has a Noyce scholarship. He has an "unconventional" education history, didn't finish college, came back to complete an undergrad degree in biology. He has extensive teaching experience as an outdoor educator, working in Watsonville and Salinas, a lot of work with young people experiencing homelessness or marginalized youth. He seems to be resistant to the labels of race and antiracist, definitely more interested in seeing people as "individuals" rather than defined by ethnicity/racial identities. Repeatedly identifies himself as antiracist but also pushes against the term, mainly explaining that while "of course" he is antiracist, it is not terminology that he uses but is not being oriented to because of the program. He sees antiracist teaching as providing students with equal access to education and reducing systemic disparities. He also had a hard time thinking of particular ways that he would do this in the classroom beyond considering each student as they are, their cultural backgrounds and cultural funds of knowledge.

In general, the program was a means to an end for Alex. He came here for a teaching credential (less than a master's degree), and wants a stable career. This orientation continued to play a role on much of how he perceived the efforts of the program, wanting a more pragmatic approach than a theoretical approach to teaching. This seemed to shift a bit towards the end of the program when he developed a more sophisticated definition of antiracism.

In terms of the edTPA, he saw it as aligned and **complementary** to the program and identified it as addressing issues of race, racism and equity in that it considers the backgrounds of students. This makes sense -how Alex defines antiracism is also how he sees it show up in the edTPA, as related to culture and providing equal access to *all* students. He also valued the assessment as an opportunity for reflection.

Liz identifies as a **white, Jewish, cis-woman** pre-service **science** teacher with a Noyce scholarship. In general, Liz is eager to work with kids but also seems hesitant and anxious about doing the right thing. She grew up in Marin, wanted to work in science field work but kept getting rejected from jobs. Decided to go into teaching as a way to get a more stable job after COVID, even though it may be "letting her scientific" side down. She felt a certain amount of discrimination in STEM, but also attributed it to her personality rather than her gender (some contradictions around her feelings about those identities). Thinks a lot about being white and what it means to

be a white teacher to students of color - she seems to have some pretty consistent anxiety around this throughout the year, which seems to be solidified through experiences teaching in Watsonville and being able to be vocal on issues of antiracism and social justice in her teacher education classes.

Liz is looking for opportunities to validated - in her career, in her identity(s). She is very much on a "journey" as she describes how she conceives of antiracism. She knows she has more to learn but also is hesitant to be confident in what she already knows. She failed her first attempt at the CalTPA which **did not help her self-efficacy** as a teacher. While program faculty told her she was doing great as a teacher, she gave authority to the CalTPA "the state of California thinks I'm a bad teacher." This **conflict** between the program and the CalTPA **led to some feelings of distrust about the validity of the program, as an antiracist institution and as the authority for defining a competent teacher.** She saw how the CalTPA addressed some issues of equity and cultural competency, but also felt that the language had to be so specific, which again led to her questioning herself and ability to be an antiracist teacher.

Maggie identifies as a **white, cis-woman** pre-service **social studies** teacher. She grew up in a small town in Northern California, which she identifies as predominantly white, but also a large Latinx population. She describes her upbringing as "**working class**" with her parents attending college (they had her very young) while she was in high school. She had an experience when a teacher in high school told her she "wasn't as smart as her friends" which "flipped a switch" for her, diminishing her sense of belonging in academic spaces. A complicated relationship to understanding what becoming a teacher would look like, conflicting messages - her dad is a teacher and provides some inspiration. Maggie has clearly engaged in a lot of **critical reflection** around her identities and the social structures that inform those identities, brought on in part by courses she took in undergrad that focused on African-American history. Maggie brings her critical approach to all of the spaces she is in - her teacher preparation classes, the edTPA, and her K-12 classroom. She conceives of antiracism as a something to continually work on, particularly in how it relates to her social identities and her position within structures of power. "**I don't think it's a point of arrival.**" She is also very **systems oriented** - being antiracist is identifying racist systems and actively divesting from them. This seems like a helpful coping mechanism (?) as a white person to **sustain antiracist engagement** - focus on racist systems and position within them, rather than white identity and the problems it presents (this could be an interesting **comparison to Liz's perspective**). Maggie really disliked the edTPA and **did not use it as a touchstone for how she**

saw herself as a teacher. **"I am a worse teacher because I had to focus on the edTPA for several months."** In line with her systemic orientation towards white identity, teacher ed and K-12 education, she saw the edTPA as a barrier, especially for marginalized teachers through the financial obligation (she had to retake it due to a clerical error, which meant paying another \$100 on top of the initial \$300). She saw the edTPA rubrics as reductive and essentializing ELL students and **in conflict with the purpose of the a social justice oriented education**. She also perceived of the **program itself as problematic in its use of the edTPA**, its treatment of undocumented and Latinx pre-service teachers. Implies that she saw the program as talking the talk but not walking the walk - saying the right thing but not always following it up with action - again in line with her systemic approach to understanding antiracism.

Rupert identifies as a **Latin American, Mexican and El Salvadorean, cis-man**, pre-service **social studies** teacher. He grew up in Santa Cruz and saw himself as an average, "run of the mill" student. Had some friends who didn't graduate but he did okay himself. Really loved history in high school and identified a teacher that really made him believe in himself. Also identified a teacher who perceived as racist and to engage in some pretty racist behavior. Started at community college and then transferred to USF once he felt that he had focused on history and was doing better in school. Rupert sees **his racial identity as the most important part of his identity, or at least the most prominent**. He shared **experiences of racism** while in high school, specifically from teachers, and connected this to not having any teachers who looked like him throughout his K-12 education, not one Latinx teacher until college. Now as a pre-service teacher in the same town, he has historical knowledge of different schools and their "history of racism" and involvement in forming white supremacist groups and identifies how that continues to play a role at these schools today. Sees his role as a male Latinx teacher as very important in terms of **representation and cultural connection to students** who were like him, growing up with very few Latinx teachers.

Rupert is very easy going, easy to talk to, laughs easily and is thoughtful and methodical in his answers. Rupert's conceptualization of **antiracism focuses on education and speaking out against racism**. He quotes Freire in being neutral is to be on the side of the oppressor and sees it as essential for teachers/people to **educate themselves in order to not be neutral**. He also emphasizes the need to be **"actively vocal"** and "doesn't shy away". On the whole he saw the program as living up to its mission of antiracist engagement however he indicated that he wished there was more application of antiracist theory throughout the entire program rather than just centered

in the summer before student teaching.

While not a fan of the edTPA, he reports that it didn't have much impact on him and how he thought about teaching. He saw it as attending to issues of equity but not really to race and racism. Ultimately he saw the edTPA as being **complementary** to the program and didn't seem too bothered by the experience of preparing for it.

Diego identifies as a **white, Hispanic, cis-man**, pre-service **social studies** teacher.

Diego grew up in northern California with **teacher as a father** and parents who had high expectations of his academic success. As a K-12 student, he described himself as not doing well in math and science and being drawn to history as one of the only subjects he really loved, in part because of really good history teachers. Although he had taken AP courses, he felt very unprepared for college and it took a lot of adjusting to "buckle down" and become a good student. After a period of uncertainty, Diego eventually decided on majoring in history and minor in museum studies, going on to work as a **museum educator** in Sacramento. Then the pandemic happened and museums shut down. During this time, Diego decided to pursue a **teaching credential as a possible "fall-back" career** although as our interviews went on, it was clear Diego became more and more invested in teaching.

Diego was a part of a **Hispanic cohort** in his program which ended up having a profound effect on how he considered his own **identity**. He discussed never having had the chance to be in an educational space with only others of Latin descent and found it to be **empowering and affirming** of his experiences and identity. This shift in awareness of his identity influenced his conceptualization of antiracist engagement in the classroom, where he saw **his positionality as a Latinx male teacher as inherently political** and "not neutral" when it came to **disrupting the status quo** and "typically racist and discriminatory educational settings". He conceptualizes antiracism as "the abolition of power structures that have been perpetuated to favor white people in this country" and saw his role as a teacher as interrupting the status quo.

Diego found the edTPA to be stressful and unhelpful as a way to measure his ability as a teacher. In this sense, he saw a **conflict** between the program and the edTPA, identifying the edTPA as a measurement from the state whose interest was in maintaining the status quo. He identified the fact that the edTPA does not measure a teacher's ability to engage in antiracist pedagogy as evidence that the **edTPA is not concerned with race or equity and thus inherently racist**.

Shane identifies as a **white, hetero, cis-man**, pre-service **social studies** teacher.

Shane is older than the average PST (32) and had a career working in restaurants

before "falling in love" with history and attending community college, then a UC and then a state school for his teacher credential. He described himself as a "punk kid" who was a bit rebellious, experienced a lot of substance abuse issues, didn't graduate from high school but instead took his **GED**. Shane considers being a **punk rocker** as informing core parts of his identity including being "all about **inclusivity** and fighting for the underdog and **zero tolerance for any intolerance**, you know, kind of a do it yourself ethic and find out for yourself, **question everything**." This ethos seems to play a large role in how Shane considers antiracism as well.

Shane is emphatic and **confident** in our interviews. He often indicates his strong commitment to social justice as being "obvious" and "**of course**" **he is antiracist**. He defines antiracism much as he does the punk rock attitude "zero tolerance for intolerance" and emphasizes education over "violence". However there are contradictions in his various descriptions of antiracism, where at times he also states that it is overplayed and perhaps taken to an extreme, that it has infiltrated too many parts of his life (including dating) and it has put a "**sour taste in his mouth**" and he "needs a break". Even so, he identifies himself as "qualified as a teacher more than most".

This perspective on teaching and his engagement with antiracism matches with his description of the edTPA, which he defines as attending somewhat to equity yet not at all to race and racism. In this way, it is in **conflict** with his conceptualization of the program. He sees the edTPA as a "**necessary evil**" and measures himself by it, seeing it as **the template for what being a good teacher is**. He is also proud of doing well on the edTPA and indicates that this is proof of how good of a teacher he is. For Shane, teaching students how to **read and write is most important**, after mastering these pedagogical skills, he will move on to focusing on issues of social justice in his classroom.

Elliot identifies as a **white, cis-man**, pre-service **science** teacher. He grew up in a rural area in Northern California where he states that his education did not include anything "even remotely" related to social justice. After completing an undergrad degree in microbiology at a UC, he wanted to go into a tech or science field, where he stated that **social justice work still wasn't on his radar** or a part of his education. He became disenchanted with his work after a while, feeling that it was having negative impacts on the environment and wasn't ethical. **His dad was a teacher** and Elliot identified that this influence pushed him towards teaching as a career.

Elliot sees antiracism as core to his goals and commitments as a teacher. He takes a **structural approach** to considering antiracism, describing antiracist action as **identifying how structural racism shows up in our lives and working to**

countering it. He also finds himself questioning how much to "blame" individuals for their views given this systemic influence. He sees himself as still working to improve his ability to recognize these issues in curriculum and his work as a teacher, but also feels **dedicated to being critical** of what he's doing in his classroom. His views align with how he considers the edTPA, which he identifies as being in **conflict** with the program and only partially attends to issues of equity but not much to competence in understanding students from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. He expressed frustration that the **edTPA became "more important than the program"** and **"did not help him to become a better teacher."**

Heather identifies as a **white, cis-woman**, pre-service **science** teacher. She grew up in a suburb of Sacramento with a single mom who had previously been in the military. She described that her grandparents were close by as well as extended family so she felt that while they were not well-off, they didn't struggle. In high school, she had the opportunity to do a teen academy with the Sacramento FBI, which engendered an interest in forensic **science**, chemistry and the criminal justice system. She left California to attend college in **Mississippi for forensic chemistry** and afterwards completed an internship in forensic science in Florida. Both of these experiences included a lot of culture shock and **disenchantment with this possible career** choice. Specifically, after working in the drug analysis unit of the justice system in Florida, she was disturbed by the amount of people struggling with addiction that were given jail sentences when that was not what she thought they actually needed. Being **from a line of teachers** (mom and grandmother) she turned to teaching as a career where she felt that she could encourage other young people interested in science at a young age (much like her chemistry teacher did for her). Heather is reserved and observant. She is not the social justice warrior with the bull horn but she notices injustices and is clearly dedicated to finding ways to address them. A major example of this is her migration from a career in criminal justice. She conceptualizes antiracism as **actively calling out racism and racist policies** and working towards abolishing them. She recognizes how her teacher education program has helped develop some of these skills in herself as she reflects on an article that they read at the beginning of the program and then again at the end - she noticed how much her awareness, familiarity, and understanding of the material had developed over the course of the year. She saw the edTPA as **an opportunity for reflection** on her teaching and considered it **complementary** to the program's goals although she also noted that **race/equity were not core parts** of the edTPA.

Kenzie identifies as a "**mostly white**" **racially mixed, cis/hetero woman**, pre-service **science** teacher. She grew up in Northeast California with both parents (mother is half Mexican and father is Croatian). She got her BA in environmental studies at UCSC then moved back home after graduating. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she **began to notice some of the inequities and flaws in the education system and decided to become a teacher.**

Kenzie struggled to gain a good relationship with her cooperating teacher throughout the year of her placement, which led to feel somewhat **insecure in her teaching.** Kenzie has some **contradictory perceptions on antiracist engagement** which is illustrated through her conceptualization of social justice work and her practice and commitment to it. She identified antiracism as being an active participant in dismantling racism mainly in and through relationships. She had trouble identifying exactly what being active meant - through social media? She definitely saw teaching as one avenue for antiracist engagement, however **doubted her own ability to be an antiracist teacher.** She stated that at first her **focus was to try to get through her lessons and manage her classroom** and then incorporate antiracist elements later - she found it **difficult to infuse antiracism into the science curriculum.**

This perspective was reflected in her experience with the edTPA which she found to be in **conflict** with the ideology of the program. Ultimately she saw the **edTPA as the touchstone** to measure herself by, a helpful reflective analytical experience - because the edTPA did not include issues of race and equity, she decided to **remove attention to social justice from her lesson plans.**

Tomas identifies as a **white, Portuguese, cis-man**, pre-service **history** teacher. In terms of identity, Tomas states that he often is **mistaken for Hispanic or Spanish speaking** because of his last name and skin/hair color, but he identifies as white, western European. He grew up in a large city in Central California, lived on his own briefly in college but then because of COVID-19, **moved back with his parents** and is still with them as he completes the program. Tomas expressed a lot of apathy around his career direction and indicated that **his mom pushed him** to go to college and also to become a teacher. He describes his parents as having the "immigrant mentality", especially his father who he says has an accent and often tells Tomas to "not be like him" and to get a degree so he "won't work in construction". A lot of Tomas' interaction with issues of race and racism come from his **relationship with his biracial cousins**, who have shared with him some experiences of racism. His conceptualization of **antiracism is developing** and his answers to questions regarding antiracism were often hard to follow, rambling and ambivalent. Tomas **learned throughout the program to broaden his perception on antiracism** beyond

"don't be racist" and to pay attention to how racism is a part of the system and that the materials and curriculum used could either make him an ally or as someone who reproduces the status quo. Towards the end of the program he considered himself antiracist because he is aware and taking steps to get "there", but **still "a rookie."** He saw the edTPA as not a good measurement of being a good teacher and in this way seemed to **use the program as a touchstone**. However he did say that there were aspects of race and equity in the assessment, although had a hard time being specific about what exactly those aspects were. He saw the program as definitely addressing issues of racism and equity, so it would seem that the edTPA and the program were in **conflict** with one another, but the lack of specificity makes this somewhat unclear.

Jean identifies as a **2nd gen Taiwanese-American, female (she/they pronouns)**, pre-service **science** teacher. Born to Taiwanese parents in the US, she grew up in the Bay Area and sees one of the most salient parts of her identity as being a woman in STEM rather than her racial identity (given that she grew up in a community with a large Asian population). **Teaching is her second career** as she got an undergraduate and graduate degree in mechanical engineering and **worked in tech** for several years before deciding to go into teaching. She described being disenchanted with the tech industry, particularly the labor of being a part of the female representation, and wanted to **make a difference in the lives of young girls**, specifically in terms of inspiring them to go into STEM.

Jean describes how issues of race and equity did not appear at all in her former training as a mechanical engineer and thus felt there was a lot to learn in the credential program. She **conceptualized antiracism as acknowledging that racism exists and plays a role in the system and that being antiracist means having an agenda about actively eliminating racism**. She struggled with identifying opportunities to "be antiracist" in the classroom because she worked **mainly with white students** and found it **difficult to integrate issues of race/racism into the STEM curriculum**. She saw the edTPA as not addressing issues of race and equity and thought the program also skirted many of these issues as well. In this way she saw the edTPA and the program as **complementary**, particularly given the program's agenda to "**teach to the test**" and get teachers to pass. This was disconcerting to her and by the end of the program, Jean outlined several issues with how the program only did **surface level work to address issues of racism and inequity**. In this way, it seems that **neither really served as a touchstone for her**.

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