UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Loving the Language:

The Choice, Marketing, and Impact of Mandarin Immersion

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Sociology

by

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Dissertation Committee:
Associate Professor Glenda Flores; Chair
Professor Cynthia Feliciano; Outside Member
Professor Susan Brown

2021

DEDICATION

To

my father

Bishop E. L. Watson

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I trace the beginning of my dissertation journey back to 2005. This was the year I volunteered at my undergraduate alma mater, the University of Missouri. I was looking for some cultural enrichment and found it at the Asian Affairs Center. I volunteered as an English Conversation Partner. I met and subsequently became good friends with an agricultural scientist from a university in China. His name is Dr. Zhang Yungui. He helped me get hired as a foreign teacher at a university near his home. I completed all the necessary requirements and set off for China during the late summer of 2006.

I greatly enjoyed my time spent abroad. I lived there for more than four years. While living there, my sociologically imagination began to grow. I was very much interested in the class disparities I witnessed, often finding similarities between those class disparities in Chongqing China and racial disparities back home in America. When I returned home, cross-cultural comparisons, how connections were made, and how inequality could manifest, was something I wanted to explore. I would like to thank all the friends, colleagues, and scholars, I met while learning the Chinese culture. They provided me with an understanding and appreciation of a foreign culture which eventually shaped my own perspective of the world.

Back home in Missouri, I attended Washington University in Saint Louis to obtain a master's degree in East Asian/China Studies. Here I got the academic foundation that helped supplement my recent cultural experiences. Gradually I came to a better understanding of social stratification in China, which ultimately strengthened my articulation of social stratification at home. My personal statement for doctorate programs discussed the differences and similarities between class inequality abroad and racial inequality at home. My journey would continue with a PhD.

I arrived at the University of California – Irvine in 2014. When initially asked about a dissertation project, I could only say that I wanted to study the relationship between African-Americans and East Asians. I got some help in the beginning from Jamila Nightingale and her non-profit organization, Parents of African-Americans that Speak Chinese. This relationship pointed me in the right direction. Eventually through support from the university, friends, and family, I arrived at my dissertation topic, Mandarin Immersion Programs. Now in 2021, having to overcome many challenges, I completed my dissertation that was sixteen years in the making.

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my committee chairs, Professor Cynthia Feliciano and Associate Professor Glenda Flores. Without their guidance and persistent help this dissertation would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my committee member, Professor Susan Brown for her help and support.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Associate Professor Glenda Flores, Chair

This study investigates why and how Americans of various social locations are choosing Mandarin Immersion Programs, a form of bilingual education, as a source of cultural and linguistic transmission. Mandarin Immersion Programs are elementary school programs where children learn a foreign language and culture through a traditional elementary school curriculum. The growing number of language immersion programs and their locations outside ethnic enclaves, suggests that they hold some attraction to Americans of various backgrounds. To investigate this phenomenon, I examine Mandarin Immersion Programs through three related questions: 1) why do parents, without a Mandarin-speaking background or culture, choose a Mandarin Immersion Program? 2) how and why does a school promote a Mandarin Immersion Program when the student body is majority Hispanic? 3) how does the implementation of the Mandarin Immersion Program and the parents it attracts, impact the school environment? The analysis draws on two different, but related sets of data collection primarily located in the state of California. The first set of mixed-methods data was collected during the 2015-2016 school

year and included a 500-respondent parent survey and 15 interviews with Black and White parents. The second set of data was collected three years later, during the 2018-2019 academic year. It narrows the focus to one Mandarin Immersion Program placed within a traditional English-only elementary school. The school serves a primarily working-class Hispanic student population within a conventional public-school district. The Mandarin Immersion Program is a strand of the school, as not all the students are learning in two languages. For the 2018-2019 academic school year, I spent approximately 300 hours observing four elementary classrooms and various parent and administrator meetings. I supplement the observations with twenty-five parent, teacher, and administrator interviews. This dissertation reveals several key findings in three stand-alone substantive chapters. First, in Chapter 2, I find that White and Black parents frame the benefits of immersion for their children differently. White parents want to give their children a future advantage to sustain their place within the academic hierarchy. Black parents choose Mandarin Immersion to circumvent structural issues within the educational system that may impact their children negatively. In Chapter 3, I find that a struggling school uses the immersion program to attract parents from outside the school catchment area resulting in an improved school based on state metrics. The immersion parents that arrive are generally middle-class and begin to occupy many parental positions of influence. I argue that the district does not take the majority Hispanic student body into account because their goals are not necessarily educational or citizenship-building. Rather, the goals are to increase school enrollment, test scores, and resources by bringing middle-class parents into the school through branding itself as a gateway to a global community. Finally, in Chapter 4, I show how the immersion program creates a more racially and economically diverse student body. However, the integration is superficial, and the structure of the program creates two schools under one roof. Mandarin

Immersion parents leverage their social class resources to make changes to the school that primarily benefit their children and may eventually push out the families that existed before the immersion program arrived.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: MANDARIN IMMERSION PROGRAMS

According to the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), 1,490 schools reported having some kind of bilingual or multilingual program in 2018-19, including 747 dual-language immersion programs. The majority employ Spanish as a target language followed by Mandarin Chinese. I ask three central questions in my dissertation: why do an increasing number of middle-class parental decide to enroll in Mandarin Immersion Programs? Further, how and why does a majority-minority school market its language immersion program to attract more privileged families from outside the district to its school? Finally, what changes occur when a struggling school implements its language immersion program?

With these three questions, I investigate the social processes occurring between school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, in bilingual education. My findings suggest that although the reasons for investment differ by race, bilingual education programs are popular with native English-speaking middle-class parents. In addition, they also operate as spaces where privileged parents can leverage their resources to further strengthen educational advantages for their children. Because of the benefits that primarily middle-class parents accrue, I argue that bilingual education programs exacerbate educational inequalities.

In this introductory chapter, I provide a brief snapshot of language immersion programs. I begin by illustrating the changes in California educational policy that allowed for more autonomy for school districts in how language immersion programs were developed. More specifically, I will discuss how the Mandarin Immersion Programs in this study were developed initially without state legislative support and how state educational policy shifts provide potential

for its continued growth. Then I provide general information and statistics Dual Language Immersion Programs (DLIP), and subsequently discuss Mandarin Immersion Programs (MIP), bilingual education programs that use Mandarin Chinese as the target language. Finally, I provide various theoretical perspectives of bilingual education. They highlight how the increased attention given to bilingual education by middle-class parents corresponds to a potential decrease in educational opportunities to learn for immigrant, marginalized, or non-native English-speaking children.

BACKGROUND

California's Shifting Stance on Bilingual Education

Debates regarding bilingual programs have been around language of instruction (Gándara & Escamilla 2017). California public schools questioned the best methods regarding how to teach public school children, primarily those that did not speak English as their first language. Should immigrant children receive instruction in their native language or an English-only environment? Many California residents sensed that without full-time English learning in public schools, the children of immigrants would be unable to fully assimilate into American society. This led to a majority support of California Proposition 227 (1998), also known as the "English for the Children" initiative, that required all public schools to only provide instruction in English. The general message Proposition 227 delivered was learn English if you want to succeed (Orellana & Hernandez 1999). Proposition 227 placed the spotlight on students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)[1], requiring that students in LEP classes be taught in English, effectively eliminating bilingual learning. Students that spoke limited English were placed in English

[1] Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is used by the federal government to indicate students who are determined to be eligible for English as a Second Language/Bilingual services according to state criteria. It is often criticized for being a term that focuses on the deficiency in the student. This dissertation will use LEP and English Language Learner (ELL) interchangeably.

immersion classes. Additionally, LEP classes would no longer span multiple years and be limited to one year. Students would be moved from these special English-only LEP classes and placed into general English-only after one year, furthering the "learn English or else", protocols set in place.

Because of its insistence on teaching English Language Learners (ELL) in English, Proposition 227 is often described as the end of bilingual education in California (Citrin, Levy & Wong 2017). However, Proposition 227 did not outlaw bilingual education programs. Proposition 227 allowed for dual immersion programs only in response to a request by at least 20 parents at a school and the granting of a waiver by the school district. In addition, school administrators were not allowed to offer recommendations on language programs to parents. Districts with established bilingual programs were more likely to seek parental waivers that would allow them to maintain these programs (Gándara et al., 2000; Garcia & Curry-Rodriguez, 2000). But even with waivers in place, schools and teachers received inconsistent support for bilingual programs in terms of staff and materials (Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Schirling, Contreras, & Ayala 2000). Nevertheless, as I discuss below, dual immersion programs that were not intended for ELL students were able to grow during this time.

Research suggests that requiring English-only in schools actually subtracts resources from the children of immigrants by minimizing their culture and language (Feliciano 2001; Valenzuela 2005). Research also showed that academically, English Language or Dual Language Learners suffered no setbacks when receiving instruction in a foreign language. Native language instruction for preschool children showed no loss to their English language development (Durán, Roseth, & Hoffman 2010; Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco 2007). Social context factors matter, and directly affect language learning (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, & Páez 2008). The

home language of an English-language learner can be used to promote academic development (Goldenberg 2013). Studies of neighboring states with large immigrant populations critiqued English-only policies for students with limited English proficiency (Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass 2005). A five-year study of Proposition 227 showed that the English-only approach did little to improve ELL student achievement across the state (Parrish et al 2006). Policy makers begin to realize that it was not the language of instruction but the quality of instruction, that influenced learning outcomes for English Language Learners (Slavin, Madden, Calderón, Chamberlain, & Hennessy 2011).

California Proposition 58: Non-English Languages Allowed in Public Education

The California State Legislature ratification of Proposition 58 (2016) provided more autonomy for school districts in how they could educate their English Language Learners. Proposition 58 or the California Multilingual Education Act, is often described as the rebirth of bilingual education in California (Citrin, Levy & Wong 2017). It repealed regulations set in place by Proposition 227. Schools were no longer mandated to teach English Language Learners only in English. Proposition 58 also removed the requirement that at least twenty parents would need to sign waivers to enroll their ELL children in bilingual education programs, and it allowed public schools to choose the option of English-only, bilingual or other types of programs for English Language Learners. While schools have the flexibility to design their own programs, Proposition 58 also required that districts discuss their ELL programs with community members and parents. Proposition 58 had wide support and passed with an overwhelming margin.

The passage of Proposition 58 placed the decision of how to educate English Language Learners back into the hands of county offices of education, school districts, schools, and communities. Debates over bilingual education programs and success had been framed primarily in terms of

English language ability (Goldenberg 2013). However, the state of California began to alter the long-held perspective of English superiority by embracing multilingual education as a statewide policy. It does not matter which language is most prominent, only that multiple languages are available. Today, school districts across California are using their new flexibility to continue developing and implementing dual language immersion programs that provide instruction in English and a partner language such as Spanish. However, dual language immersion programs have had a presence in California for quite some time prior to Proposition 58, and as I discuss below, bilingual programs not intended for ELL students were not restricted by Proposition 227. After 2018, however, the state began incentivizing districts to start offering bilingual program through a competitive grant program.

Global California 2030 is an initiative of the state superintendent of public instruction and the California Department of Education. The objective is to equip students with world language skills to better appreciate and more fully engage with the rich and diverse mixture of cultures, heritages, and languages found in California and the world. Furthering the linguistic reach afforded by Proposition 58, an overwhelming majority of Californians voted in support of Assembly Bill 2514 (2018). AB 2514 gave school districts greater latitude to initiate dual-language immersion programs. In addition to state-funding already afforded to school districts for Dual Language Immersion Programs, AB 2514 (2018) would also award a minimum of 10 one-time grants of up to $300,000 per grant, to school districts. School districts would be in competition and need to apply for the grant, but the ultimate goal would be to greatly increase the number of students that acquire the seal of biliteracy before high school graduation.

Context of the Dissertation: One-Way Immersion Programs

Proposition 58 (2016) eased restrictions on bilingual education programs in California. However, many of the parents in this study sent their children to public Mandarin Immersion Programs in the state of California before the passage of Proposition 58. Although California Proposition 227 (1998) made it more difficult to teach in two languages, requesting a waiver to begin a bilingual education program primarily rested in the hands of educators seeking bilingual instruction for English Language Learners. The Mandarin Immersion Programs located in public schools in this study are one-way language programs. The waiver request required by Proposition 227 would be unnecessary because one-way immersion programs do not cater towards English Language Learners. School districts did not face any challenges of implementation because Mandarin Immersion Programs cater towards native-English speaking students and families. Generally speaking, the Mandarin Immersion Programs in the state of California would rely on public funds from the state to begin and operate.

More specifically, all the observational data and most of the interview data collection, took place at a Mandarin Immersion Program that begin during the 2011-2012 school year. Administrators often mentioned that the immersion program was not receiving any special funding from the district and in many ways the immersion program operated like a magnet school. According to the California Department of Education online portal, district governing boards can establish magnet schools within a traditional school. They are established to create a better balance in school population or provide instruction in a particular area that cannot be provided at every school. The district governing board at the dissertation field site established the immersion program in this manner and for these reasons. Although in 2018 the state began providing extra funding (AB 2514) in the form of financial grants, prior to this the dissertation

field site relied primarily on funding from the state (Legislative Analysts Office 2018), local property taxes, or school fundraising through the parent-teacher association.

DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Historically English is considered the *lingua franca* of America. Collectively Americans should not have much incentive to adopt another language or culture, yet today some individuals may be beginning to embrace them. Dual Language Immersion Programs (DLIP) are elementary school programs that, in addition to English, focus and implement another language and culture (Potowski 2007). They aim to provide a cross-cultural understanding while increasing language fluency in English and a target language (Fortune & Tedick 2003). Students will take traditional schools subjects (math, social studies, art, reading) in either the target language or English, depending upon the grade level. Along with the language, immersion programs include many aspects of the culture that the language represents (holidays, celebrations, history). Many immersion programs are also located in public elementary schools (Center for Applied Linguistics). Because of their placement in public schools, immersion programs have little to no restrictions for enrollment. Under these conditions, immersion programs, acting as a subset of traditional education, still developed and created a need for more teachers fluent in English and the target language.

In the past ten years, the number of dual language immersion programs have been steadily growing in public schools (Gross 2016; Maxwell 2012; McKay-Wilson 2011). Interest in dual language programs is driven by an increased demand for bilingual and biliterate workers and by educators who see positive impacts on academic achievement for both English-learners and students already fluent in English (Maxwell 2012). Three types of Dual Language Immersion Programs (DLIP) exist (Valdez, Delavan & Freire 2016; Hamayan, Genesee, & Cloud, 2013).

One type of DLIP caters to and primarily enrolls English-speaking students. The second type caters towards English-language learners, and the third type combine both these groups. Dual Language Immersion Programs also vary in instructional time in the foreign language. In addition to the type of student that Dual Language Immersion Programs seek to enroll comes the designation of a one-way or two-way program. One-way programs seek to add a language to the English-speaking student. Two-way programs work for both native and non-native English speakers. The English-speaking students are placed in classes with their limited English proficient counterparts. They improve their English while the native English speakers work to improve the target language. Similarly, the programs are also considered additive or subtractive programs. Additive approaches encourage language minority students to maintain the languages they bring to the classroom, while subtractive programs expect students that speak English as a second language to replace their mother tongues with English (Flores & Rosa 2015).

In California alone in the last ten years, the number of Dual Language Immersion Programs has increased over two-hundred and fifty percent (California Department of Education 2018). Nearly 1500 schools reported having some kind of bilingual or multilingual program in 2018-19, including 747 dual-language immersion programs. The popularity of the immersion model results from a convergence of factors, including increased attention to foreign language learning for English speakers, research on effective programs for educating language minority students, and the availability of federal and state funding for programs using this approach (Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000). Demographic shifts might also influence the rising number of bilingual education programs. Immigrants that speak English as a second language would benefit from a dual language program. The number of immigrants has increased sharply in the last fifty years, with America having the largest percentage of immigrants when compared with any other nation

(Connor, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). Although focused on the elementary school level, when students reach high school, they show higher levels of academic competence and motivation (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Most schools offered programs in Spanish followed by Mandarin.

[Figure 1.1 Here]

Mandarin Immersion Programs

The first Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) began in San Francisco in 1981 and they have since grown to nearly 300 across the country (Asia Society). Mandarin Immersion Programs are in most states, including the District of Columbia, with the most located in California (Center for Applied Linguistics). A standard model consists of at least eighty percent Mandarin taught in the early grades, with a gradual rise of English taught as the students advance in school. Many Mandarin Immersion Programs are a strand of the school opposed to the entire school using immersion curriculum. More specifically, they are placed in public elementary schools and ran concurrently with an existing conventional English-only curriculum. Figure 1.1 illustrates the growth of Dual Language Immersion Programs in California in general, regardless of language, and Mandarin Immersion specifically. Mandarin Immersion Programs have more than doubled in the last fifteen years, rising from 23 in 2006 to nearly 100 in the present-day.

In this dissertation, every parent had children that attended a one-way Mandarin Immersion Program in California. The students of immersion take traditional schools subjects in both the target language (Mandarin) and English. Along with the language, the Mandarin Immersion Program includes many aspects of the culture that the language represents. Because of the

complexity of the Chinese language, the popularity of Mandarin Immersion shows the value Americans assign to a language. Moreover, the prospect of globalization is made more evident in a Mandarin Immersion Program. Whether it be anxiety or acceptance, the media portrayal of China as a global superpower potentially attracts middle-class, educated parents. In Chapters 3 and 4, the primary field site for this dissertation is a Mandarin Immersion Program located in a majority-minority public elementary school. The program acts as a strand of the school, with only half of the students participating in the program and the other half enrolled in the English-only curriculum.

This dissertation spotlights one-way Mandarin Immersion Programs, directed towards English proficient students. A language associated with a globalized East Asian world, may draw a more diversified group of parents. Moreover, the increased numbers of migrants arriving from East Asian countries may change the demographics and pedagogy of education. Most of the parents in this study have household income levels that place at middle-class and above. For those that transferred out of their neighborhood school, they presumably possess the resources to provide their child with any number of educational opportunities, yet they chose Mandarin Immersion.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Middle-class parents often share similar characteristics that include how they invest in their children. Middle class parents invest in their children through active involvement in their education and a high frequency of enrollment in activities outside of school (Calarco 2014; Lareau 2002). Parents invest in their children to provide better educational and occupational opportunities, which may require them to leave the neighborhood school. School choice is primarily a middle-class phenomenon. Middle-class parents, in comparison with working class parents, are already in a privileged position and are afforded more flexibility in school decisions

(Ball, 2003; Power, Edwards & Wigfall 2003). These well-intentioned affluent families have the knowledge to the benefits of immersion, but the access to these resources might be limited for parents that are not as involved, informed, or financially secure.

Mandarin Immersion schools might act as an example of opportunity hoarding (Lewis-McCoy, 2014; Tilly, 1998). By enrolling their children in language immersion programs, middle class parents are giving their children a form of privilege. Whether parents mean to or not, they are isolating themselves from other families in two important ways: first they distinguish their children as individuals who will have greater familiarity with a secondary language than the average American, and second, they distinguish themselves as parents who have enough social and financial capital to be aware of the value of more languages. As I discuss in the next section, the rise in popularity of all immersion models and languages, not just Mandarin, is arguably a result of the converging interests of white Americans and immigrant groups.

Interest Convergence

One of the tenets of Critical Race Theory is interest convergence (Bell 1980). Interest convergence states that achieving racial justice and equality can only occur if it converges with the interest of those in power, typically the white majority (Bell 1980; McCoy & Rodricks 2015). In order to examine the power differential that potentially manifests between white families and their immigrant minority counterparts, many studies investigate bilingual education through a lens of interest convergence (Morales & Maravilla 2019; Kelly 2018; Burns 2017; Cervantes-Soon et al 2017; Varghese & Park 2010). They argue that bilingual education would not become a mainstream educational option unless it benefited white Americans as much as it does immigrant students that speak English as a second language. Recent studies provide evidence of this phenomenon in Dual Language Immersion Programs showing how race influences decision

making processes (Burns 2017; Palmer 2010). Interest convergence focuses on race, but class is also a salient issue with respect to academic achievement (Reardon 2013). Middle-class families and students might benefit from a bilingual education program as much as working-class families and students. The resulting advantage for middle-class families may prove to be better preparation and access to a global society. The rise in popularity of Dual Language Immersion Programs may be fueled by the value they hold for white Americans.

Becoming bilingual means different things for different groups of people and inequalities emerge where the interests of the dominant group take precedence. Research highlights examples of the dominant group and their interests becoming the priority of school districts (Palmer 2010). The minority white population dictated where and how other dual immersion programs would be implemented across the district. Opportunities to learn about a new immersion program, in one instance, were often created for the white English-speaking parents in the district, without much outreach towards the Spanish-speaking populations (Dorner 2011). Interest convergence is also evident in an example of a district trying to save a struggling school that was able to engender an optimistic outlook because of the white families that enrolled (Pearson, Wolgemuth & Colomer 2015). These studies highlight how dual language immersion programs often cater to white families while any benefit to minority, immigrant families, or non-native English speakers, is just an acceptable side effect.

Neo-liberal Perspective

A potential factor that has influenced California, and many other states' stances on bilingual education is found within the neo-liberal literature directed towards bilingual programs. Neo-liberalism in the bilingual education context refers to the commodification of dual language programs by social dominant groups in order to improve human capital (Cervantes-Soon 2014;

Heller, 2003; Varghese & Park, 2010). This perspective spotlights the contrasting interests held by the dominant majority that currently benefit from bilingual education and the immigrant groups that originally used it as a strength. Bilingual education has roots in immigrant, marginalized communities but over time, language learning became politicized with the support for English-only educating increasing (Flores 2016). Its original intention was to instill cultural pride in immigrant children, improving self-esteem and to support their English learning by providing a strong foundation in their first language (Flores & Garcia 2017). Bilingual education never adequately achieved these goals, leaning more towards becoming an educational advantage for the middle-class (Flores & Garcia 2017).

At the state level, the reason for implementing bilingual education is permeated with economic and hegemonic interests. Kelly (2018) analyzes state legislative bills from California and Arizona and finds the state expansion of bilingual education is due to economic interests and issues of national security. Bilingual education may paradoxically become a way to continue the English-speaking global hegemony of the Western world. In other words, in order to "save" English and Western interests, Western English-speakers need to learn another language to spread English and Western interests. The hegemonic interests in preparing students for a global economy are popular reasons for advocacy of dual language programs (Kelly 2018).

Historically, immigrant students were forced to assimilate into American society by learning the English language, because languages other than English were primarily seen as a problem to be remediated by the schools (Ruiz 1984). The shift in framing the benefits of bilingual education away from immigrant communities and towards the dominant social group marginalizes language-minority students (Flores 2016). The needs of middle-class children and families often come first due to fear of losing those desirable families (Flores & Garcia 2017).

Arguably the change in framing bilingual education is a result of the influence immigrants have had on native English-speaking Americans. Asian immigrant academic achievement has pushed middle-class parents to use language immersion programs, specifically Mandarin, as a path towards securing or retaining educational advantages (Watson 2021).

OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is presented in the form of three stand-alone chapters that address three questions: 1) Why do middle-class parents choose Mandarin Immersion Programs; 2) How and why does a school market a Mandarin Immersion Program to attract families from outside the district and; 3) How do middle-class parents influence the school environment at an underperforming majority-minority school?

In the first substantive chapter, entitled *Keeping Up With the (Zh)oneses: Mandarin Immersion and School Choice*, I examine how middle-class parents of various racial and ethnic backgrounds narrate or explain their reasons for enrolling their children in Mandarin Immersion Programs. I address the following questions: Why do American parents enroll their children in Mandarin Immersion Programs? How do parents from different racial groups frame the benefits of immersion? This chapter uses a mixed-method approach of a 500-respondent parent survey and 15 Black and White parent interviews, two groups historically known for speaking only one language. All the respondents sent their children to various immersion programs primarily located in the state of California. I found that White and Black parents frame the benefits of immersion for their children differently. White parents want to give their children a future advantage to maintain their place within the academic hierarchy. Black parents seek to circumvent structural issues pertaining to racial inequality within the educational system that often negatively impact their children. Critical Race Theory suggests that racial disparities exist

in curriculum, instruction, assessment, funding, and desegregation. I argue these inequities push Black parents to seek alternative methods of educating their children, outside of the Black-White dichotomy found in conventional educational spaces.

In Chapter 3, entitled *Promoting Globalized Acceptance: The Marketing of Language Immersion,* I shift the perspective from the parents to the teachers and administrators. During the 2018-2019 academic school year I spent approximately 300 hours observing four elementary classrooms and various parent and administrator meetings. I supplement the observations with twenty-five parent, teacher, and administrator interviews. I find that the school district is aware of the competition that school choice brings and the growing popularity of bilingual education. They use this to their advantage to attract parents from outside the school attendance zone or to keep parents from choosing another district. With help from the district, the school brands itself as a gateway to a global community. Their definition of a global community is embracing the notion of an increasingly connected society, using language as an example of foreignness that Americans should become familiar. The struggling school capitalizes on the attraction of a globalized society. The parents the school draws, turn a struggling school into an institution desirable by other middle-class parents. I argue that the district does not take the majority Hispanic student body into account because their goals are not necessarily educational or citizenship-building, but rather the potential for increased enrollment, higher test scores, and resources that the immersion program and middle-class parents might bring to the school.

Chapter 4, entitled *Diversity or Gentrification: Middle-Class Parents at Working-Class Schools,* examines what happens after middle-class parents arrive at the Mandarin Immersion Program. Drawing on parental investment and school gentrification literature, I use parent interviews and observations to examine the institutional changes in an elementary school with a

language immersion program. In this chapter, I show how a struggling school located in a working-class neighborhood gradually gentrifies without neighborhood demographic change. The immersion parents all reside outside the school attendance zone. They are generally white, Asian, and middle-class, contrasting with the working-class Hispanic families in the non-immersion program. I find that although the immersion program creates a more racially and economically diverse student body, the diversity is misleading as a disconnect exists between the immersion and non-immersion parents and students. This pushes the immersion parents to seek a school that is completely immersion, potentially pushing out the immersion families from their neighborhood school. The findings suggest those that may benefit most from an improved school environment may lose the opportunity to participate.

CONTRIBUTION AND CONCLUSION

My dissertation makes a number of contributions to the sociological literature. Previous research examining how Dual Language Immersion Programs reproduce racial or class inequalities primarily focuses on educating English Language Learners in Spanish two-way programs (Burns 2017; Cervantes-Soon 2014; Dorner 2011; Flores 2016; Heiman & Murakami 2019; Palmer 2009). By contrast, I utilize mixed-methods research to investigate a one-way Mandarin Immersion Program. My dissertation places a spotlight on parents and students that do not have an immigrant background, many of which are native English speakers. I also examine bilingual programs that use Mandarin Chinese, the second most spoken non-English language in the United States, with a majority of those speakers in California (U.S. Census 2020).

The major contribution of the dissertation is to highlight how Mandarin Immersion Programs provide three examples of educational investments. Native English-speaking parents invest in their children because of purported academic and non-academic benefits bilingual education

offers. A district invests in Mandarin immersion, instead of Spanish immersion, to attract parents to a struggling school that results in the school achieving the desired state academic measures. Lastly, while risking alienating parents that do not choose the immersion program, middle-class parents leverage their social capital to invest in a school.

To conclude, my dissertation contains a methodological appendix that uses both phases of data collection, primarily my participant observation and African-American parent interviews. In *Dual Immersion as Multicultural Education,* I reflect on my positionality as an African-American male that speaks Chinese, conducting a qualitative study of bilingual education. I employ a cross-cultural perspective to conduct a reflexive analysis. I highlight how the intersection of race and language, influence my social interactions with parents and teachers of language immersion programs. I highlight my own background and the path that led me to this research. Then, I identify various perspectives and challenges that arise when different cultures converge. Finally, by drawing a connection between my personal experience and my research, I contend that language immersion programs should be placed within a multicultural education framework.

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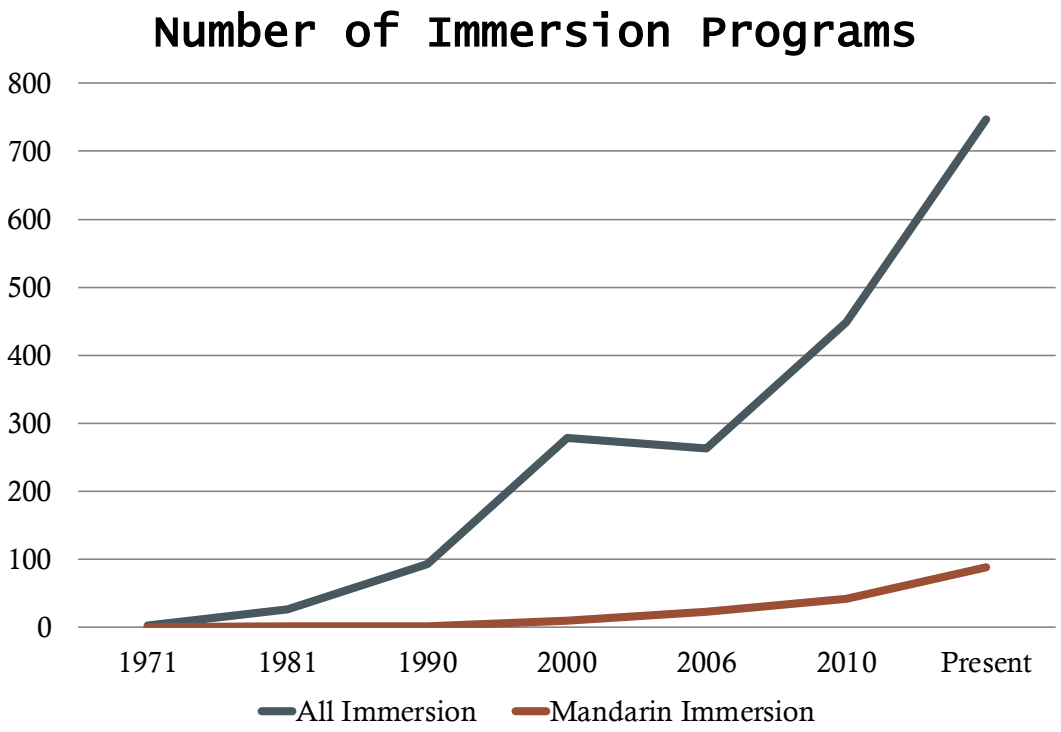
Figure 1.1: Growth of Dual Language Immersion in California



CHAPTER 2

KEEPING UP WITH THE (ZH)ONESES: MANDARIN IMMERSION AND SCHOOL CHOICE

INTRODUCTION

Historically English is considered the *lingua franca* of America. Collectively Americans should not have much incentive to adopt another language or culture, yet today some individuals may be beginning to embrace them. Recently, more Americans are choosing Dual Language Immersion Programs—a form of bilingual education in which students are taught literacy and content in two languages — as one source of cultural and linguistic transmission. The growing number of language immersion programs and their locations outside ethnic enclaves, suggests that they hold some attraction to Americans of various backgrounds. It is assumed that immigrants chose bilingual education to maintain a connection to their language, why Black and White parents chose immersion, originating from groups that historically speak English, is the primary focus of this study.

Much school choice literature examines various aspects of parental choice. The impact school choice has on racial and economic segregation (Riel, Parcel, Mickelson, & Smith 2018; Holme, Frankenberg, Diem, & Welton 2013; Roda & Wells 2013; Mickelson, Bottia, & Southworth 2008). How school choice may present as a sorting machine, attracting the best students away from the home districts due to its quality (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, & Branch 2007; Hoxby 2003). Charter school and magnet school studies are most common in the school choice literature. Charters and magnet schools are popular public school choice options (Riel, Parcel, Mickelson, & Smith 2018). While previous studies show how charter schools introduce an additional choice and competition into the education system (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, & Branch

2007). However this study situates itself through the examination of bilingual education, more specifically dual language immersion, as a novel school choice option. It also bypasses the structural processes and results of school choice policies, and focuses on individual parent rationale.

What attracts parents to these programs? The scholarship finds parents that enroll their child in dual immersion engage in a form of childrearing that stresses the benefits of language acquisition. In addition, they also seek a bicultural pedagogy that might allow children to experience other cultures and societies more meaningfully. This article implements a mixed-method approach of semi-structured interviews supplemented with survey data of parents with children enrolled in a dual immersion program using Mandarin Chinese as its target language. I ask the following questions: (1) Why do parents enroll their child in Mandarin Immersion Programs? (2) Do their motivations differ based on racial/ethnic background? This study adds and advances existing literature of bilingual school choice with two arguments (Ee 2018): parents choose immersion because of an adherence to a bilingual discourse that states bilinguals exhibit an enhanced ability to solve problems with greater mental flexibility (Lazaruk 2007; Bialystok 2001; Bialystok 2009). Second, although Black and White parents, similarly value bilingualism, they have different expectations as to the ultimate benefit for their child.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Parents are actively opting out of a traditional style of education to enroll their child into a Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP). What drives parents to seek immersion education? Existing school choice literature suggests potential explanations: the value of bilingualism, educational competition, and structural racism. Each will be discussed in turn.

School Choice

School choice might allow parents to have more control over the educational path of their children. Parents may not choose schools based on objective data like test scores but from a wide range of sources, including informal networks (Ball & Vincent 1998). White parents have used the freedom to choose as a way to avoid schools that are more diverse by race and class (Saporito & Sohoni 2007; Roda & Wells 2013). School programs tend to attract families that have access to social networks that value education more than other groups (Lareau & Goyette 2014; Altenhofen, Berends, & White 2016; Goldring, Hoover-Dempsey, Rowley, & Pachucki 2004). This process of choosing schools might be more informal yet complex, relying on multiple sources of data (Bell & Hendry 2012). These networks may aid in pulling parents towards alternative schooling while distancing themselves from traditional public schools.

Immersion programs do not hold widespread availability. Parents often become aware of them through informal peer groups. How these parents ultimately make their decisions relies on their access to socially structured networks and personal characteristics (Ball & Vincent 1998). Without even a visit to their assigned school, parents will use social networks to construct good schools, and trust this information as they make their decision (Holme 2002). These parents are often highly educated at middle-class and above. Parent education and income levels correlate with their participation in public school choice (Smrekar & Golding 1999; Jencks & Phillips 1998).

Some parents may be aware of the cognitive and educational benefits of speaking two languages. Multiple previous studies state bilinguals remain on the same level or outperform monolinguals in various educational subjects, task switching, reasoning, and other cognitive functions (Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, Mayne 2018; Steele, Slater, Zamarro, Miller, Burkhauser,

& Bacon 2017; Lazaruk 2007; Bialystok 2009; Bialystok 2001). Immersion education gives children a greater opportunity of mastering another language without sacrificing academic English proficiency (Lindholm-Leary & Block 2010). While seeking bilingual education, non-immigrant parents may also be motivated to seek out schools that desire greater parental involvement and communication. Alternative school programs can foster a tight community of parents with like-minded goals united in their commitment to the approach set forth by the school (Bosetti & Pyryt 2007). Aside from the style of student socialization or intensity of parental involvement, immersion draws parents seeking a school structured around second language learning.

Globalization

The growth of Mandarin Immersion Programs in general may relate to patterns of globalization and immigration; importing educational norms of high-achievement with a focus on testing. Immigrants originating from East Asian may influence Black and White American educational decisions. The choice of Chinese language learning could provide insight on how non-Asian Americans respond to East Asian ethnic groups setting a new benchmark in educational achievement (Jimenez & Horowitz 2013). Mandarin Immersion Programs are essentially Asian-influenced immigrant institutions. At least half of the lesson plans are conducted in Chinese, requiring native-like fluency in the language and attracting teachers and students of Chinese descent (Met & Livaccari 2012). Since MIP attempts to provide fluency in a language originating from China, Western parents may associate these schools with high achieving students.

The impact of globalization may also emerge with White Americans' attitudes toward academic merit. How might Whites respond to an impending threat of losing their dominant

group position, particularly at elite universities? Ethno-racial out-group threat shifts White support for meritocracy in different directions where Whites may decrease the importance of GPA when primed with the Asian group threat (Samson 2013). The significance of academic merit is concurrent with Asian success where social acceptance and educational achievement may no longer be defined as a White, monolingual English-speaking student. At the same time, White students that formerly acted as the educational standard are associated with inferior academic performance (Jimenez & Horowitz 2015). Black and White parents may seek to emulate Asian-American educational achievement by endorsing bilingualism.

Race and Choice

Black students continue to encounter obstacles when they attend suburban schools, presumed to provide a better overall educational experience. Systemic racism continues to be a fundamental problem for the educational experiences of Black students (Merolla & Jackson 2019). Middle-class status does not ameliorate the challenges African-American families face when seeking desirable schools. Even in an affluent integrated school district, Black students are put at a disadvantage within a racialized academic environment (Diamond 2006). If Black parents choose suburban schools attended by their middle-class peers, their children may face a range of underlying processes impeding their academic growth and potential. Black children are disadvantaged at these schools not only in outcomes such as test scores, but teacher biases, responsiveness of personnel, and special education tracking programs (Lewis-McCoy 2014). Suburban schools often espouse a color-blind ideology where racial differences are disregarded in favor of the notion; we are all the same. This impacts Black students because color-blind educational policies often implemented by administrators, masks the underlying effects of racial practices and understandings (Lewis 2001; Welton, Diem, & Holme 2015).

Race is more salient than socio-economic class with respect to school experiences, and this may guide Black parents to choose schools that are more responsive to racial and ethnic identities. Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be used to challenge the ways race and racism impact social structures such as educational institutions (Ladson-Billings 1998; Yosso 2005). CRT sees school curriculum as designed to maintain White supremacy and for an instructional approach, Black Students require some aspect of remediation (Ladson-Billings 1998). A majority of urban schools continue to not adequately provide a substantial framework that supports the historical existence and culture of minority students (Faltz & Leake 1996). Regardless of the curriculum, schools exist to advantage White students. White teachers and administrators often view Black children as intellectually inferior when compared with White children. Black children face a host of challenges in majority White schools including stereotype threat, pressure to conform to White culture while at the same time acting as the sole representative of their entire race (Fordham 1988; Fordham & Ogbu 1986; Ogbu 2003; Polite 1993; Steele 1997). Black students are also more likely to be tracked in lower-performing classes and disciplined for behavioral reasons causing Black parents to rely on school choice rather than their assigned school that may fail to educate their child (Merry & New 2008).

Patillo (2015) examines the difficulties of the politics behind school choice in the African-American community highlighting how choice does not offer Black parents as much control over school placement. Choice often rests on whether a parent, based on where they live, accepts the school they are assigned. Residential segregation puts Black families at a disadvantage, requiring the use of personal financial resources to gain adequate schooling that White neighborhoods often provide (Davis & Welcher 2013). Parents with the resources have the luxury to move into or out of, school districts. Families of color want to search for alternatives because they often are

unable to choose a residence by educational preference (Goyette 2008). Charter and magnet schools are popular choices for urban families. But charter schools create more segregation than district counterparts while promoting values that ultimately are detrimental to students of color (Stulberg 2015). The racial demographic of the school affects choice as well. White parents are not likely to choose schools with a large minority population, but non-white parents do not base their decisions on racial composition (Renzulli & Evans 2005; Saporito 2003).

METHODS AND RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

Even though private schools and some parent-led programs found a way to teach in a foreign language, it was not until the passage of California Proposition 58 (2016) that instruction in another language was officially permitted. Prop 58 had wide support and passed with an overwhelming margin. It ensured all students could receive English proficiency as soon as possible. Schools now had the flexibility to design programs that met the needs of both English language learners and students that wanted to learn another language. Reintroducing the possibility of bilingual education programs into California school districts.

The primary objective of this paper is to discuss why parents without a related ethnic background choose bilingual education. I separate these parents from parents with a related ethnic background (i.e. Asians parents) because Asian-Americans often choose a second [East-Asian] language for heritage maintenance. Some Asian (non-Korean) parents chose Korean immersion to maintain in Asian identity (Ee 2017). Korean-Canadian and Korean-American parents want their children to keep their cultural identity (Park & Sarkar 2007; Lee 2002). In the process of heritage language maintenance, Chinese immigrant families struggle against the assimilative forces of English (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe 2009). Vietnamese parents show a favorable attitude towards bilingual (Vietnamese) language learning as a way to maintain

language and culture (Young & Tran 1999). It is possible that Asian[2] parents in this study chose Mandarin Immersion for reasons unrelated to cultural maintenance, but that is beyond the scope. I choose to focus on why parents without any ethnic connection to Mandarin choose a language that is spoken by less than 2 percent of English language learners in California public schools (CA Dept. of Education 2019).

Reviewing the existing literature suggests that parents choosing MIP do so for different reasons depending upon their racial background. For the White and Black parents of Mandarin Immersion, the arguably foreign influence of Asian academic achievement may cause a shift in two different directions. White parents may be willing to move towards Mandarin Immersion to retain greater academic standing. Latino parents chose magnet schools as a way to avoid their inferior zoned schools (Taylor Haynes, Phillips, & Goldring 2010). Similarly, Black parents may want to move away from conventional English-only elementary education. It is also likely that all of these parents recognize the benefits of bilingualism for children. Parents in this study are predominately middle class and have more resources to provide their child with what they perceive as the best school investment opportunity.

I chose one-way Mandarin Immersion Programs, directed towards English proficient students, to highlight the value English-speaking Americans assign to language. A language associated with a globalized East Asian world, may draw a more diversified group of parents. Moreover, the increased numbers of migrants arriving from East Asian countries may change the demographics and pedagogy of education. In this study, all of the interview respondents had children that attended a one-way Mandarin Immersion Program in California. A majority of the parents in this study have household income levels that place at middle-class and above. For those that

[2] Although Asia is a large continent with many racial and ethnic groups, Asians in this study refer to the peoples originating from the East Asian countries of China (Taiwan), Korea, and Japan.

transferred out of their neighborhood school, they presumably possess the resources to place their child into a school deemed satisfactory, yet they chose Mandarin Immersion.

Mixed-Methods Design

I conducted a mixed-method study of parents that have children currently enrolled in Mandarin Immersion Programs in order to triangulate my results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). I relied on surveys and interviews with 15 parents located in the two largest metropolitan areas of California. Although both forms of data collection are directed toward answering my research questions, I conducted a chi-square analysis and an ordered logistic regression to highlight the motivations of parents without a related ethnic background. Respondents that self-select into a survey generally will be more committed to completing the open-ended questions, providing additional valuable qualitative insight into parental motivations.

Survey Data

The quantitative portion comes from data I collected through an online survey I designed, made nationally available online in September 2015. I gathered respondents that had a child currently enrolled in a Mandarin Immersion Program. To distribute the survey, I purposely sampled by contacting three online resources: The Mandarin Immersion Parents Council[3], and Facebook and Yahoo Mandarin Immersion Parent Groups[4]. The Mandarin Immersion Parents Council is a web blog created by a parent with children enrolled in Mandarin Immersion. The same parent helps moderate the online parent forums, posting information from nationwide news sources to keep parents abreast of Mandarin Immersion-related information. The parent groups

[3] www.miparentscouncil.org

[4] The groups are a social network comprised mainly of parents with children currently enrolled in Mandarin Immersion Programs throughout the US and abroad. The groups' main purpose is to provide a forum for parents to share information and find support relating to Mandarin Immersion programs, Chinese language study, and dual language education. These are private groups and postings on these groups represent parents' views only; they do not represent any school's opinion nor are they endorsed by any school. [Taken from group descriptions]

are online communities where like-minded individuals come together to communicate with others sharing similar interests. Both Yahoo and Facebook Mandarin Immersion parent groups have a moderator and can only be joined upon request. The moderators of the online blog and parent groups posted my survey link with an invitation to participate, resulting in a sample size of 500 respondents that completed the survey. I use descriptive statistics, a chi-square analysis, and an ordered logistic regression of odds ratios controlling for education and household income, to analyze the differences across racial groups.

The survey totaled 25 questions divided into three parts: descriptive statistics, a ranking question, and Likert scale statements. Due to a small sample size of Non-White and Non-Asian respondents, I recoded the race question *What Race/Ethnicity Best Describes You,* into two distinct ethnic groups, parents with an ethnic background related to East-Asia (Asian) coded 0 and those without (Non-Asian) coded 1. The non-Asian category comprised White, Black, Hispanic, and Multiple-Race parents. Compiled together, the ethnic background of the parent may serve as a distinguishing trait that separates one group of parents from another.

The open-ended ranking question asked respondents to rank their top three reasons for choosing MIP out of eight choices[5]. The ranking question also asked respondents to provide an explanation or justification for their first choice. 460 out of 500 parents completed the open-ended question for a response rate of 92%, adding more detail about their motivations for choosing MIP. I evaluated the ranking question using a chi-square statistical analysis to measure the relationship between the top three ranked responses and race. I recoded the eight options for the ranking question into top three reasons for choosing MIP, dummy coded as (1), chosen as a top three reason, and (0), did not choose as a top three reason. I dummy coded the ranking

[5] See Table 2 for all eight ranking questions

question to mirror the way I asked respondents to rank their responses on the survey. This also provides an alternative perspective on which parents fall outside of the top three for each of the eight variables. I hand-coded the open-ended responses treating them like interview data, highlighting key words and phrases that provide a clearer representation of parental motivations.

The Likert scale consists of twelve statements indicating parents' level of agreement. Originally, all items were scored on a five-point Likert scale where 0 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Due to a skewed distribution, I collapsed the Likert scale items into three items coded 0 = disagree, 1 = neutral, and 2 = agree. Conducting the Ordered Logistic Regression, I control for education and household income to highlight the argument of racial differences in motivations for choosing Mandarin Immersion. The education variable is coded as 0 = some college, 1 = college graduate, and 2 = graduate or professional school. I dropped high school from the analysis because the response rate was zero. Annual household income is coded on a five-point scale where 0 = $25,000 - $49,999 to 4 = over $200,000

Upon preliminary survey data analysis, I grouped the non-descriptive survey questions into three categories that will provide a better comparison of reasons why parents choose MIP across racial groups. I titled the three categories as follows: linguistic motivations, cross-cultural motivations, or educational motivations. These categories mirror how I constructed questions for the interviews.

Interview Data

I complement the survey analysis with 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews of parents in the two largest urban areas of California, with children enrolled in MIP. I purposely sampled the interview respondents by race to better answer my second research question, does enrollment in MIP vary across racial groups? I chose Black and White parents for two reasons: they represent a

native-born population of a country that traditionally speaks one language, and historically these two groups lie on opposite ends of the spectrum with regard to academic achievement patterns. The interview data helps explore the thought processes for choosing immersion, from the specific language of Mandarin Chinese to the methods of curriculum and instruction. The interview data from the White and Black parents will illustrate the differences in motivations from the perspectives of two historically monolingual racial groups with different educational experiences and outcomes.

Through a publicly available website[6], I contacted the founder of an organization committed to the support of African American children studying Chinese. Through snowball sampling, I was introduced to participants of the organization and other African American parents with children enrolled in MIP for a total of two couples[7], mother and father interviewed simultaneously, and six individual interviews. Within the comment section of the survey many parents left contact information stating they would provide further information upon request. I contacted two such White parents and requested interviews. Again, through snowball sampling I gathered more White respondents for a total of two White couples[8], mother and father interviewed simultaneously, and five individual interviews.

I created the interview questions to mirror questions used in the survey. I ask questions regarding respondents' familiarity with China and their desire to cultivate a general foreign cultural awareness. As well as if their attraction was primarily due to immersion curriculum and second language learning. Because of the exploratory nature of interviews, I added a category of questions related to obstacles and challenges of Mandarin Immersion. Challenges of MIP and

[6] www.paassc.com
[7] Of the Black respondents, one couple was an African American father and Asian mother.
[8] Of the White respondents, one couple was an Asian father and a White mother.

school-choice in general may provide a clearer understanding as to whether White and Black parents' motivations differed initially with respect to racialized experiences in schools. The qualitative interviews allowed me to probe my subjects by requesting examples of situations I thought appropriate to the study. All of the interviews were hand coded and I used the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss 2014) to search for defining characteristics and engage in an extended theory analysis.

Complementary mixed-method research provides a more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem, using qualitative data to explain the quantitative results (Creswell & Clark 2017). The mixed-method approach also provides more valuable data for a relatively new phenomenon, recently growing in popularity. The survey data provides general demographic descriptive statistics for a subset of parents choosing immersion. It also provides the distinction between parents with or without a related ethnic background. The interviews illustrate the thought process behind what leads parents to ultimately select this particular style of education. They provide a more nuanced recognition of the benefits and drawbacks associated with MIP, emphasizing any variation that emerges between Black and White parents.

FINDINGS

[Table 2.1 Here]

The general demographic background of all respondents (See Table 2.1) shows that all parents reported having at least some college education, and less than 5% reported a household income of less than $50,000 per year. 89.4% of all respondents report speaking English as the primary language with their child and 80.2% spoke English as a primary language as a child. Speakers of a language other than English as a child have opted to speak English with their child.

Thus, in some cases, Asian respondents have linguistically assimilated to the dominant language by speaking English primarily with their child.

The descriptive statistics also show the lack of familiarity that parents without a related ethnic background have with Chinese language or culture. 78.12% report having minimal to no Chinese language ability, 62.22% of respondents have **not** spent a significant amount of time in an area where Chinese is widely spoken. Lastly, over half (59.77%) of the non-Asian respondents reported having little to no contact with Chinese people prior to entering their child in Mandarin Immersion. Below, I present the principal findings: 1) Support of Bilingualism; 2) Parental Differences; 3) Academic Hierarchies; and 4) African-American Identity. These themes highlight why parents choose Mandarin Immersion and how their investments differ across racial groups.

[Table 2.2 Here]

Bilingualism as a Gift and a Challenge

Of the responses to the ranking question (see Table 2.2) on the survey, *Please Choose the Top Three Reasons for Choosing Mandarin Immersion*, the most popular choices for all parents regardless of race was *A Bilingual Education is Better for my Child.* Followed by *Mandarin Immersion will Better Prepare my Child for Job Market and a Global Society* as the second most popular choice. The third most popular choice was *Reason Not Listed* and respondents provided more information in the open-ended response to why they chose this as one of the top three choices. Of all parents, 84.4% chose providing their child with a bilingual education, 73.4% chose better preparation for a job and global citizenship as one of their top three reasons, and 36.8% chose another reason not listed in their top three. Table 2.2 better illustrates the survey

data regarding the open ended ranking question: *what are your top three reasons for choosing Mandarin Immersion*?

This table shows the percentages of parents that chose the reason, *A Bilingual Education is Better for my Child*, as one of their top three reasons for choosing Mandarin Immersion. An overwhelming majority chose Mandarin Immersion because they prefer their child be involved in second language learning. Approximately 81% of the 145 Asian parents and 85% of the 355 non-Asian parents want their children to receive the gift of another language, with many parents wishing they had learned another language at a young age. Parents across all races feel bilingualism is important. Many parents stated that bilingual children would develop more mental flexibility, while also aware that learning another language is reportedly easier at a young age. A bilingual education also offers a more intellectually stimulating education in the minds of many parents. The following statements from the survey further highlight what I found common across all races:

> Early on, I would often say that if she rejected the MI [Mandarin Immersion], or it became too difficult, I would just appreciate it for the mental gymnastics a bilingual education offers. But now I feel quite committed that we need to stick it out at least until 8th grade.
>
> -- Asian Mother, 1st grade: open-ended

> Learning a second non-native language helps improve development of the frontal lobe Executive order functions. The brain area that helps with memory, organization, planning etc. An immersion program would best help with that.
>
> -- White Mother, 6th grade daughter: open-ended

Parents seek the challenges and cognitive benefits a bilingual education offers. They adhere to a discourse of bilingualism that states children, when compared with monolinguals, will have superior skills in problem solving, task switching, and conflict resolution (Bialystok, 2008).

Many parents in the surveys and interviews have similarly done the research on bilingual benefits and the advantages of second language learning, viewing a second language as a gift they are giving their child. When the child becomes an adult, they will cherish this gift as they realize the usefulness of being bilingual. A specific language is not the primary focus, but second language learning attracts parents. The interview respondents share a similar sentiment:

> "I do not think it is an educated way of raising someone without a couple of languages. The program is less about Mandarin but more about language acquisition."
>
> -- White Mother, 4th grade son: interview

> "Children need to be bilingual in today's world. He goes to a Spanish school part-time. I want him to be trilingual, this is the goal. He has to play an instrument and has to speak another language."
>
> -- Black Mother, 3rd grade son: interview

The intangible nature of speaking another language can be carried with the child through adulthood. Later in life if the child loses Chinese fluency, the mental development acquired from immersion education will still provide an advantage. The choice of Mandarin Immersion signifies a unique parental investment opportunity. Parents in this study perceive a superior educational experience, yet many are unable to genuinely assist with school assignments. They invest in second language curriculum and sacrifice daily homework involvement. This is not only a challenge for the parents but also the children.

Parents believe that their children need an educational challenge to properly develop academically. In their adherence to the discourse of bilingualism, that learning another language increases a child's cognitive awareness; parents see themselves as educational obstacle creators. Their role as parents includes providing their child with a challenge as a cure for educational apathy children might experience at non-immersion programs. Daily language immersion

represents the ultimate challenge. The complexity and unfamiliarity of Mandarin Chinese only adds to the difficulty.

> "Our kids get so much love at home; we needed a way to give them (children) a struggle. Their lives are not really much of a struggle now, because they have parents that love and support them so much. But everything is not handed to you."
>
> -- Black Father, 4th grade son: interview

> The education system in the US is not challenging interested and intelligent children. Without the challenge of learning another language our child would be bored in elementary school.
>
> -- White Mother, 1st grade son: open-ended response

Parents want their children to encounter some form of struggle at an early stage in life. The survey confirms that due to household income and education, respondents raise their children in socially advantageous environments. They need a challenge to ensure that when they become adults they can overcome obstacles. For parents, Mandarin Immersion represents this test, which children pass when increasing their language and cultural awareness. Parents look for a way to keep their child's mind active and dynamic. Parents in this study choose immersion to make a deliberate effort in stimulating development and cultivating cognitive skills. In sum, bilingual education increases potential and demands effort. Continuing with the survey data, the ordered logistic regression provides differing attitudes toward what drives parents to immersion.

Parent Choices Diverge

I find that learning a second language is key for all parents, but how Mandarin Immersion actually benefits children yields a bifurcation of perspectives among parents. Examining the survey data (see Table 2.3), the educational benefits of immersion between parents with or without a related ethnic background are significant. The Ordered Logistic Regression highlights

variables related to general immersion curriculum and instruction, with each variable in the table representing a statement providing the motivations behind choosing MIP. Results highlight the difference between the two parent groups.

The data shows that parents without a related ethnic background (non-Asian) are more likely to agree with the following four statements: They are 1.56 times more likely to agree that Mandarin Immersion is more academically demanding than non-immersion programs; 1.88 times more likely to agree that Mandarin Immersion will improve my child's performance in non-language subjects. 2.23 times more likely to agree that they prefer any immersion program, not necessarily Mandarin. Finally, they are 2.76 times more likely to agree that knowing Chinese will get my child into a better university.

Parents without an ethnic background related to China or the Chinese language appear to be motivated by academic reasons. They see Mandarin Immersion serving a purpose that will translate to something more than just being able to speak another language. They seek a program that may provide higher academic achievements. Parents with a related ethnic background (Asian) in my study speak English primarily, they do not see Mandarin Immersion providing greater academic success when compared with conventional styles of education. Parents with a similar ethnic background to native speakers of Mandarin seem to be more concerned with their children receiving something concrete or tangible, like the ability to speak Chinese fluently.

[Table 2.3 Here]

Asian Heritage – Investment in the Past

I found that learning a second language is key for all parents, but a divergence of perspectives as to how Mandarin Immersion will benefit their child academically emerges. Examining the survey data (see Table 2.3), a significant difference with the variables related to the educational benefits of immersion between Asian and non-Asian parents. According to the Ordered Logistic Regression, the variables of significance general immersion curriculum and instruction. Each variable in the table represents a statement providing the motivations supporting why a parent would choose MIP. They show a clear pattern of difference between the Asian and non-Asian groups.

The data shows that non-Asian parents are more likely to agree with the following four statements: Non-Asian parents are 1.56 times more likely to agree that *Mandarin Immersion is more academically demanding than non-immersion programs*. They are 1.88 times more likely to agree that *Mandarin Immersion will improve my child's performance in non-language subjects*, 2.23 times more likely to agree that *they prefer any immersion program, not necessarily Mandarin*. Finally they are 2.76 times more likely to agree that *knowing Chinese will get my child into a better university*.

The data shows that non-Asian parents are motivated because of academic reasons. Asian parents prefer second language learning for the opportunity to strengthen a familial connection. The statement, *I will be disappointed if my child is unable to speak Chinese as adult,* trends in the other direction. Asian parents are 64% **more** likely to agree with this statement. Asian parents hope that their children will continue to have opportunities to speak Chinese throughout adulthood. Non-Asian parents conversely, see Mandarin Immersion serving a purpose that will

translate to something more than just being able to speak another language. They seek a program that may provide higher academic achievements.

Even though many of the Asian parents in my study speak English primarily[9], they do not see Mandarin Immersion providing greater academic success when compared with conventional styles of education. Asian parents are very concerned with their children receiving something concrete or tangible, the ability to speak Chinese fluently. Non-Asian parents main concern is more general, and does not have a direct connection to Mandarin Chinese fluency. To further support this hypothesis I present two responses from the open-ended ranking that supports this evaluation.

> It's our heritage. We want our children to keep it as much as they can. We also want them to be able to know our rich culture and history.
>
> -- Asian Mother, open-ended response

> It was important to us that our daughter be proficient in Mandarin as part of her cultural heritage. We felt that the only way our daughter would truly learn Mandarin is through an immersion school.
>
> -- Asian Mother, open-ended response

These two responses suggest that Asian parents are not choosing Mandarin Immersion for any perceived educational benefits but to retain a connection to their past language and culture. One of the ranking questions provides more support as well (see table 2.2). The question focused on motivations based on a superior academic environment, *the Mandarin Immersion school is the best in the area;* show significant differences with a chi-square measure of association between the Asian and the non-Asian parents. Non-Asian parents are almost four times more likely to place this statement into their top three reasons for choosing Mandarin Immersion. Asian parents

[9] See Table 2.1

look to connect with a cultural heritage that may be lost; it is an investment in the child's past, a way to sustain the link that will diminish with each successive generation.

Asian parents stay active in their pursuit toward reclamation with their language heritage. Survey data show that Asian parents want to fight off the continued generational trend of assimilation into a monolingual speaking society. Asian parents sustaining a heritage link by enrolling their children in Mandarin Immersion may exacerbate Asian otherness and the 'forever foreign' (Tuan, 1998) concept that exists in America. Mandarin Immersion temporarily forestalls a linguistic association with the dominant White majority. Asian Americans are aware of the disadvantages of not being White (Zhou, 2004), yet still choose to emphasize the importance of maintaining an ethnic attachment. Asian parents assume the academic benefits to be lost on their children because speaking Chinese does not distinguish Asian children from their peers thus not providing an improvement in future job and educational opportunities. Despite this Asian parents still choose Mandarin Immersion, taking the risk of playing into Asian stereotypes.

The survey data provides interesting insights to the Asian and non-Asian distinction. Due to the large number of White parents that represent the non-Asian sample in the survey, the quantitative analysis is best used to highlight the dissimilar views of Asian parents. The qualitative analysis helps to answer the more puzzling question of why parents without an existing cultural or linguistic connection to China choose Mandarin Immersion. Moreover, why do those parents view Mandarin Immersion offering benefits that Asian parents do not share? I use the survey data to highlight this distinction and turn to the interviews to examine the perception found among non-Asian survey respondents that MIP leads to greater educational success.

The survey data provides interesting insights into this distinction between parents with an

East-Asian ethnic background and those without. But the more puzzling question relates to why parents without an existing cultural or linguistic connection to China choose Mandarin Immersion. I turn to the interviews to examine the perception found within the non-Asian survey respondents that MIP leads to greater educational success.

Academic Hierarchy – White Parents Invest in the Future

Mandarin Immersion provides the benefit of learning another language, but parents also perceive added advantages that will help their children succeed. White parents' primary motivations for immersion-style education are academic. They place a high value on Mandarin Immersion and its ability to offer future rewards, electing to view their choice for immersion as a pragmatic investment. During the process of searching for the best school, MIP stands as the most likely choice that will ensure success in the future for opportunities of higher education and elite occupations. The next two statements taken from the open-ended survey responses provide insight into the forward-thinking perspective of White parents.

> I think having learned Chinese will distinguish him from others and increase his chances of getting into his university of choice in this increasingly competitive market, which in turn, will provide broader choices for jobs after college.
>
> -- White Mother, open-ended response

> We want our children to be exposed to all the positive and enriching opportunities available to them…to give them a jump-start to lead a productive and successful future.
>
> -- White Mother, open-ended response

These statements show that these parents want to give their children a "leg-up" on future university and job applications. White parents want to push their children to acquire the skills they need to succeed in a world that has recently become more competitive. When their children

reach a certain age, knowing a second language will provide a marker of distinction that separates them from others within their peer group. White parents ultimately are investing in the educational stock of their child, hoping it pays a generous return for the child in the future. White parents I spoke with gave the impression that choosing Mandarin Immersion was a very business-like process. They would look at a series of schools and weigh the cost-benefit analysis that results in Mandarin Immersion providing the best outcomes. The fact that the majority of MIP are located in public schools, without annual tuition, further aids in the final decision. This single sentence represents much of the sentiment found throughout with the White parents. For example, a white mother who had a second-grade daughter enrolled in MIP said, 'The returns on investment made in Mandarin Immersion seem to make the most sense.'

White parents view Mandarin Immersion as an investment for the future. They are investing in the immersion program itself, trusting it will provide benefits greater than non-immersion programs. The curriculum will help their child perform better in all school subjects, i.e. math, science, and art, leading to better options when choosing a university. The potential return on investment is high and Mandarin Immersion increases the odds of future success.

As more Asians exhibit success in the American educational system, non-Asian parents may begin to emulate their approach towards education. Asian parents construct and support a strict academic success frame that helps overcome any disadvantages their children may face (Lee & Zhou 2014). White parents may directly or indirectly feel a threat to their position within the academic achievement hierarchy. This belief was never openly expressed but immigration statistics[10] provide some support to this argument. Asian immigration to the United States increased 26.8% since 2006, the same year that Mandarin Immersion began to rise dramatically.

[10] Taken from Migration Policy Institute. The top five countries of origin in order: India, China, Philippines, Vietnam, and Korea.

Moreover, Pew Research Center (2013) projects Asian Americans to become the largest foreign-born population by the year 2055. Immigrants that come from Asia tend to be more highly educated than their home countries' populations, suggesting that this important pre-migration characteristic influences the next generations' educational expectations (Feliciano 2005; Feliciano 2006).

The drastic increase in Asian immigration parallels the rise of Asian educational success, particularly in California, a top destination for Asian immigrants[10]. Asians have set the standard in education while White parents do not want to fall behind into academic mediocrity. The next quote from a white mother with a first-grade son enrolled in MIP, who does not speak Chinese but lives near Mandarin speakers, highlights this concern. She said, "My son needs to be able to compete against his peer group. Currently his peer group is Asian, so he needs to keep up. I am looking down the road to even the playing field."

Asian Americans are the best educated and highest earning racial group in America (Pew Research Center 2012). Asian-American educational success is a primary factor in the creation of the "model minority" stereotype, suggesting that Asian Americans do well in school because of their parent's commitment to education. This parent recognizes the group threat that is Asian academic success. Without Mandarin Immersion her son may not receive a desired university acceptance, instead being replaced by another Asian academic achiever. Asians have influenced the norms of educational success to which White parents must adjust (Jimenez & Horowitz 2013). To enhance the chances for success, White parents turn to an Asian immigrant institution. White parents move *toward* Mandarin Immersion to remain academically successful, while Black parents move *away* from conventional schooling that is academically detrimental.

Black Identity – Investment in the Present

In contrast to White parents, Black parents look to enroll their children in MIP to receive other benefits outside of bilingual cognitive development. Black parents similarly choose MIP for a future investment, but their rationale for investment begins with a greater definition of self during the present. This investment in the present includes combating stereotypes applied to children within the educational institution. The following quote illustrates a Black father's reluctance for his son to be stereotyped:

> In the beginning, I felt that my son had to shift his cultural identity to fit in. Now he actually seems to understand himself more, fit in better, have his own identity. Just because I am a black man doesn't mean that I am going to fit into this box! I wanted to give my kids an example of dealing with diversity. Blacks are the only culture in America that speak one language and are proud of it.
>
> -- Black Father, Son 4th grade: interview

Similarly, a Black father of a bi-racial child wanted to combat these stereotypes. He showed concern with the historical concept in America of hypodescent. Historically, White America denoted who could participate in the dominant society with laws stating that one drop of Black blood meant you were excluded. About enrolling his second-grade daughter in MIP this father said,

> Mandarin Immersion is important because of identity construction. I did not want to have my children embrace the one-drop rule. I wanted them to embrace both sides of their heritage. My experience growing up was that my bi-racial friends would only stick with the black side of their culture because that is what America tells them they are. Culture is a powerful way to solidify who we are, and identity is wrapped up in culture.
>
> -- Black Father, daughter 2nd grade: interview

These respondents show that it is more important for Black parents to stress to their children that they can achieve more than what the dominant society has historically allowed. Black parents want their Black children to realize that they have multiple layers to their personality and identity. The Black parents want to bring that out of their children and stress that Black culture is not homogenous. This maturation process is more important to develop during adolescence, an important time when children are making decisions as to how they view themselves.

Mandarin immersion adds another cultural dimension that helps Black children distinguish themselves. When they encounter people outside the Black community, their knowledge of another language and culture may help to remove the typical stereotypes of Black children and Black people in general. Black parents do not necessarily desire children to have a strong knowledge of China but want them to understand something outside of the dominant American racial ideology, or to interact with other cultures in diverse environments. Providing their children with a stronger identity at a young age will help solidify positive outcomes later in life.

Black parents' satisfaction with Mandarin Immersion is associated with the present-day investment of a strong adolescent identity. They desire to encourage their children to connect a racial identity with a sense of confidence and self-worth, important attributes for future social and educational success. African American youth find paths to academic success when they create a positive sense of self (Osyerman, Gant, & Ager 1995). Merry & New (2008) found that because Black children are not the objects of instruction, African-centered pedagogy is able to provide Black children with a firm understanding of their identity. Similarly, Mandarin Immersion facilitates identity construction and the cultivation of diversity because of its unique specialization of language and culture. For Black children to know and understand themselves at a young age sets them up for a better future.

The Black respondents in this study all had children of elementary age and the idea of public school in a conventional English-majority setting was abandoned early on, with most not giving conventional school a chance. Black middle-class parents still consider racism a considerable threat and attempt to protect their children from an educational experience marked by racial inequalities (Vincent, Rollock, Ball, & Gillborn 2012). Teachers at conventional schools often unknowingly treat students differently with respect to race, with ingrained stereotypes leading teachers to escalate their negative responses to Black students (Okonofua & Eberhardt 2015). The following father comments that any immersion school must be better than what is found at conventional schools in his area. He said,

> At a conventional school, every time you open a book you will see a picture of a European. Conventional public school was a toxic environment. There are some good public schools but few and far between [in their neighborhood]. The children are growing and being challenged. The education is there. Their brains are being forced to think critically and differently…any immersion is better than a conventional school.
>
> -- Black Father, Son 4th grade: interview

Some Black parents reported that their children initially faced challenges to their identity formation. However, Black parents choosing MIP hopefully diminishes the burden accompanying Black elementary school students attending predominately White schools. The burden that includes curriculum designed to support a White supremacist narrative (Ladson-Billings 1998). Black parents, like White parents, also wish their children will be competitive but the first step is to circumvent obstacles found within conventional elementary school programs. While Mandarin Immersion Programs do not provide instruction around African-centered themes, they may move further away from instructional strategies that presume a deficiency in the Black community (Ladson-Billings 1998). This can promote a greater international

perspective where Black children are not just viewed as members of a narrow Black/White dichotomy but become participants of a broader global citizenry.

DISCUSSION

This study advances previous findings of parental choice for dual language immersion in two important ways (Ee 2018). The survey data presented here provides a more comprehensive perspective of parents, the majority of which do not have a background related to East-Asian culture or identity. Second the interviews illustrate a more nuanced view of two groups often viewed as occupying opposite ends of the American educational spectrum. Although the quest for a bilingual child remains a strong motivating factor, parents also view immersion as a path towards expanding their child's awareness of another language and culture.

The findings presented here also provide two important insights. Parents without an East-Asian ethnic background choose MIP because of perceived educational benefits, not due to an affinity for any specific language. Second, White and Black parents frame the benefits of immersion for their children differently. White parents want to give their children a future advantage and sustain their place within the academic hierarchy. White parents are choosing Mandarin Immersion because they feel a second language will help their children *compete* with the kids who are being parented by what they see as "tiger moms"[11]. Black parents, however, circumvent structural issues within the educational system by system by choosing Mandarin Immersion, because conventional American schools in many respects have been unable to properly educate a significant portion of their children.

Asians have passed Hispanics as the largest group of new immigrants, with a majority possessing a college degree (Pew Research Center 2013). Although this study is not

[11] The term Tiger Mom, coined by Yale University Law professor Amy Chua in 2011, refers to a strict form of childrearing popular in East Asia.

representative of the general society at large, it provides a good example of globalization via direct immigrant impact. America is known as a country of immigrants, but a majority of immigrant influence is in addition to already established American norms. Language options are more widespread, ethnic businesses are located outside of immigrant enclaves, and the availability of cultural holidays and celebrations are more easily accessible. These examples illustrate how the American mainstream might be expanding (Yancey 2003) to include elements of other non-white groups such as the Chinese or other East Asians.

Alternatively, immersion may attract parents without any concern or even some animosity towards immigrants; they are simply seeking another approach for their child to succeed in a competitive educational market. White parents in this study embrace inclusivity, but they do so because of their perceptions that an Asian educational advantage may come at a cost to their position in U.S. racial hierarchies. Parents see second language learning as a way to position their child in a global market. What a student learns in an immersion program acts as a positional good in a global competition for jobs, serving as a marker of distinction (Smala, Paz, & Lingard 2013). Exercising *consumptive contact* White parents are able to selectively consume material benefits their children will acquire through diversity and bilingualism (Woody 2020). Immersion programs could provide the semblance of a multicultural familiarity that many advantaged White parents may now realize is necessary in our increasing global society.

Due to historical inequities in education, Black parents in this study were willing to choose immersion, because they perceived that foreign teachers may be less likely to reproduce educational structural hierarchies. Although educated Black parents are aware that predominately Whites schools are academically stronger, they are less likely to leave a school for racial demographic motivations (Sikkink & Emerson 2008). Black parents that chose immersion seek

to avoid an educational experience complete with the symbolic capital of Whiteness within the formal and hidden curriculum (Merry & New 2008). Mandarin Immersion Programs often tout their ability to provide students with a stronger appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures. Immersion may not include all of the parameters to define it as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 1995). Black parents enroll their children with the hope they are provided with identity-affirming experiences.

The rising pattern of enrollment in Mandarin Immersion raises the question of why parents choose Mandarin Chinese. Middle-class parents want to challenge the tradition of America as a monolingual society shown by the increasing enrollment in immersion schools in general, not just Mandarin. Other language immersion programs are being created or are also experiencing an increase in enrollments. Parents of Spanish immersion are outside of the scope of this study, but they may exhibit similar motivations and investment frames. Jazmin Muro (2016) examined a Spanish Immersion Program and found that divisions continued to persist between parents from different racial and class backgrounds. Symbolic integration occurred between White and Latino parents that shared a common goal for their child but ultimately only participated in polite, surface-level interactions with each other (Muro 2016). Parents from Spanish-speaking backgrounds investing in Spanish immersion for cultural connections is plausible, but I expect non-Spanish speaking parents may also perceive advantages that could benefit their children academically, mirroring the parents without an East-Asian related background in this study.

Spanish is more widely spoken in California and the United States. Theoretically the Spanish language is more useful, regardless of social class positioning. Parents that want their children to seek careers of high occupational prestige, will find Spanish more practical in professional and personal encounters. Middle-class parents subscribe to similar media outlets that continuously

promote our globalized economy. A global economy that contributes to a rising number of international students in the U.S., the majority coming from China and attending school in California (IIE Open Doors 2019). The draw of Mandarin comes from either fear or foresight, both genuine parental motivators.

CONCLUSION

Asian immigrants and their exceptional academic outcomes serve as an example of influencing native-born Black and White Americans to change the historic practice of an English-dominant education. If native-born parents continue enrolling their children in immersion programs, regardless of language, I contend this action as a response to Asian academic achievement. Instead of immersion serving as an option to traditional education, the rise of both Spanish and Mandarin Immersion may signify a trend away from monolingual schooling to some form of a second language curriculum becoming the norm in elementary education.

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Table 2.1

Parents of Mandarin Immersion – Descriptive Statistics

Characteristics	Asian *N =145*	Non - Asian *N = 355*	All Parents *N = 500*
Level of Education			
Graduate or Professional	65.28%	56.65%	58.43%
College Graduate	34.72%	34.18%	34.34%
Some College	none	10.17%	7.23%
Household Income			
$200,000+	41.96%	27.43%	31.64%
$150,000 - $200,000	18.88%	18.00%	18.26%
$100,000 - $149,999	23.08%	31.43%	29.01%
$50,000 - $99,999	12.59%	17.71%	16.23%
$25,000 - $49,999	3.50%	5.43%	4.87%
Language Spoken as a Child			
English	51.03%	91.78%	79.92%
Chinese	31.72%	0.28%	9.44%
Multiple	11.03%	4.25%	6.22%
Other	6.21%	3.68%	4.42%
Language Spoken with Child			
English	77.24%	94.37%	89.40%
Chinese	15.86%	0.85%	5.20%
Multiple	4.83%	1.97%	2.80%
Other	2.07%	2.82%	2.60%
Region of the United States			
West	88.28%	59.21%	67.67%
Mid-West	4.14%	17.85%	13.86%
South	2.76%	13.60%	10.44%
East	4.83%	9.35%	8.03%
Chinese Fluency			
Fluent	30.99%	2.27%	10.53%
Minimal	45.77%	19.60%	27.13%
No Ability	23.24%	78.12%	62.35%
Spouse Chinese Fluency			
Fluent	19.12%	6.53%	10.15%
Minimal	21.32%	10.39%	13.53%
No Ability	59.56%	82.79%	76.11%
Chinese Widely Spoken[12]			
Yes	72.54%	37.78%	47.77%
No	27.46%	62.22%	52.23%
Prior Chinese Contact[13]			
Regular	59.86%	22.10%	32.93%
Some	24.65%	18.13%	20.00%
Little to None	15.49%	59.77%	47.07%
Type of Program			
Public	63.16%	67.74%	66.46%
Private	15.79%	6.74%	9.28%
Magnet	5.26%	2.35%	3.16%
Charter	15.79%	23.17%	21.10%
Race (Non-Asian)			
White		83.66%	
Black		4.50%	
Hispanic		4.23%	
Multiple		7.04%	
	N = 145 Asian	*N = 355* Non - Asian	*N = 500* All Parents

[12] Have you spent time in an area were Chinese was widely spoken?
[13] How much contact have you had with Chinese people prior to MIP?

Table 2.2

Top 8 Reasons for Choosing Mandarin Immersion (Chi-Square Analysis)

	N = 145	N = 355	N = 500
Percentages of Parents That Ranked the Following in the Top 3	*Asian*	*Non-Asian*	*All Parents*
A Bilingual Education is Better for my Child	81.38%	85.63%	84.40%
MIP Will Better Prepare My Child for the Job Market and Global Society	70.34%	74.65%	73.40%
Chinese People Do Relatively Well in this Country, I Want My Child to Participate in Their Style of Education	7.59%	5.63%	6.20%
Chinese People Have Similar Cultural and/or Familial Values as I Do	35.17%*	9.58%	17.00%
The Mandarin Immersion School is the Best School in the Area	7.59%	27.04%*	21.40%
I Do Not Want My Child to Participate in a More "Traditional" Style of Education	13.10%	12.11%	12.40%
Other Parents Have Had Positive Experiences With Mandarin Immersion	11.72%	14.93%	14.00%
Reason Not Listed	33.79%	38.03%	36.80%

$\chi 2$ Significance by Race at *$p < .05$ $df = 1$

Table 2.3

Differences in Parental Reasons for Choosing MIP (Odds Ratios)

Dependent Variables[14] (Agree with Statement)	*Non-Asian Parents (vs. Asian)*	*Education (Control Variable)*	*Income (Control Variable)*
MIP More Academically Demanding Than Non-MIP	1.561*	0.937	0.894
	(0.372)	(0.174)	(0.0859)
MIP Will Help Child in Non-Language Subjects	1.878**	0.805	0.895
	(0.466)	(0.168)	(0.0914)
I Would Choose Any Immersion, Not Just Mandarin	2.232***	0.879	0.906
	(0.467)	(0.139)	(0.0748)
Chinese Will Help Child Get Into A Better University	2.757***	0.736*	0.994
	(0.570)	(0.118)	(0.0800)
Disappointed If Chinese Not Used as an Adult	0.644**	1.183	1.063
	(0.143)	(0.178)	(0.0838)
I Want My Child to Interact With a Different Culture	2.830**	1.183	0.998
	(1.222)	(0.420)	(0.411)
America Should Maintain a Strong China Relationship	1.253	1.082	0.830
	(0.277)	(0.174)	(0.151)
Parents of MIP are Generally More Involved	0.938	1.088	1.204
	(0.215)	(0.177)	(0.243)
America Should Have More Mandarin Speakers	1.248	1.166	0.855
	(0.262)	(0.178)	(0.149)
My Child Has Smarter Classmates Than Non-MIP	1.179	1.167	0.867
	(0.229)	(0.162)	(0.140)
My Child Has Smarter Teachers Than Non-MIP	0.876	0.874	1.225
	(0.172)	(0.128)	(0.205)
A Foreign Culture Will Enrich My Child's Life	2.581	1.596	0.487
	(2.100)	(0.960)	(0.268)

Std Err. in Parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.1

[14] See Survey for Complete Statements

CHAPTER 3

PROMOTING GLOBALIZED ACCEPTANCE: THE MARKETING OF MANDARIN IMMERSION

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of public-school systems are beginning to operate more as competitive businesses; they allocate time and funding for marketing plans, brochures, school tours, and program branding (DiMartino & Jessen 2016; Lubienski 2005). Schools may market to attract students in order to raise test scores or increase funding (Cucchiara 2013; DiMartino & Jessen 2016; Jabbar 2016; Lubienski 2005; Posey-Maddox 2014). In response to competition, districts might begin to implement and support innovative educational curriculum. In the marketing landscape, schools that do not respond to the parent and student needs are likely to be replaced (DiMartino & Jessen 2016). This study presents an interesting case of a district that did not respond to the existing parent or student need, but instead opted to administer a program that would begin to replace the existing parents and students.

Recently California has become more receptive to using languages other than English in the classroom. The shift in bilingual education from a heritage language and cultural maintenance towards a strategy for privileged students to acquire global capital, is exemplified in the presentation of dual language education programs in California. In California, the growth in popularity of bilingual education might be due to the change in how it is marketed. The State referendum proposition 58 (2016) that passed by a resounding margin, presents bilingual education as an economic resource that is beneficial to all children and the business interests of the state and the nation (Katznelson & Bernstein 2017).

In California, the change in the marketing approach is accompanied by Global California 2030, an initiative of the state superintendent of public instruction and the California Department of Education. The California Department of Education 2030 program mission statement is to "equip students with world language skills to better appreciate and fully engage with the rich and diverse mixture of cultures, heritages, and languages found in California and the world". With the passing of CA Assembly Bill 2514 (2018), school districts are eligible to receive grants to initiate dual-language immersion programs in their schools. This chapter highlights an example of how one district uses the prospect of globalization to attract parents from outside the school attendance zone to enroll their child into one of their struggling schools.

With an increasing number of bilingual programs, learning two languages may not be enough to attract parents, especially to a struggling school. Many bilingual programs are two-way Spanish programs, that attract both native English and native Spanish speakers. They often are used in response to dwindling enrollments of middle-class enrollments (De Jong, 2002; Senesac, 2002; Valdés, 1997). However the school district in this study began a one-way Mandarin Chinese language immersion program as their first bilingual education program in the district, despite the overrepresentation of Spanish-speaking students in the district. One-way programs enroll primarily students that speak English as their first language. When compared with non-native English-speaking parents, the district focus lies primarily with something it feels native English-speaking parents are more likely to desire – globalized acceptance. In this study, a globalized acceptance is defined as a welcoming into a community that shows an appreciation and understanding of non-Western cultures. Promoting globalized acceptance is a marketing tool that the school district strategically uses in order to draw in middle-class parents.

Focusing on the supply side of school choice, or how schools use curriculum or marketing decisions to shape enrollment, this chapter will show how a struggling school located in a working-class neighborhood uses their bilingual language immersion program to draw parents. As I will show in this chapter, with help from the district, the school brands itself as a gateway to a global community. They embrace the notion of an increasingly connected society, using Mandarin Chinese as an example of foreignness that Americans should become familiar. The school markets the immersion program and the increasing prospect of globalization to attract middle-class or Asian parents and students. Globalization is attractive to privileged parents that envision their children interacting with a global populace, as I showed in Chapter 3 (Watson 2021). They identify language as a commodity in the competition for good jobs in a global marketplace (Smala, Paz & Lingard 2013). When the immersion parents arrive, they leverage their social and class resources to improve the school. The result is an improved school based on test scores, with increasing enrollment. I focus on three phases of an elementary dual immersion program. First is the use of a foreign language to sell the school. Then I examine the attraction of the global society. Last, I present the results that manifest from the marketing efforts. I find that the school district understands the desire of global capital and views the immersion program as an appropriate commodity that satisfies the demand. The district intentionally chooses Mandarin, designed to attract middle-class families with global experience and aspirations for their child, that are primarily white and Asian. I argue that the district does not take the majority Hispanic student body into account because the goals in introducing bilingual education are not necessarily educational or citizenship-building, but rather the potential for increased enrollment, higher test scores, and resources that the immersion program and middle-class parents might bring to the school.

PREVIOUS LITERATURE

The Educational Market

Much of the literature that speaks to school marketing focuses on charter schools. Charter schools use marketing as a method to distinguish themselves from traditional public schools (Lubienski 2007). Student outcomes can be a measure of school success that illustrate the difference between a charter school and a traditional public school (Bettinger 2005; Ni 2009). However, this study highlights a traditional public school and their attempts to compete in the educational marketplace by using the marker of bilingual education. In a market-based school economy, parents would ultimately choose the school that offered the best product for their child. Adding the marker of "language immersion" may be enough to influence parental decisions.

The supply side of school choice raises the possibility of schools shaping their student body. Depending on what type of parent a school wants to attract, districts create different ways in which to "sell" their school (Jabbar 2016). Some strategies include targeting specific types of students or opening in specific locations (DiMartino & Jessen 2016; Henig & McDonald 2002; Jacobs 2011; Lubienski, Gulosino & Weitzel 2009). Schools may also use methods to avoid specific types of students from enrolling (Jennings 2010; Jessen 2013). Other schools commodify racial diversity as an advantage for students from less diverse backgrounds (Turner 2018). Placing school choice within the realms of a market economy may pressure schools to develop methods of attracting parents. The branding decisions a school makes influences how prospective parents perceive the school and in turn influences the decision of enrollment (DiMartino & Jessen 2016). In response to competition, school leaders will use a variety of strategies, including finding a niche in the market (Jabbar 2015). Branding charter schools in

ways that are recognizable to parents provide parental consumers a level of confidence in the school quality (DiMartino & Jessen 2016).

Instead of aiming to improve education for disadvantaged students, schools often decide to attract better performing students (Lubienski 2007). When middle class families arrive at underperforming schools within low-income neighborhoods, new challenges will arise. They begin to shape the institution in a way that benefits their children (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2014; Posey-Maddox, 2014). This influx of middle-class parents often leads to increasing racial and economic stratification (Holme & Richards 2009; Phillips, Larsen, & Hausman 2015). Parents are unlikely to share a common school or neighborhood history, reducing the desire for an inclusive parent community. Middle-class parents enrolling their children in schools that are ranked low or underperforming may reproduce social stratification and divide school communities (Ho, Vincent, & Butler 2015). Middle-class parents bring with them a necessary influx of resources to under-performing schools, but this does not come without negative ramifications (Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg & Cucchiara 2016). School districts may risk unfavorable outcomes in the hopes of attracting middle-class families bringing new resources that in turn, attracts more middle-class families. As a result, White middle-class families may replace many of the non-White students at majority-minority schools (Cucchiara 2008; Freidus 2019; Ho, Vincent & Butler 2015; Posey-Maddox 2013).

Selling Globalization

As shown in chapter 1, parents are increasingly enrolling their children in bilingual immersion programs for a variety of reasons. A desire for bilingualism is the most notable reason as research shows bilingual children excel in their ability to solve problems with greater mental flexibility (Lazaruk 2007; Bialystok 2001; Bialystok 2009). Previous studies state bilinguals

remain on the same level or outperform monolinguals in various educational subjects, task switching, reasoning, and other cognitive functions (Watzinger-Tharp, Swenson, Mayne 2018; Steele, Slater, Zamarro, Miller, Burkhauser, & Bacon 2017; Lazaruk 2007; Bialystok 2001; Bialystok 2009). Parents that are aware of the benefits of bilingual education outside of speaking two languages may choose this option for their child regardless of the academic prestige or location of the school.

Bilingualism may attract parents but what ultimately is for sale is global capital or cosmopolitanism. Examining cultural capital as a form of cosmopolitanism is a recent empirical approach in sociology (Beck 2006; Skey 2012). Cosmopolitanism is defined as an openness to foreign cultures (Beck 2006; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Skey 2012). If parents decide to leave their home school for a bilingual education program, their motivation could be opportunistic. Parents conceptualization of cosmopolitanism does not necessarily rely on a global connection or genuine interest in foreignness (Weenink 2008). The accumulation of global capital may simply act as an opportunity for privileged parents to gain more advantage for their children (Watson 2021).

Language serves as a form of cultural capital, commonly referred to as linguistic capital. Linguistic capital refers to the distinction attached to a language that can empower a language speaker in terms of social status and recognition (Bourdieu 1991; Nguyen 2017). Previous research examines cosmopolitan as a form of capital for students learning English as a second language (Nguyen 2017; Song 2010; Weenink 2008). Bilingual schools outside of the English-speaking world often present learning English as a path to valued cultural, social, and linguistic capital (Nguyen 2017). Learning English serves as a path for students to accumulate global

capital because English is viewed as a marketable commodity that allows for cosmopolitan membership (Song 2010).

Cosmopolitanism may not only be desirable for schools outside of the United States. In the United States, several studies chronicle the shift in marketing dual language programs from policy aimed at equity and heritage language learning towards a global capital framework (Freire, Valdez & Delavan 2017; Delavan, Valdez & Freire 2017; Valdez, Delavan & Freire 2016). Analyzing newspaper articles over a six-year period from the state of Utah, Valdez, Delavan & Freire (2016) find the global capital discourse focuses on the benefits of globalization and human capital. They argue that highlighting the marketability of the human capital received through language learning, changes the audience to more privileged student groups (Valdez, Delavan & Freire 2016). The former constituency of non-White heritage language learners is replaced with an audience primarily composed of white, English-dominant parents, more concerned with global economics than language or cultural maintenance (Delavan, Valdez & Freire 2017).

Marketing Mandarin

The choice of Mandarin Chinese may be strategic for reasons outside of the accumulation of global capital. Educational achievement may no longer be defined as a white monolingual English student. When compared with Asian students, white students are associated with inferior academic performance (Jimenez & Horowitz, 2015). Asian-American educational success is a primary factor in the creation of the "model minority" stereotype, suggesting that Asian Americans do well in school because of their parent's commitment to education. The decision to implement Mandarin Chinese as the first language immersion program in the district would have the potential to attract Asian parents and students. Asian Americans are the best educated and

highest earning racial group in America (Pew Research Center, 2012). Asian-American students often perform better on tests and obtain higher grades (Goyette & Xie 1999; Hsin & Xie 2014; Zhou & Bankston 1994). An increase in the Asian population and their approach to education would theoretically benefit a struggling school. Drawing on ethnographic data of a struggling school branded as a gateway to a global destination, this study is uniquely positioned to examine how a school, with help from the district, advertises Mandarin Immersion as an example of foreignness that is a beneficial commodity.

METHODS

Context: A Marketed School

This study was conducted in Monterey Apple Orchard School (MAOS), located in a diverse, suburban city of Southern California, within a school district with an enrollment of over 28,000 students. The demographics of the elementary school are racially and economically diverse. According to the California Department of Education, the demographics for the 2019-2020 school year were approximately 48% Hispanic, 20% Asian, 20% White, and 8% Mixed-Race. The neighborhood surrounding the school is a working-class, largely Hispanic community. On one side of the street, adjacent to the school, sits modest, one-story homes and small-scale apartment complexes. Primarily residential, this is in stark contrast to the opposite side of the street where commercial structures occupy the space. The neighboring commercial industry is completely blue-collar in scope. Businesses range from mercantile, textile, plumbing, printing, and wastewater. The location is off the beaten path, unbeknownst to many that do not deliberately enter the area.

The total enrollment of all students at MAOS, from kindergarten through sixth grade, is approximately 466 students. The Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) housed within MAOS is a

strand of the traditional English-only elementary school program. This means that at the same school, the Mandarin immersion program operates concurrently with a traditional English-only program. Approximately half of the students participate in the immersion program and the other half are in the non-immersion program. Currently in the eighth year of the program, Mandarin Immersion continues at the junior high level at a second location. For their immersion program, MAOS primarily enrolls English-dominant children that are seeking to improve their Chinese language fluency.

I conducted an ethnographic study of the school documents the ways stakeholders market the immersion program and the school success that follows. The chapter draws on data gathered from attendance at monthly parent-teacher organization (PTO) meetings and Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) meetings, as well as participant-observation in numerous school events, including cultural and extracurricular events, various school tours, and informational meetings for families interested in the program. In addition, the research includes classroom observations and twenty-five interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators over the course of the fieldwork. I also rely on publicly available statistical information from the state department of education, as well as pamphlets and brochures that the school publicizes as its marketing material.

The schoolwide parental and administrator meetings provided opportunities for discussions of issues related to budget, academics, enrollment, curriculum, involvement, and program presentation. Analyzing the data, I applied inductive coding to discover and distinguish recurrent themes found through textual data. Genuine grounded theory approaches are less commonly used today by many qualitative researchers (Deterding & Waters 2018). With the use of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software, Atlas.ti, I organized and indexed my codes. From the memos and

transcripts, I grouped my codes by categories. These codes allow me to search for interactions and apply thematic instances. After a group of codes were identified, I began writing memos in the form of short stories. From the memos I was able to reduce my data, search for patterns and develop an argument.

FINDINGS

A Struggling School

Maple Apple Orchard School is not a charter school and is not currently a Title I school. In the state of California title I schools receive extra funding to serve populations with high student concentrations of poverty. However, teachers, parents, and the principal were familiar with its struggles in the past. Enrollment numbers were dwindling not just at the school but the district level as well. Not only was MAOS suffering from reduced enrollment, it was also producing gradually decreasing test scores. The following Figure 3.1 presents MAOS statewide ranking when compared with every elementary school in the state.

[Figure 3.1 Here]

Based on test score data from the California department of education, Figure 3.1 presents a history of decline at Maple Apple Orchard School. The vertical axis shows the school percentile ranking, a measure of how it is performing, when compared with other elementary schools in the state. The best performing school in the state would receive 100%. Beginning in the 2003-2004 MAOS held a ranking percentile of 67.5%. When compared with all other elementary schools in the state, MAOS was ranked in the 67.5 percentile. 67.5% of elementary schools in the state of California were ranked lower than MAOS, while 32.5% were ranked above. From this high point

there is a gradual decline to the 2009-2010 school year. That year MAOS held a low percentile ranking of 12.2%. Approximately 88% of the elementary schools in the state were ranked higher than MAOS, while only 12% were ranked lower. 2010 was the lowest percentile ranking at MAOS before the immersion program began during the 2011-2012 school year. The district implemented the immersion program during the 2011-2012 school year, two years after the test scores and school rankings hit their lowest point.

Public schools receive funding from various places. They generally include various amounts of state and local funding. According to the Public Policy Institute of California (2018), per pupil funding has increased dramatically. Per pupil funding is approximately eleven thousand dollars per student. School finances are partially determined by how many students are enrolled. When districts increase enrollments, they will receive more funding. Declining enrollment leads to reduced funding form the state, and when combined with increasing teacher salaries, many districts are challenged financially (Murphy & Paluch 2018). Funding for public schools serve to keep many of the programs in place. Losing enrollment may make the implementation of innovative programs more difficult but necessary, to counteract the potential loss of funding.

Next, I illustrate how the school gradually begins to meet and exceed the academic metrics set by the state, increasing its state percentile ranking. I first show the higher value the district places on Mandarin Chinese as opposed to Spanish. I do this by providing examples of the school selling the value of Mandarin through foreign displays and culture. I argue the district is more concerned with increasing enrollment and satisfying state-based evaluations and metrics, rather than increasing the educational outcomes of the students that are already at the school. Ultimately the school is exchanging the existing Hispanic students for new Asian and middle-class students.

The District Values Mandarin

According to the California Department of Education, the year the immersion program at Maple Apple Orchard School was implemented (2011), the Hispanic population in the school district was approximately 50%. The Hispanic population at MAOS specifically, was approximately 70%. In addition, the Spanish speaking population of California statistically, dwarfs the number of Mandarin Chinese speakers. Spanish might be more practical and readily beneficial than Mandarin Chinese. Even though most of the students are Hispanic and presumably would have a stronger connection to Spanish over Mandarin Chinese, the school district made the decision to implement Mandarin Immersion as their first immersion program within the district. Among neighboring districts their bilingual program is one of the more established immersion programs, and one of only a few in all Southern California.

Prior to the administrative level, the Dual Language Immersion Instructional Coordinator (DIIC) acted as a Spanish dual immersion teacher in another district. When the immersion program began at MAOS during the 2011-2012 school year, the first in the district, the DIIC was the only person with dual language experience. Initially, the primary focus for the DIIC was English Language Learners (ELL) and training teachers in the district around language acquisition. Now the time is split between working on ELL students and the immersion programs in the district, but the DIIC foresees immersion becoming the sole focus of their position because the district has grown these programs to a current total of three. When asked why the district would begin a Mandarin Chinese program as the first in the district instead of a Spanish program, the Dual Immersion Instructional Coordinator first discussed what sets their district apart from neighboring school districts, and then proceeds to comment on the unique attraction parents might have to Mandarin Chinese.

> I know that there are definitely some districts that are starting [immersion programs], but as far as starting as many as we are, um, I know that our superintendent is really invested in dual immersion. Like she was the one that started, was kind of at the forefront of starting the one at MAOS, which was our first dual immersion. And so she's definitely interested in that piece of, of that dual immersion piece.
>
> Edward: Why Mandarin instead of Spanish?
>
> Because Spanish is just like everybody else and with Mandarin, we could pull from lots of different districts. Cause we were, we were the first Mandarin program in all of […] county. Yeah, so that's what they're trying to do is they're trying to put our dual immersion programs now at all of our quote "border schools". So it's kind of, so they're looking to pull people from other districts into our district.
>
> District Dual Immersion Instructional Coordinator (DIIC)

The district administrator refers to the uniqueness of implementing Mandarin. The needs of the student population are not taken into consideration here. The school district is making a business-like decision to attract parents to maintain or increase enrollment, as opposed to an educational decision of what will provide current students with the strongest academic foundation. The district realizes that language programs aimed at middle-class parents will attract parents and help to increase their enrollment numbers. Additionally, the choice of Mandarin, a language originating in East Asia, may attract students that identify as Asian-American students. The potential for high-achieving Asian-American student enrollment would be a benefit to schools that measure their success with through tests scores and academic rankings. The California Department of Education shows an increased enrollment of approximately 128 students since the program was implemented in 2011, showing that enrollment has in fact increased.

The objective of attracting parents was echoed by the District English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator. The ELL Coordinator services students that have ELL needs. The role calls for aiding students through teacher support and with an approved curriculum. The goal is to

supplement and not supplant their education. The district has ELL students at all 40 schools, K-12. In the Spanish Immersion programs that began after MAOS, they incorporate the two-way model, students with limited English proficiency that share the curriculum with students of limited Spanish ability. The two-way Spanish model is an attempt to cater to a large Spanish-speaking district population. Yet Mandarin is not viewed in this light. It may not benefit many within the district but potentially those from outside the district. The ELL Coordinator began as an elementary school teacher 20 years ago and is now in the fourth year in this position. Relatedly, the ELL Coordinator shared a similar sentiment as the Dual Immersion Instructional Coordinator.

> I think that the um, the Mandarin was something to put us on the map. It was a program that no one else was doing at the time. It was at a school location where the population was dwindling a little bit. So you might've been looking at a school closure unless you brought something, you know.
>
> District English Language Learner Coordinator (ELLC)

When enrollment suffers, the district might decide to close a school and redirect the students to another location. Schools closures disproportionately affect places where low-income communities of color live, ultimately harming students by reducing their access to an important community institution (Ewing 2018; Lipman, Vaughan & Gutierrez 2014; Tieken & Auldridge-Reveles 2019). To prevent this action, more families would need to move into the zoned area for the school or the school would need to attract parents from outside the school zoned area. The district used the immersion program for the latter.

> …we are looking to … increase enrollment. […]. We want to pull kids from other districts or you know, other schools. It's a little bit of a race right now to build enrollments everywhere, not just our district, but enrollments everywhere.

The district representatives I spoke with value Mandarin Chinese differently than Spanish because Mandarin Chinese provides the district with something unique that could not be found elsewhere. It allows MAOS to take control of the foreign language educational market. It also could potentially increase the size of the student body in a competitive educational market. By default, to some extent, the emphasis placed on Chinese devalues other languages.

Selling through Foreign Displays

One way the school can sell the value of a language is through highlighting the foreignness of Chinese. Selling parents on the value of a foreign language might be challenging when parents do not have a strong relationship to the language or the cultural background. According to the California Language Census (2019), over 80% of English language learners are Spanish speaking, yet less than 2% speak Mandarin Chinese. With the large population of school-age Spanish speakers, Spanish immersion programs could potentially be used to aid native-Spanish speakers. Generally speaking, Mandarin Immersion Programs are not used in the same way. The number of school-age Mandarin Chinese speakers are too few so helping native-Chinese speakers would not be the goal of most Mandarin Immersion Programs. When Maple Apple Orchard School (MAOS) began its immersion program it needed a pitch to attract parents, the majority without a connection to the target language of Mandarin. The following creed was present on school materials provided at parent orientation meetings:

Maple Apple Orchard School Creed

> *"To increase student achievement and bring high standards by offering multicultural learning environment of excellence, with high expectations that the dual language students will be able to complete in a global environment."*

The school aims to pass along this point of view to the parents. They do this by displaying foreignness. Parental information meetings consistently have Chinese teachers present. One role they have is to display the foreign language but also the foreignness of themselves. The Chinese teachers represent the global aspect that the school offers or the globalized dream the school sells. This subtle way of marketing relies on attracting parents that want their children to have opportunities to engage in foreign cultures. The strongest marketing tool is the foreignness of Mandarin Chinese. At an informational meeting attended by both current and prospective parents, two of the Chinese teachers stood in front of the room. They introduced themselves and began encouraging the parents to learn numbers and some simple phrases. The following fieldnote from the meeting illustrates the observation:

> The two Mandarin teachers are giving the parents a quick Chinese lesson.
> They are going over the numbers 一二三四五六七八九十。*123456789.*
> Now Ms. Lian is presenting some simple Chinese phrases for the parents.
> 你孩子几岁? *How old is your child?*
> 我孩子_____岁. *My child is_____years old.*
> The two Chinese teachers ask the parents to practice with each other.
>
> Field Notes MIP Meeting 10-30-18

The "displays of foreignness" are for selling the program to middle-class parents, but not necessarily to the parents of the existing Hispanic student body. Foreign displays not only happened at meetings, but also during the school day, from the word of the day to school activities, they could be witnessed all around the school. In the morning before school, all students, immersion and non-immersion, face the flag and recite the pledge of allegiance. Before they recite the pledge most students, immersion and non-immersion will say "please face the flag, put your hand over your heart, ready, begin" in both Mandarin and English. Then they

recite the pledge in just English. Although the non-immersion students may be able to recite this phrase in Chinese, it is unclear if they truly know what the words mean. The non-immersion students are not taking part in school efforts of cultural harmony or citizenship building. The non-immersion students and teachers participate in many of the cultural activities the school coordinates but the effect the foreignness has on them is minimal.

All students, both immersion and non-immersion, participated in an arts and crafts activity during the school day, where the students were provided with materials to make a Chinese-style fan using their personal style. The fourth-grade non-immersion teacher enjoyed this activity for her students. She was in her third year as a full-time teacher. A few months after the fourth-grade non-immersion teacher finished her graduate program that simultaneously provided her with a Masters degree and a teaching credential, she was hired at MAOS as a long-term substitute. The following school year she became a full-time teacher. I asked the fourth-grade non-immersion teacher how her non-immersion students felt about the arts and crafts activity.

> I think, yes, they did like doing that. They thought it was really cool and they couldn't wait to take them and keep them and everything. The crafts I think are really awesome. […] But I wish they would do maybe like tell a story or give a reason of why they're making a fan. I know that we can see it and associate it with the Chinese culture, but we don't know why or anything like the background would be helpful to the cultural thing. That would be more meaningful. […] So I just think, I think it's very superficial.

Although the arts and crafts activity provide students with some introduction to Chinese culture, it ultimately serves the school in three different ways. First the school can promote its unique curriculum in which it mixes the culture of Chinese into various activities. Then the school can highlight its inclusive practices because it combines the students not learning Chinese with the students that are learning Chinese, into one activity. Lastly the school may have students display their arts and crafts projects in the classroom or around the school, for prospective parents to

view during school tours. Whether or not students gain a clear understanding of Chinese culture is immaterial because selling the school through "displays of foreignness" was enough to attract more middle-class parents. As more middle-class parents arrive from outside the school zone, the working-class parents from within the school zone might conclude that the school is not for them. When the school was successful in selling the language through its foreignness, it continued promoting the value of a language by spotlighting its cultural significance.

Culture for Sale

One benefit of Dual Language Immersion Programs is to introduce a student to another culture or to support the cultural maintenance of the student. At Maple Apple Orchard School, the transmission of culture from instruction to learner or school to student manifest in a few ways. The teachers would often discuss cultural aspects such as Chinese holidays. The parents would organize holiday activities. The district administered a yearly Chinese Lunar New Year celebration.

At MAOS the parents were sold on the idea of increasing the cultural awareness of the students. The Mandarin Parent Council is a group of parents that focus on how to improve the learning and experiences of the immersion students. They planned three Chinese holidays that the school celebrated: Mid-Autumn festival, Lunar New Year, and the Dragon Boat Festival. The Lunar New Year celebration was the largest. The district decided to move it to the local middle school in order to accommodate all those that wished to attend. The local middle school had an auditorium that MAOS did not have. I arrived just after the start of the performances began and immediately noticed the large scale of the event. The parking lot was completely full as was the auditorium. Folding chairs filled the room as parents watched their children perform on stage.

> The principal was the emcee of the event. In addition to every immersion class giving a performance, a local organization provided some entertainment… The principal was speaking as I entered, welcoming everyone to the performance. She gave a brief introduction and presented the upcoming performances. She wore a red and gold traditional Chinese jacket. Many of the students had dressed up in traditional Chinese clothing. The girls had on a 旗袍 (qi pao), a traditional Chinese dress that is popular to wear in China. The boys wore traditional Chinese style jackets or shirts. Almost every seat was taken and there were plenty of people standing in the aisles.
>
> Field Note 2-22-19

The Lunar New Year celebration highlights the cultural significance of the Chinese language. It was larger than any celebration or activity that occurred throughout the school year. It was the only school event that occurred away from the school. Originally the event was held at the school but had outgrown that location. The principal, teachers and students, dressing in traditional Chinese clothing adds more substance to how important cultural understanding is at the school.

The culture on display at the largest school event of the year is just part of what the school sells. The District Dual Immersion Instructional Coordinator (DIIC) was also present at the Lunar New Year festival. The DIIC expanded on how familiarity with the culture could lead to something larger. The language and culture were only a portion of the curriculum.

> I think it's bigger than that. I think it's bigger than just that culture. But I think it's this global perspective of not having stereotypes and judgments and just being really opening and welcoming, and having that feeling of what it feels like to not know when, when somebody is talking to you to not know what they're saying about you. So like we're creating more global citizens in the idea that they are capable in to go anywhere and figure something out. […] So I think it's bigger than just the culture of the language that they're learning. But it's more of this big idea of culture.
>
> District Dual Immersion Instructional Coordinator (DIIC)

The DIIC views MAOS as a place that develops students for the larger world. Immersion students are not just prepared for what Southern California has to offer but will be prepared when they encounter the foreignness. Interestingly, despite Spanish being a foreign language, it is not thought to provide the same access to the (elite) global community."

The school use of global cosmopolitanism as a benefit to immersion, relieves a parent from the challenges of the world right in front of them. The close connection of our world impacts the decisions we make. More educated parents often subscribe to similar media influences and move within similar social circles. These parents tell each other they need to think bigger than their immediate surroundings. Spanish is everyday but Chinese is the future, Spanish is here and now, but Chinese is long-term. To not get left behind, your young child must acquire some form of globalized acceptance.

Globalized Acceptance

I develop the concept of *Globalized Acceptance* to describe the acceptance into an elite club of people that are adept at navigating disparate cultural spaces, eliminating culture shock. *Globalized Acceptance* is the acknowledgement of membership into this global social club. Membership in this exclusive club will allow students to navigate situations that are foreign to nearly all, because many people are rarely in an environment where most participants do not share their language or cultural background. Not only will they feel comfortable in these environments, but they will also be able to provide a significant contribution. Having the opportunity to become successful in business accompanies the theme of a globalized acceptance. Although bilingualism is a large part of why parents choose immersion programs (see chapter 1), many parents stated the prospect of conducting future business as an added advantage as many view Chinese as a global language for business opportunities (Chan 2016). The school promotes

success in the business world as one of the proven benefits of language immersion. During parent-orientation meetings the theme of business successes is consistently raised. When entering these meetings, participants will pass a table where they can leave their email address or take some school information. The school used this as an opportunity to promote the benefits of Mandarin immersion.

> *"What really counts for multinational businesses is employees' ability to effectively communicate in a variety of cultures and contexts. Bilingual employees are valuable, not only for their language skills, but also for their ability to interact effectively with people around the world in either their first or second language."*
>
> *MAOS MIP Newsletter; Proven Benefits*

The proven benefits of immersion and Mandarin Chinese more specifically, as stated by the newsletter, is what defines a *globalized acceptance*. The proven benefits illustrated here were not of an academic nature such as test score improvements, but the type of benefits that would only be attractive to parents with some awareness of multinational corporations. Business opportunities were mentioned by several parents. I spoke with one parent and asked her to discuss the kind of parents that attended the school. She stated that some of the parents enrolled their children for cultural maintenance (see Chapter 1) but others were more concerned with potential career opportunities.

> …Then you have those [parents] who are in it for their children to have the fact that it's a second language, you know, and then, you know, America does a lot of business with China. So they're thinking maybe, [be]cause my one friend, her husband's, his company does a lot of business with China. So I think like they were looking at it for their kids to be able to speak and possibly later on work in the company and then, you know, to have, have business dealings with China and the factories and knowing the language and being able to represent, you know, when you're speaking to your client, to your co-[worker], your business, you know, […] that would be really cool that you could speak on that level and understand what they're doing.
>
> Mother 5th and 2nd grade

The students at MAOS are too young to accurately predict how their success will unfold, but that does not deter their parents from specific goals. The school can capitalize on the mentality of business-minded parents. They sell the idea that China is the next big power, or it holds the jobs of the future, or it is the key to a high salary. Most importantly to not get left behind, your young child must acquire some form of a *globalized acceptance*.

Did Marketing Turn the School Around?

The immersion program took an academically struggling school, marketed the school as a gateway to a global society, and parents from outside the school zone came to enroll their children. As a result, although not marketed as a place for student academic growth, the school began to produce stronger test scores. State testing assessments begin at the third grade. The first year of state assessments that included immersion students would be during the 2014-2015 school year, corresponding with implementation of the immersion program beginning at the kindergarten level during the 2011-2012 school year. The following Figure 3.2 illustrates the state assessments at MAOS for all students, immersion and non-immersion, between the third and sixth grades from the 2014-2015 to the 2018-2019 school year. This is the extent of the publicly available data for summative assessments at MAOS. The stronger performances are likely to contribute to the overall school rankings and contribute to the academic turnaround at the school.

[Figure 3.2 Here]

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system consists of various online summative assessments that include English Language Arts (ELA) and

mathematics. CAASPP math and English assessments begin when students are in third grade and continue to grade eleven[15]. Figure 3.2 shows the level of assessment of student progress and performance for students that met or exceeded the achievement level that demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills in ELA and mathematics. During the 2014-2015 school year, approximately 32% of students met or exceeded the level of knowledge and skills in ELA. That same school year, approximately 24% of students met or exceeded the level of knowledge and skills in mathematics. Four years later, during the year data was collected for this study, the percentage of students that met or exceeded the level for ELA increased to approximately 57%. That same school year, approximately 44.6% of students met or exceeded the level of knowledge and skills in mathematics.

The principal and District Dual Immersion Instructional Coordinator (DIIC) would consistently share these positive facts with current and prospective parents at meetings. During a Mandarin Immersion parent informational meeting a few Chinese teachers were present, along with the principal and the DIIC. The meeting was held in the teacher's lounge, with a screen at the front to share a presentation. Thirty-seven parents were at this meeting, some of them prospective parents and some with children. The principal begins the meeting and discusses how proud she is of the ELA and Math test scores (see Figure 3.2) and uses them to calm the fears of those that worry about school ratings. Yet the more substantial component is what the scores mean for the school and at the meeting the DIIC illustrates this with the following:

> Across the county, schools are not growing and districts are not growing. People are leaving the county and at least every school in the county has lost one teacher, at least. MAOS has gained two teachers and is growing out of its enrollment. MAOS attracts

[15] The achievement level descriptors state that the student has exceeded/met the achievement standard and demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills in English Language Arts/mathematics needed for likely success in future coursework.

> students from 15 different school districts from across the county. MAOS has at least 80 inter-district transfers (students from outside the district), more than all schools in the district, but one.
> [*the principal jokes that this means more money*]
>
> Field Note 10-30-18

Based on the improving test results, MAOS is arguably becoming a top-tier elementary school. Gradually test results will impact the school rankings as some schools will be seen as higher quality than others (Lareau & Goyette 2014). Importantly, the enrollment numbers have also increased with an additional 128 students since the immersion program began (see chapter 3). However, the overt presentation of academic progress does not make MAOS any different than other well-performing schools. Overall satisfactory test score performance is not what attracts parents to the school from outside of the school attendance zone. As a result of a continuous marketing effort underscored by the accumulation of global capital, MAOS is gradually supplanting the existing student body. Instead of placing the spotlight on creative methods to supplement the education of the existing Hispanic study body, Maple Apple Orchard School markets immersion so that it encourages privileged parents to self-select into the program.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter illustrates how a school district uses a language program to achieve a higher level of success based on state measures of academics. It does this in three ways. First the district markets the value of language. The language it advertises is not Spanish that might benefit its existing student body, but Mandarin Chinese, a language that might attract parents of a higher social class standing. Second, the school attracts parents by showing the connection between the Chinese language and culture, and the accumulation of global capital or cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is valued among high-SES parents and their children should acquire a familiarity with foreign cultures at an early age (Igarashi & Saito 2014). Finally, the parents buy

into the notion that Mandarin immersion can act as an international business pathway. Many parents sold on this narrative are generally more educated and more involved, leading to a stronger school in the form of test scores and increased enrollment.

Although it is widely spoken around the world, it is actually the lack of people that speak Chinese locally, as a first language, that works to the school's advantage. This strengthens the global angle but supports the idea that Chinese is beneficial. In other words, it is not widely spoken within the parameters of the district, but it is one of the world's most spoken languages, therefore it is essential. Since the Mandarin immersion program began the district has started two Spanish immersion programs. Yet Spanish immersion is not marketed in the same way. Spanish does not symbolize the type of foreignness that grants membership into a globalized community. The district promotes the schools with those programs as science and technology academies. Introducing another culture to your child, discussing the global cosmopolitanism as a benefit to immersion, relieves a parent from the challenges of the world right in front of them. The close connection of our world impacts the decisions privileged parents make. These parents tell each other they need to think bigger than their immediate surroundings. Spanish is everyday but Chinese is the future, Spanish is here and now, but Chinese is long-term.

The district decision to begin a language program using Mandarin provides two major insights. First it shows that the district does not prioritize the academic components of schooling like educational growth. Instead, it seeks more financial measures of school success like a larger student population, regardless of the types of students that enroll, benefit, or are in need. Most students in the community and the district identify with a Hispanic background. The choice of Mandarin potentially excludes a marginalized educational community within their own minoritized community. The district wants to offer something that other schools do not have,

Mandarin Immersion. They also realize that to sell a unique educational commodity they must highlight benefits that parents desire. The school provides subtle displays of the global value of Mandarin Chinese through its phrasing and presentations. It also uses its most valuable asset, the teachers, to maintain the exclusivity of its product. Yet language alone does not grant entrance to the global educational arena. As the school markets the language and its value, the culture of Mandarin is put on display in a culminating yearly event. Parents hope their children can excel in a global future where knowledge of Mandarin might be beneficial.

Next, the decision to use Mandarin Chinese and the promotional methods the school and district use to sell the program, also corresponds with a larger issue of how Americans continue to view Asian languages and people. Asian Americans are often targets of the forever foreigner stereotype that assumes Asian Americans may never be able to assimilate (Tuan 1998). Perpetually foreign is a xenophobic categorization that makes it difficult for Americans to accept that individuals from specific ethnic groups are naturalized or native-born American citizens. Interestingly, this stereotype works in favor of the school by making Chinese more desirable to middle-class parents, particularly those of non-Asian racial or ethnic backgrounds, seeking to strengthen the global capital of their child. Chinese is seen as a global language, ranking second behind English, ahead of French then Spanish (Chan 2016). The school does not behave in a way that minimizes this stereotype because they arguably are not supporting the stereotype, just using it for their own benefit.

The district and school promote the global capital that students can acquire through learning Chinese. They essentially promote foreignness through the stereotype of Chinese equals foreign, yet they do not outwardly equate Chinese with Asian-Americans. This divorces the foreign language from a group of people that may speak that language. Moreover, the school promotes

the foreignness of the teachers, again to their benefit of promoting the sale of global capital. Yet in this instance the Chinese teachers are not naturalized citizens, all immigrating to the United States for better opportunities, so in reality they are foreign. It is a metaphorical gray area, where the school uses a stereotype of an ethnic group to sell their language program, while attempting to sidestep the negative connotations that accompany the stereotype.

This study highlights the need to interrogate how social class and the foreign language marketplace shapes marketing and education more generally. Considering the supply side of school choice, schools often market in ways that shape enrollments. Through marketing, school districts can target and retain a specific type of parent and student. With a competitive educational landscape, schools with dual immersion programs benefit from promoting their language and culture-based curriculum, something many public schools do not share. What a dual language immersion programs market not only depends on the type of student they want to attract, but also the type of language that schools or districts plan to implement.

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Figure 3.1: California State Percentile Ranking

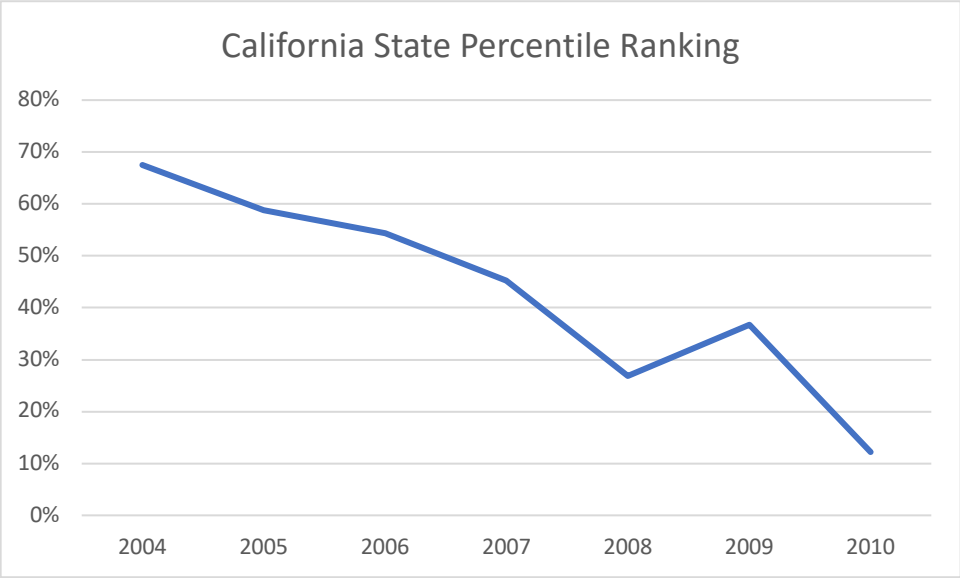
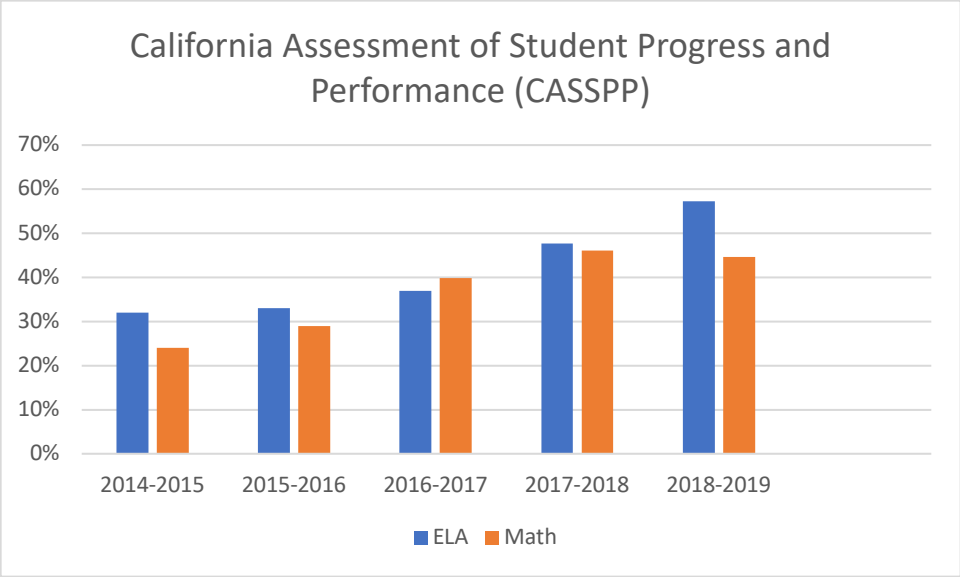


Figure 3.2: MAOS Assessment of Student Performance and Progress



CHAPTER 4

DIVERSITY OR GENTRIFICATION: MIDDLE-CLASS PARENTS AT WORKING-CLASS SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Gentrification is a process of economic and demographic change in a disinvested neighborhood, often by means of new higher-income residents moving in creating change in income, education level, and racial make-up (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2010). Gentrification is complex but it can manifest as increased investment in neighborhood amenities (Zuk et al 2018), changes in land use from industrial to residential and commercial (Hamnett & Whitelegg 2007), and changes in the character of the neighborhood (Chapple et al 2017; Zukin et al 2009). Gentrification can also reduce the sense of belonging or increase the feeling of being out of place for existing residents in their own neighborhood (Hyra 2015; Zukin 2009). Often linked with gentrification as one of its negative outcomes is residential displacement. Residential displacement occurs when a household is forced to move by conditions which are beyond its ability to control or prevent (Zuk et al 2018; Grier & Grier 1978). When neighborhoods change demographically, it will inevitably shift the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood school. Moving beyond existing studies of gentrification and the gentrification of neighborhood schools, this chapter provides a case study of an elementary school experiencing gentrification independent of the stable working-class neighborhood where it resides.

As with residents that are native to the gentrified neighborhood, existing parents and students at the school in the gentrified neighborhood would suffer similar misfortunes. School gentrification is characterized by three components: (a) material or economic upgrades in a

school, such as an increase in parent-teacher organization funds; (b) the exclusion or marginalization of low-income students and families; and (c) changes in school culture and climate (Posey Maddox 2014, p. 13; Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, and Cucchiara 2012). Plenty of scholarship examines school gentrification as a reaction to a changing neighborhood (Freidus 2016; Green et al 2020; Keels, Burdick–Will & Keene 2013; Pearman 2020). But less known is how a school gentrifies regardless of neighborhood context. How does a school gentrify when the neighborhood remains relatively stable? What kind of parents enroll their children in a disinvested school? How do the parents that arrive from outside the neighborhood differ from the existing parents, and how do they impact the school?

To answer these questions, I draw on data from an ethnographic study of parents, teachers, and students, at a Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) placed within a traditional English-only elementary school. Most of the students are Hispanic but the school district implemented Mandarin immersion instead of Spanish, as the first immersion program within the district. MIP began during the 2011-2012 school year with one kindergarten class. While students from the school attendance zone have the option to enroll in MIP, I found that the parents that enroll in the immersion program almost entirely come from outside the school attendance zone. They differ from the non-immersion parents, those that live within the school attendance zone, both ethnically and by social class making for an ostensibly diverse educational environment. The non-immersion parents are majority Hispanic while the immersion parents are mostly white and Asian. The non-immersion students participate in a traditional, English-only style of education.

When the immersion parents arrive, they begin to mold the school to their satisfaction. The immersion parents occupy all positions of parental leadership at the school. Through these roles, they make many changes to the school. The principal and administration support the immersion

parents but stress that all changes must be accessible by both the immersion and the non-immersion students. Although the immersion parents did not intend to isolate themselves from the non-immersion parents, they find it difficult to connect with them. Gradually some immersion parents push for a removal of the English-only tract to create a school that is entirely Mandarin language immersion, despite the Spanish-speaking backgrounds of many of the non-immersion students.

These findings suggest that bilingual education programs are not only popular with native English-speaking parents, but they can also operate as spaces where privileged parents can leverage their resources to further strengthen educational advantages for their children and enact institutional change. Before the immersion parents arrived, the school did not have many programs, including a music program and a transitional kindergarten, for the existing non-immersion families. The immersion parents created advantages, or brought investment, along with them. However, by removing the English-only strand they may end up taking school investment away from the students that need it most. The existing non-immersion parents are slowly getting pushed out, not able to access the benefits of attending a well-performing school.

This study builds on previous research that finds an increasing number of white families are enrolling their children in schools that historically served communities of color (Freidus 2016; Posey-Maddox 2014). In addition, this study draws from school gentrification studies (Freidus 2019; Pearman & Swain 2017; Davis & Oakley 2013) that focus on how schools change in relation to a shift in neighborhood demographics. Existing research focuses on gentrification in schools due to neighborhood change but does not look at gentrification in a school regardless of neighborhood demographic shifts. This gap in the literature is important because it suggests that like neighborhood gentrification, higher-income parents can alter the ethnic and racial makeup

and change the character of any school. This can result in the paradoxical circumstance where existing parents are forced out of their neighborhood school but not their neighborhood, having to find another school because of conditions that are beyond their ability to control or prevent.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Gentrification of Bilingual Education

In the dual language immersion context, the term gentrification is used to describe a trend where dual language immersion programs have pushed out English Language Learners or catered to non-marginalized students in providing multilingual education options (Valdez, Delavan, & Freire 2013). With a growing interest in bilingual education comes a new demographic of parents that desire this form of schooling. Many in this new contingent are middle-class native English speakers whose parents want their children to learn a foreign language in the early grades of elementary school (Palmer 2009). These parents are often middle class and welcomed by schools with bilingual education programs for several reasons. Schools often see middle-class parents as desirable because of the financial, social, and cultural resources they bring, along with personnel and curriculum development (Chaparro 2020; Billingham & Kimelberg 2013). One-way immersion programs seek to add a language and cater to native-English speakers. Native English speakers may bring tension to the structure of bilingual education. They place bilingual education programs in a position of deciding whether they should support language minority students or be used to attract middle-class parents (Palmer 2010). These trends are more likely to divert attention away from heritage, equity, and cultural concerns, allowing existing inequalities to remain (Cervantes-Soon 2014; Petrovic 2005).

Existing research focuses on how the gentrification of bilingual education can occur through the context of the gentrifying neighborhood (Heiman, & Yanes 2018; Williams 2017; Flores &

Chapparo 2017; Morales & Rao 2015). Pearman (2020), suggests that gentrification is often associated with declining enrollment at neighborhood schools, especially when gentrifiers are White. While catering to middle-class families, bilingual education programs may reproduce inequity. Valdez, Delavan, and Freire (2013) illustrate the inequity found in the gentrification of language immersion similarly follows larger patterns found in programs that privilege already advantaged students. More specifically, literature examines gentrification in two-way Spanish bilingual education programs that are located within gentrifying neighborhoods (Freire & Alemán 2021; Dorner et al 2021; Heiman 2021; Heiman & Murakami 2019). However, not as evident in the literature is how schools located in an unchanging neighborhood transform their demographic composition.

This study seeks to understand gentrifying processes in a one-way Mandarin Chinese bilingual education strand program. This study will extend previous scholarship by investigating a language not as commonly spoken in a one-way strand program. Mandarin Chinese may attract a different demographic than Spanish. Moreover, one-way strand programs are placed in existing elementary schools that already employ a traditional English-only curriculum. Parents enrolling their children for the language aspect may have children that can capitalize on the benefits of bilingualism. Students participating in the English-only style of education will not be able to learn another language with this curriculum or build upon any existing linguistic strengths they may have, particularly those that come from Spanish-speaking homes. This dynamic is important to explore with the hope of further understanding what inequalities may be reinforced or ameliorated when two contrasting academic programs, English-only and language immersion, operate within a singular educational environment.

Parental Involvement

Parental school involvement is important in high educational achievement in elementary schools (Jeynes 2010; Lee & Bowen 2006; Jeynes 2005; Englund, Whaley, & Egeland 2004). Increased parental involvement often means parents spend a large amount of time focused on the schooling of their child and are involved in school activities more generally. But schools cater to and depend on middle-class parents (Calarco 2020). A working-class parent may have something to offer the school but it might not be as appreciated. Schools request specific types of behavior from all parents but cultural resources that are valued are possessed by middle-class parents, leading to greater participation (Lareau 1987). Lareau (2011) suggests that social class is an indicator of the propensity or amount of involvement, as middle-class parents are more involved in the lives of their children. Middle class parents often act collectively and draw on their social networks when faced with challenges at schools (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau 2003) and strong social networks are directly correlated with school involvement (Sheldon 2002). Parental networks also play a role in school organizational participation, such as the PTO (Li & Fischer 2017). Elementary schools often operate as spaces where through involvement, privileged parents can leverage their resources for the benefit of their child (Jeynes 2010; Lee & Bowen 2006; Jeynes 2005; Englund, Whaley, & Egeland 2004). But bilingual education programs, although not a new phenomenon, may present an unfamiliar curriculum to parents. A child learning multiple languages in addition to traditional classroom subjects, may draw greater interest on the part of the parent. Regardless of the curriculum style, parental involvement in schools is a key component in the educational success of children (Epstein 2001; Hill and Tyson 2009).

Dual immersion might exacerbate educational inequalities in the same way that gifted and talented programs, specialized STEM programs, and other types of academic or racialized tracking often do (Baldwin 2005; Ford & Grantham 2003; Museus, Palmer, Davis, & Maramba 2011; Valdez, Freire, and Delavan 2016). This could create a situation where the already advantaged children increase their opportunities to acquire more educational privileges. Low-SES minority immigrant parents report more barriers to participation in school and are less likely to be involved at school (Turney & Kao 2009). This will reduce the benefits children receive with parental involvement. Additionally, parents that live in disadvantaged communities are less likely to participate in school activities (Li & Fischer 2017). Those that can be involved, often the middle-class, may contribute to the gentrification of bilingual education, where native English-speaking parents begin to supplant English Language Learners or other marginalized populations.

When schools struggle with dwindling enrollments, immersion programs may help alleviate this problem. Language immersion programs are found to act as direct responses to struggling elementary schools (Burns 2017; De Jong, 2002; Senesac, 2002; Valdés, 1997). The attraction of middle-class families to low-income schools in particular, has the potential to alter the power structure between parents and teachers, or parents and other parents. As native English-speaking, middle-class parents arrive at struggling schools with bilingual programs, the schools often undergo change. Compared with Latinx working-class families, Middle class parents hold greater sway in policy making in bilingual programs (Burns, 2017; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Shannon, 2011). Middle class parents may also use their influence to hoard opportunities (Lewis-McCoy 2014; Tilly 1999). Parent-Teacher Organizations that exist within schools offer opportunities for parents to gather and distribute shared resources.

The social capital gained through the interaction of parents, teachers, and the community, can be a positive influence on the school. When parents know their school principal or teacher, they may have more decision-making power, and can advocate or discourage policies that affect their children (Woolcock & Narayan 2000). Putnam (2001) distinguishes between two types of social capital – bonded and bridging. Bonding social capital is a characteristic of homogenous groups with individuals that are often in close proximity, while bridging social capital refers to an outward looking connection across social spaces to share resources (Murray et al 2020; Putnam 2001). The PTA can structure interactions and provide a space for parents to work with each other (Small 2009). It also helps create a shared identity among parents. Tight-knit and demographically homogenous Parent-Teacher Organizations may represent social capital that is bonded. Parents that seek bilingual education programs are potentially like-minded. They take a risk leaving their home schools, placing trust in a non-traditional style of education. These actions may strengthen the bonded social capital between immersion parents. This study will explore whether these actions strengthen the bonded social capital between immersion parents, and what the ramifications are for the school and existing students.

Why Bilingual Education?

Bilingual education strand programs located in traditional English-only elementary schools are an interesting case due to the growing attraction of middle-class, English-dominant parents. Bilingual education policy in some states is designed to target white, higher-SES, English-dominant students, providing benefits to the already privileged (Valdez, Freire & Delavan 2016). This study builds on existing literature to examine how parental involvement from one type of parent, generally middle-class, influences the institutional changes that affect the other type of parent and ultimately their children, generally working-class. It presents two reasons as to why a

bilingual immersion program is a salient factor in elementary school change. First the district did not create an environment that would benefit the existing families that hold a predominately Hispanic background. They adopted a program that would attract a study body that differs from the one that already exists. This program does not relate to the linguistic capital their existing students have, risking a potential exclusion of the existing minority community.

Second, the choice of Mandarin Chinese as the target language may attract parents from outside of the school attendance zone or those that find value in learning a language contrary to their own backgrounds. This would create an environment where parents from outside the school neighborhood that predominately occupy a higher social class must interact with parents that live within the school neighborhood, or those that occupy a lower social class. Regular social contact between these two types of parents will either lead to a dissolution or reinforcement of social class divisions. By drawing on ethnographic data of a demographically changing school with a unique curriculum, this study is uniquely positioned to examine the potential benefits and negative outcomes of school gentrification regardless of neighborhood change. This research will also add to previous literature on school inequality by showing how class divisions continue to be reinforced.

CONTEXT

I consider how advantaged parents leverage their resources to enact institutional change that results in a gentrified elementary school. I base this analysis on an ethnographic study of parents and administrators, at a language immersion program placed within a struggling school in a working-class neighborhood.

Maple Apple Orchard School

Maple Apple Orchard School (MAOS) is located in Grandview, a diverse suburban city on the West Coast of the United States. According to recent Census data (2019) Grandview is mid-size city with a population (2019) of 138,669 people (See Table 4.1). According to the year 2010 Census, the racial makeup was 46.8% Non-Hispanic White, 11.3% Asian, 4.0% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 38.1%. Compared with the census data of 2010, Table 4.1 illustrates that Grandview has not exhibited any drastic demographic changes for nine years ending in 2019. The table illustrates that by race and the income measurement of living below the poverty line, Grandview has remained relatively stable in its recent past.

[Table 4.1 Here]

Grandview is a city that spans multiple zip codes and has a large school district with an enrollment of over 28,000 students. The Census data suggests that Grandview overall, is not undergoing a suburban revival. However due to its size some areas differ slightly from others by condition, circumstance, and demographics. The neighborhood surrounding MAOS is a working-class, largely Hispanic community. On one side of the street, adjacent to the school, sits modest, one-story homes and small-scale apartment complexes. Primarily residential, this is in stark contrast to the opposite side of the street where commercial structures occupy the space. The neighboring commercial industry is completely blue-collar in scope. Businesses range from mercantile, textile, plumbing, printing, and wastewater. The location is off the beaten path, unbeknownst to many that do not deliberately enter the area.

The total enrollment of all students at MAOS, from kindergarten through sixth grade, is approximately 451 students. The Mandarin Immersion Program housed within MAOS is a strand of the traditional English-only elementary school program. Currently in the eighth year of the

program, Mandarin Immersion continues at the junior high level at a second location. For their immersion program, MAOS primarily enrolls English-dominant children that are seeking to improve their Chinese language fluency. Parents that live within the school attendance zone are given the option of choosing the immersion program for their child but very few do, opting for the English-only tract instead. Approximately half of all the students at the school are enrolled in the immersion program.

I chose this site because even though most of the students are Hispanic and presumably would have a stronger connection to Spanish over Mandarin Chinese, the school district made the decision to implement Mandarin Immersion in a school struggling with enrollment, as their first immersion program within the district. The school district started the program for the 2011-2012 school year with its inaugural kindergarten class. They were an early adopter of the language immersion style of education. Among neighboring districts their bilingual program is one of the more established immersion programs in the area. Three years later for the 2014-2015 school year, the district launched its first Spanish Immersion program at another elementary school within the district.

Before beginning data collection, I submitted and received IRB approval. I also met with the principal to discuss the project and obtain permission to conduct this research. The participants included parents with children enrolled at Maple Apple Orchard School, as well as the administrators that worked with the parents of the immersion program and the school.

DATA AND METHODS

Data Collection

The data collection primarily relies on two sources, in-depth interviews and observations. The interview sample includes twenty-five parent, teacher, and administrator interviews (See

Appendix Table 4.1 for characteristics of the interview participants). All the data collection took place during the 2018-2019 school year, excluding one parent-administrator meeting that occurred early in the 2020 school year.

I spent three full school days a week as a participant observer in four classrooms: the fourth and fifth grade immersion and non-immersion classrooms. I observed in-school events that happened outside of the classroom. Parent–teacher association (PTA) meetings occurred once a month where I attended several. Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) meetings occurred six times a school year and I attended each of those. I also observed cultural and extracurricular events that happened outside of school grounds. The school would often hold tours and informational meetings for families interested in the program. Occasionally I would join these tours as an observer. Sometimes I would aid teachers with classroom tasks but mostly I sat in the back of the classroom and took notes.

In addition to the observations, I also interviewed four administrators. Two worked at the school, including the principal, and two that worked at the offices of the district. I interviewed a sample of parents, most of which had children enrolled in the immersion program. Each group of respondents provide a different perspective of the immersion program. The administrators discuss the challenges of implementing an immersion program and the paths taken to fund them. The parents shed light on their contribution to the development of the immersion program and school in general. Both groups comment on the changes and growth taking place at the school. All the interviews took place during the observation phase of the project. Interviews lasted on average 45 minutes, were recorded and transcribed. In arranging parent interviews, I introduced myself as a researcher at different meetings that included parents. These meetings were held during the evening at the school site. I recruited parents for the study through contacts made

through the various administrator-led program assessment meetings. Most of the parent interviews were collected this way, the other parent interviews were a product of snowball sampling. I interviewed immersion parents, all of whom came from outside of the school catchment area to intentionally enroll in the school. I also supplement formal interviews with informal conversations, which I document in fieldnotes.

In addition to the interviews and observations, I used a few online record sources to gather information relevant to understanding the demographic and structural changes that occurred at the school. Those sources included local newspaper reports, various flyers and information provided by the school itself, school ranking websites, and the state department school education records.

Data Analysis

The analysis relies on administration and parent interviews, and meetings held between parents and administrative staff. The schoolwide parental and administrator meetings provided opportunities for discussions of issues related to budget, academics, enrollment, curriculum, involvement, and similar topics. I wrote memos after every interview and after every week of observations. From the memos I applied inductive coding to begin to discover and distinguish recurrent themes that I found occurring through text and visual data. This application of inductive coding should help me learn from my respondents and lead to a theory that is grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss 2017). However, a true grounded theory approach is less commonly used today by many qualitative researchers (Deterding & Waters 2018). With the use of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software, Atlas.ti, I organized and indexed my codes. From the memos and transcripts, I grouped my codes by categories. These codes allow me to search for interactions and apply thematic instances. After a group of codes were identified, I began writing

memos in the form of short stories. From the memos I was able to reduce my data. Below, I focus on three main themes that arose from the data: the changing demographics, elementary (in)equality, and detached diversity. I use these themes to show how middle-class parents attracted by a bilingual education program, shape an elementary school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Changing Demographics

The school district implemented a language immersion program at a conventional English-only school that attracted middle-class parents. Those parents were different than the parents that already inhabited the school. Maple Apple Orchard School (MAOS) is in a large school district. From various anecdotal accounts from long-time administrators, MAOS had a large population of students. For reasons that were unclear, the enrollment numbers began to decline. The language immersion program was implemented in 2011 and since that time, enrollment numbers have steadily risen. Most parents that were interested in the immersion program were primarily middle-class and did not identify as Hispanic, distinguishing them from the existing parents that lived in the surrounding working-class neighborhoods. The following table illustrates what happened demographically at MAOS when the new types of parents began to arrive.

[Table 4.2 Here]

Since the implementation of the language immersion program, in its eighth year, the school demographics have changed dramatically. Publicly available data (State Department of Education) for MAOS enrollment show demographic shift of the school population from 2011 (the year the immersion program began) to 2020 (the time of data collection). Table 4.2 shows direct percentage changes. To understand how the demographics have changed, add or subtract the percentage change from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2019-2020 year. The Latinx

population at MAOS has decreased by 22.7% from 2011-2012. During the 2011-2012 school year the Latinx enrollment percentage was 70.4% but after a decrease of 22.7%, it stands at 47.7%. Latinx students, the majority population, have drastically decreased at the school while Latinx enrollment rises throughout the district. Conversely the Asian percentage has increased by 16.1%. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Asian enrollment percentage was 3.6% and during data collect stood at 19.7%. The percentage of students participating in the free or reduced lunch program has also decreased drastically from 62.1% to 37.5%. While the racial demographic percentage of students enrolled in the district as a whole has remained relatively stable. MAOS has decreased the number of Latinx students and students that receive a free or reduced lunch, while simultaneously increasing its Asian, white, and mixed-race student populations.

Based on the student total, one location where the district has not witnessed a reduction in the student population is at MAOS. The increase in enrollment is accompanied by a shift in ethnic demographics and social class standing, creating a more diverse elementary population. More parents have arrived at MAOS and many of those parents do not share the same ethnic background or financial status as the current parents. They are not Hispanic, and they are more financially stable. All the immersion parents I spoke with could not rely on the school bus and provided transportation themselves or by way of carpool. Compared with parents that live within the school zone, immersion parents need more time to send their children to school every day.

The district created a situation that did not benefit the parents that were currently at the school. At the potential exclusion of a minoritized community – the Hispanic parents and students – even amongst their own predominately Hispanic demographic in both the school and the neighborhood, the district chose another language. Presumably a Spanish language program would provide a connection to the language and culture of most students. Bilingual education

builds on, rather than erases the home language of immigrant students (Cummins 2000). Based on the ethnic demographics, the immersion program was not created to build on the home languages of the existing students at the school. Students that do identify with an ethnic Chinese background represent less than 3% of individuals living in the city where the elementary school is located (US Census 2019), which leads to the conclusion that the program was created to attract parents with children attending other elementary schools (see Chapter 1). In short, when the program began it was not for students that were currently attending MAOS.

Long-term gains

MAOS is a school that is underperforming, based on publicly available school ranking data. During my fieldwork, MAOS was rated 4/10 on GreatSchools.org, a non-profit organization that provides information about PK-12 schools. Families often rely on rankings when choosing schools (Hasan & Kumar 2019). The ratings reflect standardized test scores, which were lower on average when compared with other schools in the district. Due to the differences between the equity and academic scores at the school, the low ratings are driven (based on data below) by the test scores of the lower-SES Latinx students, rather than the higher-SES White and Asian American students. The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) provides an annual measure of what students know and can do using the Common Core standards for English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Taken from publicly available data (California Department of Education) from the most recent year, 2018-2019, the Asian students at MAOS at that met or exceeded the state standard for ELA and math were approximately 90% and 74% respectively. The white students at MAOS that met or exceeded the state standard for ELA and math were approximately 77% and 64% respectively. The percentage of Latinx students at MAOS that met or exceeded the state standard for ELA and math were approximately

40% and 27% respectively. The racial difference in the assessments of student performance and progress, mirrors student performances between the immersion and non-immersion students more generally. Additionally, the growth of Asian and white students at MAOS has positively affected the overall school rankings. This potentially may attract even more Asian and white parents, particularly those that rely on rankings as a guide when choosing schools.

Parents that enroll their kids in the Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) are advised before they make their decision that there is a certain expectation that comes with immersion programs. Students will not benefit unless they stay with immersion at least through their elementary years. This expectation works to the benefit of the school and district. It is more likely that parents ensure their investment pays off, rather than withdrawing their child. At multiple immersion informational meetings, open to both current and prospective parents, the principal and Dual Immersion Instructional Specialists would stress the need to stick with the program, as this fieldnote describes:

> The meeting is in the expanded teacher's lounge, a faux wall removed to accommodate the parents. I count approximately twenty parents, some with children in two. The principal oversees the meeting and discusses some of the characteristics that make for a successful student in the immersion progam. She says, "it is a commitment and the last thing you want to do is send your child to MAOS and then pull them out after a year or two. You have to think about the long-term commitment to the program, even going into high school." The school hopes that the students should be able to take an AP test as a tenth grader and not a twelfth grader [more common grade to take AP exams] and maybe even earlier.
>
> Parent Orientation Meeting 12/5/18

What might limit some from joining the immersion program is what fuels the growth and changes within the school, staying with it for the duration. Parents will not see any genuine progress after a year or two. They must have confidence the language gains will come. To acquire the greatest benefits, the students must stay in the immersion program until they are

ready to receive their Seal of Biliteracy. The Seal of Biliteracy is the stated goal, an added adornment to a high school diploma. The chances parents leave the program are reduced and the likelihood that parents get involved and provide resources, increases. With parents staying with the program for years, the ethnic and social demographics should continue their current trends.

Elementary (In)Equality

The Mandarin Immersion Program (MIP) at Maple Apple Orchard School (MAOS) welcomed its first groups of students during the 2011-2012 school year. It began as one small class that after some early challenges, is now entering their first year as high school students. Within the last two years the MIP program has expanded from one class per grade level to two classes in kindergarten and first grade, where the non-immersion students have remained in one class at each grade level. The increasing student population brings more parents from outside the school catchment area and like the school demographics, the demographics of school parental organizations has also changed. The parent teacher association (PTA) often works alongside the school to improve school resources for the students. At MAOS, the PTA administers several activities that did not exist before the immersion program was established. Ostensibly open to every parent, the PTA president and its members are all immersion parents. The transition to all immersion parents did not take a long time, as described by a fifth-grade parent that has been with the program since kindergarten:

> Um, I just see a lot more of the Mandarin parents. I mean, I believe the board [PTA] is completely Mandarin immersion, the executive board. I want to say they are all Mandarin immersion parents that has slowly changed since, obviously my first PTA meeting ever. [At that time] there was not one [MIP parent] on the board I want to say. And that's because it was a new program. By the second year, the president was a Mandarin immersion parent. So starting from then on that board just completely grew and evolved from non-immersion to now it's completely Mandarin immersion parents.
>
> Mother 5th grade

Additionally, school administrators created the Mandarin Parents Council (MPC), a parent group that places their attention specifically on issues related to MIP. Both organizing bodies, the PTA and the MPC are populated with immersion parents only. The MPC often held their meetings during the evening and would include parents that may be considering enrolling their child in the immersion program. The MPC meetings were a combination of a discussion of the long-term goals of the program, paired with highlighting the successes of the program. While the immersion program was frequently a topic of conversation, the PTA meeting discussions included the English-only strand of the school.

The PTA raises funds for the school, and it should raise funds for the entire school. If the money it raises will only benefit half of the students, that will cause an issue of equity. The immersion parents did comply with this requirement, but it was not for the lack of trying to find ways around it. One mother had heard that similar language immersion programs began their own fundraising arms and she wanted to do the same. She had suggested fundraising for the immersion program when her son, currently in fifth grade, was just beginning the program.

> The only issue we ever came across was when I first started another group of parents and I tried to form a nonprofit group for the school. And it was specifically to fundraise and make money for the immersion program now. The principal at the time…wasn't involved, she couldn't be involved, but she was encouraging. And then we went to the school district and they said, no, you can't do that. Whatever you do needs to be for the entire school.
>
> Mother 5th grade

This was not the only instance of an immersion parent mentioning wanting to support the program financially but getting told it must be for the entire school. Although the district did not allow the immersion parents to raise money directly for the program, they did allow parents to organize activities that were Chinese-themed, using money the PTA raised for the entire school.

The big event the school arranged each year, with help from the PTA and the MPC, was the Lunar New Year celebration. To commemorate Lunar New Year, each immersion class (K-6) at MAOS would hold a performance. I was told that in the past, the Lunar New Year celebration was held at the school, but it had since gotten too large for the school. The district administrators that coordinate the immersion programs moved it to a nearby junior high school auditorium. I attended the celebration but did not catch sight of any non-immersion students or their parents. I asked a parent on the organizing committee how this did not violate the "entire" school issue. The first-grade mother told me it was a compromise, "even though we're [PTA and MPC] funding the Lunar New Year, the whole school is invited, not just the immersion parents and students". This illustrates a program that although it is available to the entire student body, ends up being a resource where only the immersion students participate or benefit.

Making a Good School

Mandarin immersion parents occupy all school-related positions that can enact institutional change. Control of the PTA can enable opportunity hoarding among the advantaged (Murry, Domina, Renzulli, & Boylan 2019). Yet at MAOS the district stresses that all students should have access to all programs and activities, making it difficult for the immersion parents to prevent the non-immersion students from utilizing opportunities. Instead, the immersion parent control of the PTA is used to mold the school to their vision of a "good" school. What do they see as a "good" school? I spoke with a another fifth-grade MIP parent that began in kindergarten and asked her what the PTA and parent leadership was like when she first arrived.

> Going to my first PTA meeting where my [child] was in kindergarten, and there were no MIP members on the board, it was chaos. It was absolute chaos. [The PTA] was not organized. Um, people were rude to each other. There was clearly, you know, in-fighting stuff that we [immersion parents] had no idea what was going on. We didn't understand it. Um, yeah, it just wasn't well run. And it was at that moment I'm like, did we make a mistake with just the culture of the school or whatever. […] Otherwise, I'm like, you

> know, the PTA is separate [volunteer-based] maybe I'm not going to be that involved, but, but then we, a group of [immersion] parents decided, okay, I'm going to be on the board next year. […] And at the time it was like, okay, you guys are kind of representing us and being, you know, the new, the new group of parents on campus and whatnot. And so that's kind of what started the process of everything changing here and fundraising for more things and bringing more things to the school [that students could participate in].

The dissatisfaction towards the non-immersion parents and their parental leadership spurred action from a new group of parents. From then on, the new group of parents secured leadership representation and began the remaking process, turning MAOS into a "good" school. Parents often base their decisions of where to live on whether a good school is in the area, but this would not matter for immersion parents at MAOS because they were not from the surrounding neighborhood. Lareau, Evans, and Yee (2016) found that when compared to the district, schools that were highly ranked often enrolled more white and Asian students, and a smaller percentage of students on free or reduced lunch. Trends (Table 4.2) illustrate that MAOS is headed in a similar direction, when compared with the rest of the district. The immersion program and the changes that it brings to the school overall can contribute to the continuation of these statistics.

Inclusive Benefits

Since the start of MIP at MAOS, the school now has a music program, a school carnival, a transitional kindergarten program, school uniforms, including an optional immersion t-shirt, guest speakers, Lunar New Year celebration, physical fitness activities, and more. Although the new programs and activities were available to all students, the non-immersion students only participated in those that were during the school day and compulsory. These changes are a result of immersion parent involvement and their PTA leadership, where parents are bringing the idea of a "good" school to a working-class neighborhood.

Through a partnership with a local university, the immersion parents used PTA funds to occasionally bring in professors to teach students rudimentary musical readiness. The partnership

between parents and local university music professors placed pressure on the district to reimplement their district-wide music program. According to one of the music teachers, the district discontinued their music program around 2008 for reasons that were unclear to the teacher. By the 2015-2016 school year, less than four years after the start of the immersion program, MAOS had a music program for the fourth through sixth grades. The program is district-funded and provides the students with different options: instruments, vocal, or theatre. The immersion parents were not satisfied with only the upper grades participating in music, so they continued to fundraise for a more fixed option for the lower grades. The lower grades have a PTA-funded music teacher that regularly visits the classrooms to teach the students music fundamentals.

It is compulsory for all students to participate in some way in the music program. For many of the upper grade students, that meant playing an instrument. The lower grades learned general music appreciation. My observations took place primarily with the students learning stringed instruments. Fifteen students jammed into the library twice a week to participate in orchestra or strings. Six of the students were from the fifth-grade immersion class and nine were from the fifth-grade non-immersion class. The classes would combine but the students never formed any meaningful connections.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) serves as a bridge between preschool and traditional kindergarten that prepares students for fundamental skills needed for success in school. MAOS had no TK until the immersion parents single handedly brought it there. The immersion parents pounded the pavement in the area surrounding the school, placing postcards into the neighborhood mailboxes exclaiming, “TK is here!”. After some initial skepticism and push back

from the district office, the immersion parents got enough parents to sign up and the district was forced to begin a program.

Music and Movement is a school wide rhythm and exercise activity. The activity takes place during the morning of the school day. It last one hour and is split into two half-hour sessions, for the lower grades then upper grades. Music and Movement is completely organized and led by the immersion parents. Students are led out to the blacktop by classrooms. They are randomly given places to stand, close enough to speak with each other but with enough space to move and jump. The parents participate in the activity by dancing with the students, leading the exercises, and operating the music. They want the students to think of music and exercise as fun activities.

These are three examples of various parent-organized functions implemented at MAOS. The immersion parents placed themselves in positions where they could enact institutional changes at the school. Their idea of a good school includes opportunities for students to enjoy music, education, and exercise. Aside from the Lunar New Year celebration that was recently moved off campus and to the evening, all school activities occur during the school day and are available to any student regardless of language strand. The obligatory nature of school day activities at MAOS meant that all students would participate and ultimately benefit from programs and activities that were absent prior to immersion implementation. Inclusive activities like these, however, did not advance the reduction of any barriers erected between the students of the non-immersion and immersion strands of the school.

Much like the school day activities implemented after the arrival of immersion parents, recess and lunch also highlight missed opportunities to strengthen relationships between immersion and non-immersion students. Like the school day activities, recess and lunch are compulsory and all students participate, yet the immersion and non-immersion students rarely

co-mingled. The following field note refers to fifth-grade student observations. Even through the mandatory time spent together creates more opportunities for them to interact, it illustrates the separation of the two student groups.

> The difference [I observe] at recess is not with who the students associate with, although they generally stay with their home class [immersion or non-immersion] classmates. The difference may lie with what games they play or what they do during recess. I notice students from the non-immersion class always seem to play dodge ball and tetherball. I rarely see any immersion students playing these more movement-oriented games. I have also seen non-immersion students playing soccer. [On the other hand] I usually see the immersion students playing some version of hide-and-go-seek or going into the library where they can play board games or games on a computer/iPad.
>
> Field Note 11/14/2019

The fifth-grade students observed here, when compared with the lower grades, have spent more time together as they have progressed through their elementary school years. Yet they do not appear to have grown closer together, even as much as preferring different playground activities. The students' disconnect mirrored the detachment found between the immersion and the non-immersion parents. Statistically MAOS is increasing its diversity, but the students were unable to make deep connections and as the following will show, the parents interactions lead to integration that was largely symbolic (Muro 2016).

Detached Diversity

Studies find that a desire for diversity is commonly cited when parents choose schools (Kimelberg & Billingham 2013; Posey-Maddox 2014). Since the implementation of the immersion program, the Ethnic Diversity Index (Table 4.3) at Maple Apple Orchard School has increased, illustrating the growth in diversity that has occurred at the school. According to an educational partnership with the State Department of Education, the Ethnic Diversity Index reflects how evenly distributed students are among the categories of race and ethnicity. The more evenly distributed the student body, the higher the number. A school where all the

students are the same race and ethnicity would have an index of 0. As of 2020, the highest number in the state was 76. Since the immersion program began in the 2011-2012 school year, the ethnic diversity index has increased by a measure of 21 to 53, while the district as a whole has produced little movement with respect to diversity. The increasing number is moving towards a more diverse student body. More students of different ethnicities attend the school while fewer students of the same ethnicity enroll. The immersion program has contributed to this growth in various ethnicities because immersion student backgrounds are majority Asian, white, and mixed race, contrasting with the overrepresentation of Hispanic students in the English-only program.

[Table 4.3 Here]

Although MAOS has become more diverse statistically, the diversity is misleading. The fourth and fifth grade MIP classrooms I observed had visible diversity in the immersion class. The students were primarily white, Asian, or mixed-race. The non-immersion classrooms had only one student (Vietnamese) that I was aware, not of a Hispanic/Latinx background. Overall, the school is more diverse, but the immersion classrooms are the only classes with visible ethnic differences. This might not be the cause of the detachment between the immersion and the non-immersion classrooms, but it adds to their separation. I find a similar dynamic between the immersion and the non-immersion parents. I spoke with an immersion mother that launched an after-school dance program for the students at the school.

> "I see the [non-MIP] parents waiting for their children, I will want to say hi but there is no conversation because there are no topics that we can talk about. […] We [active immersion parents] have to think about the non-immersion. We want to connect with them but we can't. It is unfortunate because they are not involved, as much. It [Immersion Program] is being held back, because the whole school is not immersion. There is no good direction because the entire school is not MIP. If we were all on the same page [immersion only], it would create a better learning environment.

This mother views the non-immersion program as a roadblock, something now allowing the immersion program to reach its potential. The two strands of the school are detached unable to connect through the parents. The inability to connect across social spaces hurts the sharing of resources, in turn creating a group of immersion-only parents that become closer together in their shared vision for the school. The social capital that is a product of the close bonds between immersion parents may exclude people who are not members of the immersion groups (Horvat el al 2003; Lewis & Diamond 2015; Posey-Maddox 2014).

During the observation phase of the study, I noticed the absence of the non-immersion parents and their input. The immersion parents at MAOS do not actively dissuade other non-immersion parents from joining or participating but few instances existed where the non-immersion parents did participate. I rarely crossed paths with them and unlike the immersion parents that were readily available, I had to seek out the non-immersion parents. Those that I did encounter did not choose immersion because Chinese was not their background. Their children spoke or were learning to speak their heritage language (Spanish). They had no problem with the immersion program, they just did not see adding a language, often a third language, as necessary when educating their child.

The after-school care was run by a non-immersion parent. After-school care, or extended day, was an added expense for parents and the non-immersion parent was getting compensated financially. Students that were unable to go home when the school day concluded would move to a trailer behind the school. The parent watched the student, often helping with homework or providing other activities. She filled this role for a few years and had no problem with the immersion program but did not see it as beneficial. I asked her why she did not choose the

immersion strand, particularly since her child was already enrolled at the school in the English-only tract.

> I didn't choose the immersion program because Spanish is my family language and me and my husband feel that this language is most important for our children to know. […] I figure that many of the [non-MIP] parents probably are fine with the program, their children might get some extra [non-language] benefits.
>
> Non-Immersion Mother 1st Grade

I spoke with a Vietnamese mother that volunteered in the classroom and she shared the same sentiment – "We speak Vietnamese at home and see no reason to trouble our child by learning Chinese". Non-immersion parents trusted the school to fulfill its commitment to educating their children, the language program that the other parents chose was immaterial. They placed faith in the school, but the immersion parents did not share the same perspective. Working-class parents depend on the teacher to educate their child, while middle-class parents behave in ways that mirror school requests (Lareau 1987). The immersion parents held a different view of the role of schools, and with their time and resources they blurred the line between administrator and parent.

The non-immersion parents acknowledge the changes happening at the school but have not contributed to the changes in any significant way. The obstruction on the path to a better learning environment is not the actions of the non-immersion parents but their inaction. They see the language program as one would view an extra-curricular activity, fine for the school but not for them. The immersion parents have come from outside the school zone and put in the time and effort to develop a language program that resulted in improvement for the entire school. The immersion parents cannot help but feel a sense of entitlement: immersion is not an activity the school implemented but something that belongs to them. With a sense of ownership comes the desire for success, removing any obstacles to its continued growth.

Immersion Gentrified

During the data collection phase, the immersion parents often mentioned the balance of improving the immersion program without overlooking the non-immersion strand of the school. But it was an open secret that the school was headed in the direction of becoming completely immersion. Many parents, teachers, and administrators felt this way. They all felt that it was best for the school, not commenting on the complications it may have on the non-immersion students and parents. Understanding this perspective is best articulated by an immersion father of a second-grade student. I mentioned that the administrators were trying their best to blend both sides of the school, but he stated that from his own observations what mattered most were standardized metrics.

> I think, and no one said this, but I think watching as well as an observer, I suspect, that they're [administration] trying to turn that entire school into an immersion school because that would be the biggest money maker, […] that will draw the most kids. It's going to change the test scores because the Mandarin parents, like I said, have kids, you know, they're able to create an environment at home that is a little bit better. It's just going to make the school better by [the state] and district standards.
>
> Immersion Father 2nd Grade

If the district implemented a Spanish immersion program the long-term goals may have been different, but Mandarin immersion drastically increased the Asian population. Asians are less likely to live in poverty and more likely to hold an undergraduate degree, when compared with other Americans (Pew Research 2021). With more educated middle-class parents, MAOS will become better by the numbers.

The district is not ignorant of the concerns of the parents. The MIP parents feel an immersion only school would create a better learning environment for their children and understand that the school and district would benefit in its outward recognition. At a parent-administrator meeting of

the new school year (2019-2020), MIP parents immediately raised the topic of an immersion-only school, as this fieldnote describes:

> The meeting is held in the sixth-grade classroom with most of the desks removed, leaving seats in rows. Approximately twenty parents sit facing a screen at the front of the room. They wait for the principal to begin the presentation discussing the success and challenges of the immersion program. As the principal goes through the slides a parent raises their hand. A mother, she asks:
>
> "Does the district have plans to make it immersion-only?"
>
> The principal states that they are looking at the next steps. The classrooms are full, but the principal envisions a magnet school where anyone can come [a school without an attendance boundary]. Discussions haven't gotten that far but they will need to look at facilities. It could be a stand-alone school instead of a neighborhood school. Hopefully a decision can be made in the next month or two.
>
> MPC Meeting 9/19/19

The district administrators have responded to the immersion parent perspective and are looking to formulate a plan. The middle-class parents have gentrified the school. Gentrification refers to an upper-class group moving into a lower-class location to potentially displace (Palen & London 1984). The Mandarin Immersion parents have come from outside of the school zoned area to an elementary school in a working-class neighborhood. In less than ten years, a genuine discussion of the removal of students has taken place. Diplomatically, the parents needed to take the non-immersion students into account when planning any program or activity, but many teachers, parents, and the principal, foresee a school where all students will be provided instruction in both English and Chinese. It was uncertain what would happen to the non-immersion students, but it was clear that their circumstances were not a top priority. I surmise that only one of two things would happen: the non-immersion students would be bussed to a nearby elementary school, or the immersion students would find a new location in the district, taking many of their parent-run activities and programs with them.

CONCLUSION

This study asks how racial and social demographic shifts brought on by a language immersion program shape an elementary school. Using evidence from an ethnographic study of a language immersion strand program placed within a struggling school, in a working-class neighborhood, I find that middle-class parents came from outside the school attendance zone to enroll their children in the immersion program. They differ from the existing English-only strand parents, those that live within the school attendance zone, both ethnically and by social class, making for a more ostensibly diverse educational environment overall. The English-only strand parents are majority Hispanic while the immersion parents are mostly white and Asian. Through the parental leadership roles they occupy, the immersion parents gradually shape the school to their satisfaction. The principal and administration support the immersion parents but stress that all changes must be accessible by both the immersion and the non-immersion students. Without a strong connection between the immersion and the non-immersion parents, many immersion parents envision a school without the English-only strand.

The findings suggest that before the immersion parents arrived, the school provided few benefits for the existing non-immersion families. The immersion parents created advantages, or brought investment, along with them. However, they end up wanting to take the school investment away from the existing parents by removing the English-only strand. The existing non-immersion parents are slowly getting pushed out, not able to access the benefits of attending a well-performing school. The actions at Maple Apple Orchard School mirror those found in a gentrified neighborhood. Gentrified inequality occurs when a historically disinvested neighborhood attracts real estate investment and new higher-income residents. Long-term residents may remain but experience a reduced sense of belonging or are unable to stay and

benefit from the new investments. MAOS exhibits inequality through school gentrification. At MAOS, despite the stable working-class neighborhood, higher-income parents brought new school investments, and the existing non-immersion parents were not as visible or as involved and may eventually become displaced.

The immersion program at MAOS illustrates how schools can change their demographics and when they do, those without the loud voices may get lost or have a reduced influence. An immersion program created to attract parents from outside the school attendance zone shares similar dynamics with magnet schools, or other specialized programs, placed in urban neighborhoods. Rather than find ways to support the existing students and improve the school environment, the district approach to revitalizing a struggling school is to attract desirable families that will play a large role in those efforts. Regardless of whether the involved parents feel a sense of ownership over the school they helped recover, the parents that are unable to assist may find their school is not what it used to be. It no longer mirrors the neighborhood in which they live, strengthening the disconnect.

Schools with similar immersion programs may also display similar conditions that have implications for school inequality. Unlike gifted programs or even magnet schools, many think of bilingual education as being inherently inclusive and diverse. Schools seek diversity in their student populace and immersion programs offer a chance at cross-cultural integration, but at MAOS the diversity was largely symbolic. Instead of creating more inclusivity or diversity, this chapter shows how bilingual education has the capacity to reinscribe social status, exacerbating the effects of race, class, and geography on the educational experiences and opportunities of students. Bilingual education should benefit parents that seek diversity but. With respect to

inequality, this study shows that bilingual education produces similar outcomes as other special or unique educational programs – ultimately doing very little to ameliorate inequality.

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Table 4.1: Grandview Population Statistics

	2010 Census	2019 Census	Percentage Change
Total Population	136,416	138,669	+1.65%
Latinx	38.1%	38.9%	+2.01%
Non-Hispanic White	46.8%	44.6%	-4.70%
Asian and Filipino	11.3%	11.8%	+4.42%
2+ Races	4%	3.5%	-12.50%
Persons in Poverty	11.8%	12.1%	+2.54%

Table 4.2: MAOS 2019-2020 Enrollment Demographics

	2019-2020 MAOS	+/- 2011-2012	2019-2020 District	+/- 2011-2012
Total Students	451	+128	27,291	-2,845
Latinx	47.7%	-22.7%	56.8%	+5.9%
White	20%	+2.0%	26.1%	-7.0%
Asian	19.7%	+16.1%	9.6%	-0.3%
Filipino	3.3%	+1.3%	1.8%	+0.1%
2+ Races	8.4%	+7.9%	3%	+1.7%
Free/Reduced Lunch	37.5%	-24.6%	45.3%	-3.9%

Table 4.3: MAOS 2019-2020 Diversity

	MAOS	+/- 2011-2012	District	+/- 2011-2012
Total Students	451	+128	27,291	-2,845
Ethnic Diversity Index	53	+21	43	-2

Appendix Table 4.1 – Interview Participants

Parent	Race/Ethnicity	Grade of Child	Gender of Child	Immersion
Mother	White	5th grade/1st grade	Son/Son	Yes
Mother	White/Indonesian	5th Grade	Son	Yes
Mother	Asian (Chinese)	5th Grade/2nd Grade	Girl/Girl	Yes
Mother	Asian (Chinese)	1st Grade	Son	Yes
Father/Mother	Latinx (Mexican)	Kinder	Son	Yes
Mother	Latinx (Mexican)	1st Grade	Son	No
Mother	Asian (Vietnamese)	5th Grade	Daughter	No
Mother	Asian (Chinese)	1st Grade	Daughter	Yes
Mother	Asian (Korean)	5th Grade	Son	Yes
Father	White	2nd Grade/2nd Grade	Boy/Girl (Twins)	Yes
Father	White	2nd Grade	Son	Yes
Mother	Asian (Chinese)	2nd Grade/Kinder	Girl/Girl	Yes

Teacher	Grade	Immersion	Years at MAOS
Ms. Lian	5th	Yes	3
Ms. Alsop	5th	No	20+
Ms. Luo	4th	Yes	2
Ms. Kerr	4th	No	2
Ms. Zhang	3rd	Yes	3
Ms. Yang	2nd	Yes	2
Ms. Ryan	2nd	No	13
Ms. Hu	1st	Yes	7
Ms. Ryman	6th	No	14

Position	Years at MAOS/District
English Learner Instructional Specialist	10+
English Learner Services Coordinator	10+
Principal	4
Vice Principal/Resource Instructor	6

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In California alone during the last ten years, the number of Dual Language Immersion Programs has increased over two-hundred and fifty percent (California Department of Education 2018). Nearly 1500 schools reported having a bilingual or multilingual program in 2018-19, including 747 dual-language immersion programs. Most California programs offered Spanish as the target language, followed by Mandarin Chinese (CDE 2018). In California approximately 3% of people speak Chinese at home (American Community Survey 2019). Due to the small number of native Chinese speakers, many Chinese dual language programs are one-way programs. They exist to primarily serve native-English speaking students increase their Chinese ability. This dissertation focused on this phenomenon, asking why middle-class native-English speaking parents choose Mandarin Immersion, why schools offer Mandarin Immersion and how they market the program, and how the implementation of a Mandarin Immersion Program as a strand of an existing traditional public school changes the school.

Following empirical findings documented in this dissertation, I make three important claims about language immersion programs. In chapter 2, I examine Mandarin Immersion Programs from the viewpoint of the parents. This chapter relies on a mixed-method approach using a survey to highlight motivations of parents who enroll their children in Mandarin Chinese, supplemented with 15 semi-structured interviews with Black and White parents. I argue that *all parents are attracted to Mandarin Immersion Programs because of the contemporary discourse regarding bilingualism, but the reasons parents choose Mandarin Immersion are differentiated by race.* The discourse on bilingualism states that children that speak two languages have

stronger academic outcomes. The attraction is retained across all racial groups but the outcomes parents expect, differ. Asian parents seek to retain a cultural connection. Asian parents in this dissertation spoke English with their children and found Mandarin Immersion Programs could be an avenue for cultural maintenance. White parents, viewing their children in competition with Asian students, take a pragmatic stance of greater future returns, while Black parents hope immersion will help construct a stronger self-identity.

In Chapter 3 I rely on interviews, observations, and statistical data, from a majority-minority school that is underperforming and that has implemented a Mandarin Immersion Program. I find *that the district does not take the majority Hispanic student body into account when implementing a dual-immersion program because their goals are increased enrollment, higher test scores, and other beneficial social class resources.* Public schools measure their academic achievement through student performance on state-wide exams. In order to improve student performance, the school district in this dissertation decided to enroll students that would perform better during state-wide testing. The school district used the immersion program to attract them. The school district made two important decisions that could only result in more advantaged students. The first decision was the choice of Mandarin Chinese. Mandarin Chinese is not a widely spoken language. It places the program in a unique context in the larger landscape of language immersion. Second, the program is a one-way program that enrolls only native-speaking English students.

The last argument I make is also supported by qualitative data collection at the same majority-minority underserved school in Chapter 3. *The immersion parents leveraged their social class resources to bring changes to the school, but the non-immersion students might get pushed out of the school, unable to benefit from many of the new changes.* The actions from various actors at

Maple Apple Orchard School (MAOS) mirror the characteristics of a gentrifying neighborhood that welcomes the middle-class and marginalizes the working-class. An immersion program placed in a under-resourced school attracts higher-income parents and school investment. My findings and associated arguments have important implications for ongoing education research and theoretical debates. Previous research suggests that elementary schools often operate as spaces where through involvement, privileged parents can leverage their resources for the benefit of their child (Calarco 2014; Jeynes 2010; Lee & Bowen 2006; Jeynes 2005; Englund, Whaley, & Egeland 2004). In particular, scholars argue that an increasing number of white families are enrolling their children in schools that historically served communities of color (Freidus 2016; Posey-Maddox 2014). My findings support this argument. I find that middle-class parents are invested in the educational success of their children and are using Mandarin Immersion Programs to foster potential academic success. The middle-class parents in this dissertation exhibit concerted cultivation, a child-rearing strategy whose priority is the intensive investment of resources in their children (Lareau 2011).

Thinking of middle-class investment in the form of concerted cultivation, a logic of action that generates social class-based resources further clarifies why school districts would market a Mandarin Immersion Program as a gateway to a global society. The branding decisions a school makes influences how prospective parents perceive the school (DiMartino & Jessen 2016). Instead of aiming to improve education for disadvantaged students, schools often decide to attract better performing students (Lubienski 2007). This is potentially the general objective for many schools that implemented Mandarin Immersion Programs in the state of California. More specifically I find that the school district at MAOS purposely chose a language that would not benefit the existing, majority Hispanic student body. The school was struggling to perform to the

level of state-based educational metrics, and through the language immersion program the school began to outperform its previous academic levels. Schools may market to attract students in order to raise test scores or increase funding (Cucchiara 2013; DiMartino & Jessen 2016; Jabbar 2016; Lubienski 2005; Posey-Maddox 2014).

Examining the case of a school attracting parents through the immersion program shows that when middle-class parents arrived at the immersion program, they brought class-specific resources with them. The resources implemented institutional changes at the school that mirror existing gentrification studies. I find the immersion program is the catalyst for a gentrifying school in that the class-specific resources provide the students at the school with academic and cultural improvements. Previous studies characterize school gentrification as material or economic upgrades in the school, changes in school culture, and the marginalization of low-income families (Posey Maddox 2014; Posey-Maddox, Kimelberg, & Cucchiara 2016). Although my larger argument parallels existing studies of school gentrification, I show that an immersion program can create a gentrifying school regardless of neighborhood change. In the larger context, schools that aim to increase or retain a specific type of student body might succeed in doing so through the implementation of an immersion program. Schools are known to shape their student body depending on what type of parent it wants to attract (Jabbar 2016). In this dissertation, the choice of a one-way Mandarin Chinese program was strategic. It indicates that the school was seeking to attract a student body different than the existing Hispanic student body.

The choice of language influences the nature and type of program. MAOS and other immersion programs that choose Mandarin Chinese as the target language, would be more suitable for one-way immersion programs for two reasons. The first reason is because not

enough students that speak Chinese as a first language are readily available to enroll. In comparison with Spanish, the percentage of native Chinese speakers is low. Approximately 3% of Americans speak Chinese at home (U.S. Census Bureau; 2018 American Community Survey Estimates). Due to the large number of Spanish speakers in California, theoretically any Spanish immersion program could be a two-way program. However, schools that want to draw parents from outside the district or retain parents from leaving the district, are more likely to implement a one-way non-Spanish, immersion program.

Second, it is important to understand the distinction between one-way and two-way immersion programs. Two-way immersion programs are often found in immigrant or co-ethnic communities. They often aim to help a marginalized population succeed, in most cases English Language Learners. This dissertation examines one-way immersion programs. One-way programs aim to enroll children that speak English as their first language. A one-way program does not necessarily have a desire to support a marginalized or immigrant population. One-way programs are for whomever would like education in multiple languages. Because of that, it increases the possibilities that already privileged parents will choose language immersion.

This dissertation also presents an interesting case study of the convergence of interests between two disparate groups. Through Proposition 227 (1998), White English-only speakers, dictated how bilingual students of color should be taught and the languages they need to learn. However an increase in the desire of second language learning by White English-only speakers, accompanies the rise in popularity of bilingual education programs. At some point, the interests of White English-only speakers converged with those of bilingual students of color. Previous studies investigate bilingual education through a lens of interest convergence (Morales & Maravilla 2019; Kelly 2018; Burns 2017; Cervantes-Soon et al 2017; Varghese & Park 2010).

They argue that bilingual education would not become a mainstream educational option unless it benefited White Americans as much as it does immigrant students that speak English as a second language. Recent studies provide evidence of this phenomenon in Dual Language Immersion Programs, showing how race influences decision making processes (Burns 2017; Palmer 2010).

Interest convergence is evident in the emergence of Mandarin Immersion Programs in general, and the development of the program at Maple Apple Orchard School (MAOS) more specifically. The interests of predominately White or native English-speaking administrators converged with the interests of immigrant communities that often-supported bilingual language instruction. The original intention of bilingual education was to instill cultural pride in immigrant communities (Flores & Garcia 2017). Due to the small number of native Mandarin speakers, many Mandarin Immersion Programs in California may have never taken the desires of the Chinese-speaking immigrant community into consideration. At MAOS specifically, the large number of students that identify as Hispanic in the existing student body would likely benefit from a Spanish Immersion Program. The interests of the existing student body could not have been considered which is unfortunate for the largely Hispanic population, because dual immersion provides academic benefits. Hispanic students participating in a dual language program in predominantly working-class Hispanic schools achieved comparably or significantly higher than their mainstream peers in tests of English reading, language arts, and mathematics (Lindholm-Leary & Block 2010). Yet the immersion program was conceived to increase student achievement by replacing low-income Hispanic students with middle-class White and Asian students.

Ultimately, this dissertation helps to address the overarching question: Who is bilingual education for? Bilingual education has roots in immigrant, marginalized communities with the intention to instill cultural pride, improve self-esteem and support English learning by providing a strong foundation in their first language (Flores & Garcia 2017; Flores 2016; Ochoa 2004). The neo-liberal perspective highlights the contrasting interests held by the dominant majority middle-class students like those that benefit from the immersion program at MAOS. It refers to the commodification of dual language programs by the middle-class to improve human capital or, as this study argues, global capital or a globalized acceptance. This perspective spotlights the contrasting interests held by the dominant majority that currently benefit from bilingual education and the immigrant groups that originally used it as a strength.

Middle-class parents may be the ultimate benefactors in a growing conflict of bilingual educational objectives because they often bring desirable resources to schools. An immersion program created to attract parents from outside the school attendance zone shares similar dynamics with magnet schools, or other specialized programs placed in urban neighborhoods. Maple Apple Orchard School has gradually increased in desirability but remains desirable to only a certain group of parents, the immersion parents. The hegemonic interests in preparing students for a global economy are popular reasons for advocacy of dual language programs (Kelly 2018). Schools that teach in two languages may foster desegregation, but the immersion program at MAOS continues to reproduce the power imbalance potentially found in desegregated schools. The desegregation at MAOS, or rather the increase in diversity of the student body, is evident at the school level but only symbolically represented between the middle-class and working-class parents and students (Muro 2016). Immersion parents are racially and ethnically different from the existing non-immersion parents, and the pursuit of

demographic heterogeneity is patently producing school norms that are pushing out Hispanic children.

The effects of the power imbalance found between middle-class immersion parents and working-class non-immersion parents manifest in the way middle-class parents hoard the opportunities the dual language instruction provides. Middle-class advantaged parents may hoard opportunities by behaving in ways that restrict opportunities for less advantaged students (Lewis & Diamond 2015; Sattin-Bajaj & Roda 2020). Parents at Maple Apple Orchard School often tried to find ways around district restrictions of including all the students, both immersion and non-immersion, in the creation of any school program or fundraising opportunities. Yet the example of class-specific parent behavior at MAOS presents an alternative perspective on immersion parents and opportunity hoarding. The immersion parents are not hoarding opportunity but are taking advantage of the opportunity created by the district, then subsequently hoarding the opportunities that ostensibly were created for all students at the school. The immersion program is theoretically open to any student, but students that would benefit from bilingual language instruction are not enrolling. I found they do not enroll because they view it as serving no linguistic benefit.

Similar to how the structure of racialized tracking discourages minority students from entering advanced placement courses (Tyson 2018), the immersion program at MAOS is not appealing to parents and students in the majority Hispanic non-immersion strand of the school. The district created a bilingual opportunity through the immersion program, but the existing non-immersion parents often do not share in this opportunity the district created. Ultimately the immersion parents receive any benefits that accompany the immersion program. This unique form of opportunity hoarding presents itself as an opportunity for all while distancing the district

and immersion parents from any culpability, because the immersion program seemingly can be accessed by any parent.

Examining the relationship between middle-class parents at immersion programs that use Spanish as a target language is one of the many future directions that my dissertation suggests. Although I examined an immersion program that uses a language spoken by a large percentage of people on the planet, Spanish is the most common language spoken by non-native English-speaking students in the state of California (American Community Survey 2019). Spanish is also the most commonly used target language for Dual Language Immersion Programs (California Department of Education 2018). I would expect that Spanish Immersion Programs are more likely to operate as two-way immersion programs; those that seek to enroll both native English and native Spanish speakers. However, with respect to institutional influence, this dynamic might continue to defer to native English-speaking students and their parents. Dual language immersion programs, regardless of language, often do not cater to marginalized populations, allowing existing inequalities to remain (Cervantes-Soon 2014; Petrovic 2005; Valdez, Delavan, & Freire 2013). Compared with Latinx working-class families, middle-class parents hold more influence in school and curriculum decisions (Burns, 2017; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Shannon, 2011). The implementation of an immersion program of any language is likely to attract involved parents and their often-higher achieving children from within and outside the school district.

My work shows that bilingual education continues to reproduce class and racial inequality. In addition to the empirical findings, my dissertation underscores the meaning behind the target language in advancing theoretical debates. In this dissertation I find that the target language is not used to create community among students that speak the target language. Language immersion programs are found to act as direct responses to struggling elementary schools (Burns

2017; De Jong, 2002; Senesac, 2002; Valdés, 1997). In short, I argue that the target language of Dual Language Immersion Programs holds shifting significance in two ways. Many parents without a connection to the target language enroll in immersion programs and secondly, schools use specific languages to attract parents. I have highlighted the importance of Mandarin Immersion in school choice, educational marketing, and school gentrification, to inform debates in the sociology of education. Importantly, my dissertation highlights possible mechanisms that may be exaggerating social inequalities.

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METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

DUAL IMMERSION AS MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A REFLECTION ON CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The number of minority children enrolled in K-12 education has surpassed white students (NCES, 2017). With the increasing diversity in our society and our schools, it is imperative that we find ways to engage students from different racial and cultural backgrounds. One increasingly common method of student engagement comes in the form of a Dual Language Immersion Program. Dual Language Immersion Programs combine a culture and linguistic-based curriculum with Western instruction.

Prior to beginning my research study on dual immersion education, I spent four years living and working in China, learning the language and culture. My experience in China led me to researching immersion programs that might best help in answering the question: How do immersion programs aid in the development of a greater socio-cultural awareness for students? Living abroad I felt that I now had a greater appreciation for other cultures as well as my own. I wondered if this experience could be replicated in an educational setting and provide young students with a similar appreciation for foreign as well as domestic cultures.

In this paper, I reflect on my experience as an African-American sociologist conducting research at a Dual Chinese Immersion Elementary School in Southern California. Reflexivity in qualitative research is often dependent upon whether the researcher shares the participants' experience (Berger 2015). I will show how my background allowed me to link both aspects of my research; the foreign and the domestic. I draw on data I gathered from parent interviews and

classroom observations. This article is structured into three parts. First I discuss the path that led me to this research. Second, I reflect on my positionality as an ethnographer conducting cross-cultural research. Finally, I examine multicultural education and how dual immersion fits into its definition.

Going Abroad

After graduating with an undergraduate degree in Sociology, I was unsure of what I wanted to do with the next chapter of my life. Before graduation I volunteered at the university Asian Affairs Center. I met ten visiting scholars from China. I was assigned to spend time with a few of them, helping them practice their English and learn about American culture. Through these relationships I was able to connect with a university in China that was in need of a foreign English teacher. I saved money and without knowing anyone, left for China to teach English through immersion in a foreign culture. I spent over four years in China, learning the language and culture. China offered a rich history, unique culture, and what I perceived as a healthier racial tolerance than America. However, during my initial searches for university employment I encountered an interesting stumbling block; I did not fit into the "Western" stereotype associated with English language teachers. Western nations consist of people that speak English, are financially stable, and most importantly are White. Although I was born and raised in the United States and speak fluent English, an African American simply did not equate with East Asian views of an American that could teach the language. I overcame these obstacles and channeled my academic interests towards understanding class and racial disparities inherent to the construction of the global citizen.

“中国人喜欢黑人因为他们打篮球很好!” (Chinese like Black people because they play basketball well!). Similar phrases were commonplace as I acquired a unique perspective of the construction of Blackness in China. Many native Chinese have allowed stereotypes and other derogatory information to affect their opinions and interactions. These experiences channeled my academic interests towards understanding class and racial disparities that manifest in the schooling process both while I was in China and when I returned to the United States I wanted to find a way to bring what I learned back to the United States to serve underrepresented communities. Moreover, I wanted to find a way to emulate my experience in China, in the United States. Because of my experience abroad, I felt that bilingual or multicultural education would help students gain a greater perspective on societal issues and problems. This desire pointed me in the direction of my dissertation topic, Dual Language Immersion Programs with a particular focus on Mandarin.

Dual Language Immersion Programs

Dual Language Immersion Programs (DLIP) are elementary school programs that, in addition to English and Western Civilization, focus and implement another language and culture (Potowski 2007). The majority of these programs use Spanish and Spanish-speaking communities as the target language and culture (Center for Applied Linguistics). They aim to provide a cross-cultural understanding while increasing language fluency in English and a target language (Fortune & Tedick 2003). The students will take traditional schools subjects (math, social studies, art, reading) in either the target language or English, depending upon the grade level. Along with the language, immersion programs include many aspects of the culture that the language represents (holidays, celebrations, history). Many immersion programs are also located

in public elementary schools where their affiliation with public schools indicates that these programs do not have any monetary restrictions toward enrollment (CAL).

In California a debate occurred about language instruction in public schools. This debate, primarily focused on Spanish-speaking immigrant children, centered on whether immigrants should receive instruction in their native language. Many residents sensed that without full-time English learning in public schools, the children of immigrants would be unable to fully assimilate into American society. This led to the passing of California Proposition 227 (1998) billed as the "English for the Children" initiative that required all public schools to only provide instruction in English. Research began to suggest that requiring English-only in schools actually subtracted resources form the children of immigrants by minimizing their culture and language (Valenzuela, 1999). Even though private schools and some parent-led programs found a way to teach in a foreign language, it was not until the passage of California Proposition 58 (2016) where instruction in another language was officially permitted. Under these adverse conditions, immersion programs acting as a subset of traditional education, still developed and created a need for more teachers fluent in English and the target language.

Gaining Access

I spent months working on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application and gaining access to a field site. Prior to my dissertation work I spoke with many parents that had children in Mandarin Immersion Programs (MIP) and used those connections to find the best school to conduct a year-long ethnography. I generally knew how many parents felt about immersion programs and the literature was clear in how they affected students academically. Some parents may be aware of the cognitive benefits of speaking two languages that state bilinguals outperform monolinguals in task switching, reasoning, and other cognitive functions (Lazaruk

2007; Bialystok 2001; Bialystok 2009). Immersion education gives children a greater opportunity of mastering another language without sacrificing academic English proficiency (Lindholm-Leary and Block 2010). However, due to my experience abroad, I was curious to know whether immersion programs actually had any effect on the behavior of children and parental outlooks, in that they would provide them with an increased cultural awareness.

After landing on a dissertation topic I found two schools in the area that would best answer my research question. The first school I selected was a high-ranking school located in a middle-class to upper middle-class area. I spent months attending parent-informational meetings, going on school tours, and establishing a relationship with the principal. After setting up a meeting with the principal and the school immersion curriculum specialist, I was able to take the next step to gain access. The principal seemed likely to oblige my request but the decision was not up to him. The principal passed my information up the chain of command to the Department of Assessment, Research, and Accountability. The school district had its own Internal Review Board.

I was denied access to the elementary school and its immersion program based on the rationale that the district felt my presence would cause too much of a distraction and would take away from instructed learning time. I had created a rapport with the principal but had no relationship with the officials at the district offices. It was difficult to connect with relevant gatekeepers, primarily because many of them are not present at the school regularly, they work in the district office. Like any hierarchy that exists in bureaucratic institutions, it is difficult to form a relationship with those that reside at the higher rungs of the institutional ladder. Getting the door opened for me was not going to be that simple and as researchers we sometimes forget that people exist on the other side of the door (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003). I contacted a

second school and set up a meeting with the principal. I had also spent some time at the school's parent-informational meetings in the past, but the principal had since changed. This school was not as highly ranked[16] and would allow me to research the influence an immersion program has at a struggling school.

This school granted me access to do my study. However, this school had much lower test scores and begged the questions: Can an immersion program thrive in this environment? Which parents does it attract? The meeting went well with the principal and she also consulted with the district about my presence. This time the district deferred to the judgement of the principal, a middle-aged white woman that had many years of experience in elementary education, but only led this particular school for a few years. The motivation of the principal seemed to be that my presence at the school would be for a mutual benefit. The principal could use my presence as evidence of her commitment to improving the program. The data I would collect might provide valued insight into any complications they faced as the program expanded both within and between schools. We set up a time at a faculty meeting to have introductions for faculty and staff. I submitted some light paperwork[17] to complete the process. They decided I was to work with the fifth grade Mandarin Immersion teacher. I would begin my fieldwork.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Monterey Apple Orchard School (MAOS) is a Mandarin Immersion Program that operates concurrently within a traditional English-only elementary school. I purposely selected this type of school to better observe any differences between the students of immersion and the students of the English-only tract. Employing an ethnographic approach, my data analysis draws from

[16] According to https://www.ed-data.org

[17] I was required to take an exam to become a Mandated Reporter. I also needed to show evidence of a recent TB immunization.

participant observations at the elementary school and in-depth interviews with parents.

MAOS is located in a fairly diverse, suburban city of Southern California, within a school district with an enrollment of over 28,000 students. The demographics of the elementary school are racially and economically diverse. According to the California Department of Education, the demographics for the 2019-2020 school year were approximately 48% Hispanic, 20% Asian, 20% White, and 8% Mixed-Race. Even though a majority of the students are Hispanic and presumably would have a stronger connection to Spanish over Mandarin Chinese, the school district made the decision to implement Mandarin Immersion as their first immersion program within the district. The district began a Spanish Immersion program three years after its implementation of Mandarin immersion. No neighboring districts have a Chinese immersion program. The total enrollment of all students at MAOS, from kindergarten through sixth grade, is approximately 460 students. The Mandarin Immersion Program housed within MAOS is a strand of the traditional English-only elementary school program. Currently in the eighth year of the program, Mandarin Immersion continues at the junior high level. MAOS primarily enrolls English-dominant children that are seeking to improve their Chinese language fluency. This type of model should attract more non-Chinese children, assuming that the children of Chinese immigrants speak Chinese (see Fishman Model of Language Assimilation).

During one academic school year I spent approximately 300 hours observing four elementary classrooms: one fourth grade immersion and one fourth grade non-immersion classroom, and one fifth grade immersion and fifth grade non-immersion classroom. The majority of the hours were spent in the fifth-grade immersion classroom. The immersion students spend half of the day with a Chinese-born teacher, speaking Mandarin, and the other half with an American-born teacher, speaking English. Observations also include music class, lunch, recess, school assemblies, PTA

meetings, MIP meetings, and other miscellaneous activities. I also interviewed large number of parents, teachers, and staff, of multiple Mandarin immersion programs outside of my field site. This paper relies on data from two specific sources: the year-long observations of a fifth-grade immersion classroom, and interviews from five African-American parents with children enrolled in different Mandarin Immersion programs, conducted prior to the classroom observations.

CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

As an alternative to Merton's (1972) insider-outsider and Collins's (1986) outsider-within framework, James Banks (1998) created a typology of a cross-cultural researcher. Banks (1998) aims to discuss how educational researchers are able to know what they know, and if that knowledge is actually legitimate. This line of thought stems from the power of race in our society in that it raises barriers between people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Banks adds nuance to the traditional *insider-outsider and outsider-within* positionalities. The Banks typology of the cross-cultural researcher consists of four perspectives: the indigenous-insider, the indigenous-outsider, the external-insider, and the external-outsider[18].

Dependent upon context, participants generally treated me as an *indigenous-outsider.* The *indigenous-outsider* experiences a high level of acculturation into an outside culture. Their values mirror those of the outside culture but remains connected to their indigenous community (Merriam et al 2001). I had enough experience with assimilation into the Chinese culture that the Chinese teacher I observed often relied on me for assistance in the classroom. In this instance, I was a racial outsider that had adopted the values and beliefs of the indigenous community. When

[18] The *indigenous-insider* not only endorses the culture of their community but are considered to have the legitimacy to discuss it. The *indigenous-outsider* experiences a high level of acculturation into an outside culture. The *external-insider* is socialized into another culture and acquires their values and beliefs. The individual goes on to reject much of the culture of their indigenous community and adopts that of the studied community. Finally, the *external-outsider* socialized in a community different from the one being studied. This individual has little respect for the community under research and often misunderstands or misinterprets their values or behaviors.

I lived in China, I often played this role to great effect. In my experience I found becoming an insider meant providing people with evidence that I was both comfortable and knowledgeable about the culture. This process would reduce the cultural barriers initially found between myself and the indigenous community. My experience with the Chinese knowledge of African-American struggles in an American context, showed that many relied on common stereotypes. However, the racial differences that separated myself from the common Chinese person often dissipated when they discovered my Chinese cultural acumen. This tactic I used at my field site. I would present the Chinese teachers with my cultural knowledge of China and my Mandarin fluency and this would legitimize my standing as a cross-cultural research.

Cross-Cultural Pedagogy

My position as a Cross-Cultural researcher that understood both Chinese and Western pedagogical methods created the opportunity for me to shift roles in the classroom from a non-participant to a participant observer. I observed Ms. Lian for the majority of my time at the school. Ms. Lian was born and raised in China. She immigrated from China to America about ten years prior. Originally, she did not move to America to teach. She came for the reason many immigrants arrive, in search of a better life. When her daughter reached school age, this piqued her interest in getting involved in elementary education. Her transition to Mandarin classroom instruction happened relatively quick. After getting her bilingual teaching certification, she spent a year as a student teacher at the same elementary school that eventually hired her permanently.

In the early stages of observational data collection, Ms. Lian had a Chinese student-teacher following her similar path, assisting her in the classroom. The Chinese student-teacher needed to spend a certain number of hours with Ms. Lian for her educational requirements. By the Winter

semester the student teacher had completed her requirements and was no longer present in the classroom. I made the teacher aware of my intentions and eventually she found a need for me.

> I asked Ms. Lian, "what will the students be doing for the upcoming Spring Festival (Chinese New Year)?"
> Ms. Lian answered a question with a question, "will you be here tomorrow?"
> I had not planned on coming to the school to observe on Friday, but I did have the time available.
> I told Ms. Lian, "I can come in if you need me to help out."
> Ms. Lian: "I will have a substitute but the substitutes often are unable to speak Chinese. Could you provide the students with a Chinese lesson during the afternoon?"

Ms. Lian trusted me enough to work with the students using the Chinese language curriculum. Aside from the general need to maintain an organized classroom, I was asked to complete two tasks, teach the students a poem and give them a dictation quiz in Mandarin. Chinese New Year is one of the biggest holidays in China and the students would celebrate by reciting a Chinese poem. The poem was called 元日, (*yuan ri*) or New Year's Day.

> I passed out pieces of paper that have the poem written on it and went through each line of the poem, having the students recite them. The poem uses some difficult characters that the students are unfamiliar with, so I also provide the students with the pinyin (*western romanization)* of each character. I increased the speed of the poem with each pass through.
>
> Next, I distributed the dictation sheets to the students. I give them the first word: 健康 (*jian kang*) or healthy. Often Chinese words will consist of two characters. I say the word multiple times, clearly, as to make sure they can also hear the different tone of each character. Chinese characters have different tones and tones pronounced incorrectly, can change the meaning of a word. I use the word in a sentence as well. After giving the students enough time, I move on to the second word, 零食 (*ling shi*) or snacks. I continue in this way until the dictation test is complete.
>
> Field Notes Memo
> 1/25/19

As the school year continued, Ms. Lian would ask me to assist her with more tasks. Sometimes it would be decorating the room or keeping an eye on the students. But other instances of participant observation arose, with me in a new position of being a Black male teaching Chinese to American students.

Race and Chinese

Living in China I was often made aware of my race, but racial tensions did not manifest in the same way as one may find in America. Most strangers just assumed I hailed from Africa. Many Africans lived in China and Chinese citizens were either unable or unwilling to recognize the distinction between Africans and African-Americans. Often when hearing my home country was the United States, some strangers turned to stereotypes portrayed in the media of Black men, often those that involved basketball or other sports. Even still many would defer to the more universal stereotype of Americans being rich and fat, no matter their race. When Chinese people discovered I spoke the Chinese language and was genuinely interested in their culture, the stereotypes faded away amidst a mutual cross-cultural appreciation. I now became a foreigner that understood China as opposed to a Black basketball player or a non-White English teacher.

In China I could remove myself from the Black-White dichotomy that continuously appears in conversations about education and inequality in the U.S. (Jones 2015; Seller and Weis 1997). I could become a global citizen, or more importantly an African-American global citizen garnering the ability to understand the world through a global perspective. This experience I would seek to find or provide for African-American youth back home in the United States. I focused on whether opportunities arose for African-American students to 'leave their neighborhoods' without actually leaving the neighborhood. Many do not have the opportunities

to experience the world outside of their own neighborhoods, let alone travel abroad. How could a "travel abroad" experience be brought to them?

Racism extends to the education system in the form of school funding, curriculum, and discipline, all of which are racialized (Ladson-Billings 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995). Racialization also happens inside the classroom when teachers exhibit their own biases (Cherng 2017; Okonofua & Eberhardt 2015). It is conceivable that Black parents with the means to do so, would not want to continue enrolling their children in schools that adhere to a traditional curriculum. They see value in learning about another culture that is distinct from the dominant middle-class American values and perspectives. In California public primary/secondary schools, students of color comprise a much larger percentage when compared with the United States in general[19]. Parents seek a form of international biculturalism they are not finding in conventional English-majority programs. The interviews suggest this:

> Black Father (1) Public School: The word *Sankofa* is a word in the Ghanaian language that means to go back and get it, don't forget about the past. This word is written with a symbol that provides this same meaning that tells a story. The Mandarin characters are similar to this. There is a lot of meaning in one character.

This parent draws a parallel with Mandarin and his knowledge of an African language, both of which offer significant cultural ties to the written language. The students are not only learning about different cultures through school curriculum but are becoming aware of cultural diversity through the written language of Mandarin Chinese. Even if the school is not racially diverse, parents believe that diversity can be found in Mandarin Immersion programs because of the language component. Mandarin Immersion offers an alternative to the racial and socio-economic dichotomies of general society, in other words MIP programs strive for an academic view that

[19] California Department of Education – cde.ca.gov

mirrors our global world instead of a strict White and non-White educational perspective. The hope is that Mandarin Immersion blurs the line between different perspectives while creating an enhanced educational form of multiculturalism. Multicultural education presents all sides of an issue and not just the side that favors White or male supremacy (Banks 1994). During the research process, I often reflected on how language immersion fits within a multicultural education curriculum.

Multicultural Education

Sleeter and Grant (1987) were early researchers that helped define multicultural education through a distinct typology. They found that previous literature had one common theme, multicultural education best helped students of color. Multicultural education gets its origins from the Civil Rights movement. The social action of African-Americans and others challenged the discriminatory practices in public institutions (Banks 1989). Multicultural education rejects racism and other forms of discrimination, by using critical pedagogy that promotes social justice (Nieto 1992). James Banks (1991) classified an approach to multicultural education and created a typology that he called the dimensions of multicultural education. These dimensions have helped to define the field. Many may think of multicultural education as merely a change in curriculum, but Banks illustrates five dimensions classified as content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure.

Content Integration refers to the integration of content from different cultures and groups into the curriculum. Immigrant teachers, or American teachers of foreign languages, presumably have the ability to not only teach the language but the history and culture that accompanies the language. Language immersion programs are examples of multicultural content integration.

> *In the afternoon, I notice Ms. Lian will provide the students some type of Chinese perspective. A few days ago she told the students how Confucius viewed learning and gave an ancient Chinese perspective on education. This was a part of a video that spoke about learning across the world. Today she mentions that the story the students have been learning all week is actually a Chinese proverb (like Aesop's Fables). These little things I would assume the non-immersion class rarely, if ever, get to hear. When these students are older they may think of/relate to old Chinese proverbs like the frog in the well, before they think of/relate to Western stories like the tortoise and the hare?*
>
> *Field notes 10/5/19*

Second, knowledge construction refers to the change in the traditional views of Western influence on American society. The history of the nation is viewed through a European lens of Western civilization governing non-White cultures for positive reasons. This view is reproduced throughout classroom curriculum and textbooks (Sleeter & Grant 1991). Within the dimension of knowledge construction, Banks (1989) outlines four approaches used to reform curriculum and integrate ethnic content into classroom education. These approaches serve as methods to teach students Immersion programs can use a combination of each approach as they move towards the higher levels of ethnic content integration. The first approach begins with focusing more on the heroes and holidays of different cultures. The second relies more on the addition of ethnic content. The third and fourth approaches, transformation and social action, curriculum structure shifts to place greater emphasis on the interaction of cultural elements in society, while allowing students greater agency in issues related to social justice. At my field site I find that the Chinese immersion teachers and the school primarily used the additive approach. The additive approach to ethnic integrations relies on the use of themes, content, and perspectives, without changing the basic curriculum structure (Banks 1989). Although the school celebrated the major Chinese holiday of Lunar New Year with a craft workshop and an onstage performance, teachers regularly blended East Asian cultural elements within the already established Western curriculum.

> *Ms. Lian mentions [to the students] that this new Chinese vocabulary word is not a common word in English. She appears to be checking the spelling as she writes it down. The word is: filial piety. One student says, "how do you say that?" Another student says, "that's a real word?" Ms. Lian tells them that they have learned a new word. The students ask what it means, and Ms. Lian says, "it means what I just said for the Chinese word; taking care of your parents, being respectful to them, etc." The Chinese word is: 孝敬 (xiao jing). This word is commonly used and spoken about in China. The culture of China places a great emphasis on a respectful relationship between parent and child, the young toward the old.*
>
> Field notes 12/7/19

Students in any immersion program learn about a culture that is not their own nor related to the culture in which they reside. Immersion is more than learning a language. The culture cannot be disentangled from the language. When the students learn the word 'filial piety', they subtly will learn the culture of respect for elders, that is much more prevalent in China than the United States (Hwang 1999). When the students learn from a teacher that has spent less time in America than their country of origin, the culture is transmitted through their pedagogy.

Next, prejudice reduction is a goal of many but can be especially salient in elementary education where students are young. Research shows that school children are aware of racial differences at a young age (Van Ausdale & Feagin 1996; Aboud 2003; Park 2010). At my field site the immersion classrooms held a stark racial and ethnic difference when compared with the non-immersion students. The immersion classes were much more diverse. Based on the type of student that enrolls in an immersion program, they may increase the opportunity intergroup contact. Intergroup contact can be an effective way to diminish prejudice between majority and minority group members (Allport 1954). Because immersion draws a more diverse set of students, the group may experience deeper ways of learning about a topic when challenged by those with different life experiences (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Coba 2016).

The last two dimensions relate to classroom dynamics and school structure. Equity pedagogy discusses the relationship between teacher and student. A classroom structured in a manner, so teachers are able to include male and female students from diverse backgrounds, is a defining characteristic of equity pedagogy. Equity pedagogy is closely related to content integration because what is taught is as important as how it is taught (Banks & Banks 1995). Immersion teaches another language and culture by placing students in a classroom that in some respects might mirror the environment the language represents. Finally the fifth dimension, empowering school culture and social structure, continues the theme of equity but takes it outside of the classroom and expands equity to the school in its entirety. The staff and administration must be also be aware of best practices to incorporate and education students from diverse cultural backgrounds. I found that for many African-American parents, the latter two dimensions of Banks' multicultural education typology, were the most difficult to reach in immersion programs. Many of those I spoke with took it upon themselves.

Parents of African-American Students Studying Chinese (PAASSC)

African-Americans enrolling their children in Mandarin Immersion offer a unique perspective associated with the challenges of creating a racially comfortable environment for maximum educational attainment. Parents of African-American Students Studying Chinese was founded in 2011 as a parent organization to support African American students studying Chinese. They support students by offering extra-curricular interactions with Mandarin Chinese language instructors, parental resources, and teacher training and workshops. PAASSC ensures that African American youth have opportunities to speak Chinese outside of the classroom while creating a community that enhances the confidence, courage, and fluency, of bilingual Black youth. Black youth are global citizens that engage in diverse multi-cultural experiences.

Membership in a larger, global community would help circumvent the centuries Blacks have faced trying to gain domestic citizenship. An African-American youth speaking Chinese would be validation that speaks, the struggles in America remain but now I belong to a global network of people of color. This organization not only supported my desire to bring a culturally abroad experience back to Black America, they helped with my research. I found some Black parents hoped to link the struggles of non-White groups with Black America. They focused on cultural competence in immersion programs. They felt that immersion programs should not dismiss elements of Black history but incorporate those elements into the culture being taught in the classroom.

Speaking with some of the participants in PAASSC, I found they often wanted to make the school more appealing to other African-American parents and more culturally equitable for the children enrolled in Mandarin Immersion in their respective programs. African-American parents are happy with their decision to enroll their child in Mandarin Immersion but in order to combat marginalization, they seek ways to increase diversity and cultural inclusion. Immersion programs are not without their difficulties towards racial harmony and inclusion. The following are responses to how parents felt about diversity and inclusion at their respective schools.

> Black Father (1) Public School: I am the creator of the cultural competency committee at the school. We seek to represent all cultures, especially minority cultures in a non-offensive way. To some Chinese, *the dope dealer or the bum is no different to middle-class Blacks.* We should find a way to meld the ethnic minority experiences, find a way to share discriminatory experiences among American minorities.

For these African-Americans, Mandarin Immersion Programs are attractive because of their cosmopolitan atmosphere. But they still must prepare for a global world that continues to run on racial stereotypes. Multicultural education appears to be a more ethnically positive style of

curriculum, but it is not without its challenges. John Ogbu (1992) argues that multicultural education ultimately will not improve the academic ability of students that have historically performed poorly in school. He continues to argue that multicultural education and its related curriculum, fails to realize the nature of the relationship between minority cultures and languages, and those of the dominant White society (Ogbu 1992).

> Black Mother (1) Private School: The Chinese never speak about Chinese disenfranchisement. They picture themselves *as not minorities, just apart of White culture, without having racial problems.* There is a little diversity at the school but not much, a little is better than none. The school does not really promote diversity. *They are not doing enough to attract minorities.*
>
> Black Father (2) Public School: I was recruited to teach diversity at the school. I have conducted workshops dealing with cultural awareness, respect, and diversity.

African-American parents I spoke with want their children to interact with other cultures in diverse environments. It is more important for Black parents to stress to their children that they are more than what the dominant American society makes them out to be. Their children have multiple layers to their personality and identity. The parents sought paths to ensure their children are in safe spaces while attending school. Racial microaggressions happen too often in classrooms. Something as seemingly minor as mispronouncing a students' name can have lasting effects (Kohli & Solórzano 2012). Will a teacher with a "foreign" name share this experience or struggle with the English pronunciation? African-American parents I spoke with aimed to connect the struggles between Blacks and Asians but were often met with further challenges.

CONCUSION

I highlight my experience of cross-cultural research to shed light on how men of color navigate their positionality within elementary education. In some ways I acted as a "cultural

broker" in a bicultural institution. A cultural broker in bilingual education should bridge the gap in our increasingly culturally pluristic society by refusing to downplay nonmainstream cultural units (Gentemann & Whitehead 1983). Because of my background I felt an obligation to ensure that African-American parents were able to adequately assess the value and challenges of language immersion.

The Center for Applied Linguistics (2007) states that for an effective curriculum, language immersion programs should align with the goals and vision of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Educational curriculum should reflect the changing ethnic diversity of enrollment. Within our society, schools should serve as the primary institution to increase our multicultural awareness. Multicultural education can assist with substantial education improvement (Hopkins-Gillispie 2011). It is possible that institutions are mindful of the call for educational reform. A 2017 RAND study estimated approximately 1000 - 2000 programs regardless of language, a substantial increase from the 260 cited by the Department of Education in the year 2000 (Steele et al). Exact numbers are difficult to come by, but an estimated 3,000 immersion programs may currently exist in the United States regardless of language (Fausset 2019).

I feel that immersion education pedagogy best mirrors my experiences as an African-American in China. Students are placed in a familiar environment, the school or classroom, with an unfamiliar instruction or method of learning. Teaching English abroad placed me in a classroom but with students that did not share any of my experiences. I was participating in the inverse of many American dual language immersion classrooms. Living abroad had a profound effect on me that no other experience could duplicate. Arguably it was because of where I lived, a country in many ways separate from Euro-Western characteristics, but I gained a larger outlook on race relations and cultural norms. I used this perspective towards finding other avenues

outside of the traditional Euro-Western curriculum, that help students of color. Research suggests that multicultural education represents one of those avenues, and I show how Dual Immersion is positioned inside its definition.

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