BLACK FAMILIES AS EMBODIED POLICY:

POLITICS OF DIGNITY TRANSFORMING COLONIZED POLICY PROCEDURES

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the

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BLACK FAMILIES AS EMBODIED POLICY:

POLITICS OF DIGNITY TRANSFORMING COLONIZED POLICY PROCEDURES

Presented by David Aguayo,

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and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dedication to:

All families working (e.g., two jobs, border crossers, political activists) so their children

receive a better education.

May your work bear fruit and blossom in hope and solidarity.

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Abstract

Family involvement in U.S. public schools continues to value functional strategies (e.g., homework help, financial contribution, time spent in the classroom) as supports for the school, denying differentiated involvement (e.g., cultural-based practices, caring for a student; Calabrese et al., 2004; Cooper, 2009). In turn, public educators such as practitioners, researchers, and policymakers can perpetuate systemic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2004) unto racial, ethnic, and language minoritized families by devaluing families' actual contributions to their children's schooling (Boncana & López, 2010). In conceptualizing the educational violence experienced by the families as a Westernized colonial power, a postcolonial approach (Anzaldúa, 2007) was used to ask the overarching research question for this dissertation: How do Black families and I become and act as policy agents in the process of policy development? The purpose aimed to explore how three Black mothers and I disrupted and exerted horizontal power and, in turn, developed new educational policy, through a Politics of Dignity.

The dissertation was situated in a Midwestern, mid-sized town with one public school district. Data production included 3 local maps and 6 graphs utilized to analyze the geopolitics of the city. Also produced as data were 15 go-along interviews, 42 pages of field notes, 300 pages of handwritten and electronic journals, with access to three years of archival data that included minutes from board meetings, two recorded board meetings, and strategic planning documents. The westernized methodological process was deconstructed using Anzaldúa's (2007) <<<choque>>>, creating, in turn, a postcolonial, performative case. Specifically, the analysis took on a postcolonial process called reflective action: a relational tension between interview-text-analysis.

In exploring how Black mothers and I created postcolonial narratives and humanized our experience as families and policy agents, this postcolonial process helps educators understand the need for the simultaneous deconstruction and construction of

one's *being* to engage in humanizing education. For example, Chapter 4 shows my transition from Educator, Re-searcher into an Activist-Inquirer, enabling me to challenge my own racist attitudes to work with the mothers in a more humane manner. Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate the mothers' postcolonial survival strategies that confronted local dehumanizing geopolitics, demanding more of their personal situation, while ordering for equitable change from the school district and the city itself. The reconstructions shared herein depict the transformation that the Black parents and I underwent before working collaboratively with the school district. To conclude, I propose a postcolonial process that requires a complete reconceptualization in the following: educational power as horizontal, theory and research as practice, and policy development as inclusive of families as policy entrepreneurs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Due to the racialized school violence experienced by minoritized students, their families are forced to engage in school-level activism to produce humane educational opportunities for their children (Fennimore, 2017). Today, people of color in the United States (U.S.) must utilize their experiences with individual and institutionalized discrimination and channel it into political activism (e.g., #BlackLivesMatter, DreamAct) with the desire of social justice and liberatory practice (Taylor, 2016). Specifically, families of color have long desired to provide their students with equitable schooling and transform the oppressive structures that have denied their children's humanity (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernández, 2013; Cooper, 2007; Jefferson, 2013; Olivos, 2006; Yosso, 2006). This dissertation case provides an example of how families of color, in particular, Black families engage in activism through postcolonial strategies (Anzaldúa, 2007; Patel, 2016) and bottom-up policy development (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011) to disrupt racist policy practices.

This dissertation case began (informally) on September 2014, when a Black mother, Dr. Serenity (all names and locations are treated through pseudonyms) invited me to a Sunday dinner where community leaders and educators discussed interventions to the local public schools' mistreatment of Black children (e.g., the school district was red flagged by the UCLA Civil Rights Project for suspending Black students at a higher rate than any other state). After a year of weekly meetings, the Black families and I decided to formalize the Sunday dinners into a non-for-profit organization. I call this organization

Families' Àṣẹ through Ethnic Identity (FÀEI)[1]. FÀEI's mission has been to create

collaborative partnerships with families, interfaith groups, non-for-profit organizations

and businesses, and local universities to work with the public schools and improve

educational experiences of Black children. The school involvement of FÀEI became a

system-wide approach to educational change making. Today, their purpose continues as

they excavate deep-rooted assumptions about students of color and work to produce

policies that humanize the educational experiences of all students[2].

    Altogether, this dissertation explored how Black families (and I) became and

acted as policy agents for educational policies. Our political action and activism became

part of a postcolonial strategy[3], a collision of cultures needed for our cultural difference

to be recognized and valued (Anzaldúa, 1987). In working with these families, I heard

them describe their living situation as a "modern day slavery" and witnessed their attempt

to rid of such slave ideology. Like this, I was forced to design a dissertation that created

more than just metaphorical insinuations (Tuck & Yang, 2012); thus, this dissertation

explores the postcolonial actions taken by the families and me to shift away from

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[1] The inclusion of "Àṣẹ" and "Ethnic" in this organization's name was at an attempt to re-shift the minoritized narrative given to racial and ethnic individuals of color in the U.S.

[2] The families I worked with taught me that their experiences with discrimination made them feel inferior and devalued, so much that they felt they lived in a society that dehumanized their humanity. While organizing and describing their experiences with racial discrimination, the imagery they painted with their words inspired me to use words such as root, excavate, and dehumanize.

[3] I use the term colonialism and colonization with two assumptions: (1) imperial structures and practices have been set in a stolen geography for the sake of land and resource expropriation; and (2) the native people, the people used for slave labor (particularly people from continental Africa) were relegated as subhuman and without legal rights.

colonized identities and living conditions[4]. Specifically, this dissertation examined the relational tension Black families and I used to re-shift our colonized identity and challenge our school district's colonial policies. Conjointly, the dissertation examined how families used their cultural experiences and strategies to act as policy actors to grant their children humane experiences in their education.

Statement (of an Obligatory Purpose)

Family involvement in the U.S.'s public schools continues to value functional strategies (e.g., homework help, financial contribution, time-spent in the classroom) as supports for the school, denying differentiated involvement (e.g., cultural-based practices, caring for a student; Calabrese et al., 2004; Cooper, 2009;). As such, public educators (i.e., practitioners, researchers, and policy makers) perpetuate systemic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2004) unto racial, ethnic, and language minoritized families by devaluing families' actual contributions to their children's schooling (Boncana & López, 2010). In comparison to white individuals, the majority population in the U.S., racial, ethnic, and language populations are considered minorities based on their comparative numbers. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2016) considers racial, ethnic, and language minorities as those identifying as Black, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific

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[4] My first action to decolonize the identities and actions of Black families and I was by focusing on Anzaldúa's (1987) <<<choque>>>, a collision of cultures. I collide the "post" and "anti" colonial fields to foster "possibilities [that] emerge from decoupling (and maybe later recoupling) postcolonial, anticolonial, decolonial and Indigenous projects" (Daza & Tuck, 2014, p. 311). I used Anzaldúa (1987) and Patel (2016) to recouple the fields of postcolonial and anticolonial to examine the relational tension Black families and I used to re-shift our colonized identity and challenge our school district's colonial policies. In this dissertation I use postcolonial at an attempt to recouple the (post)(anti)colonial that Dazel and Tuck (2014) are recommending for new possibilities.

Islanders, as well as American Indian/Alaska Native or reporting two or more races. Based on a lack of representation by population, racial and ethnic minority families' cultural assets are invalidated for not conforming to the more populous and dominant, Western-based values (i.e., white and middle-class norms). Educators who operate under dominant values are allowed to treat minority families with a non-dominant, inferior complexion (Lareau, 1987, 2002, 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; López, 2001; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Moll, 1992; Valdés, 1996; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992).

Public educators' dominant ideologies stem from a normalized system composed of a deficit-oriented (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013) and neoliberal culture (i.e., market-based, profit-driven) (Watkins, 2012). Such a normative system becomes a part of racial inequity, a structural violence (Bourgois, 2004, 2009) that denies the contributions of racial and ethnic minoritized families in children's education. Through the work of FÀEI, this dissertation explored the obligatory solution of Black families wrestling with such structural violence through a power (policy) battle. The families in FÀEI have utilized the same marker that the system uses to ostracize them. As will be explored throughout this dissertation, Black families' darkskinned ideologies and practices became the instrument to counter socioeconomic oppression and racial violence to promote policy development in an attempt to eliminate racist policies. However, such solutions as these of Black families' power continue to encounter entrenched deficit-laden systems.

The deficit-oriented and racially-motivated political practices produce inequitable systems that minimize minority families' contributions in the education of their children,

particularly those living in poverty (Bourgois, 2004). The inequity is evident by the local

educational policies that continue to foster unfair school conditions, with severe impact

for Black students[5] [6]. Without transforming the systems that produce racial violence unto

darkskinned persons, racial inequities will continue to reproduce an "epistemic,

psychological, and physical violence" that devalue minority families' attributes and

abilities to fend and educate their children (Baquedano-López et al., 2013 p. 169).

Chapter 2 will review the systemic barriers to racial and ethnic minority families'

educational involvement.

With a focus on ethnic and racial subjective being as a producer of change, I bring

myself (and my intersectional selves) into this dissertation as a point of entry for

uprooting capitalist and racists ideologies and practices in public school policy.

My point of entry to this dissertation case. My subjectivities as a male,

Mexican immigrant, community activist, and inquirer intersected to generate changes in

my being and, in turn, in my community, and in my professional life. My intersectional

subjective being (e.g., being male, an educator, and an immigrant) assisted me in

traversing different sectors of society, making me a border crosser of geopolitics (e.g.,

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[5] For example, there is a disproportionate amount of suspension rates for Black students (16%) than for White students (5%). Similarly, "Black children make up 18 percent of preschool enrollment, but 48 percent of preschool children suspended more than once. Boys receive more than three out of four out-of-school preschool suspensions. Disproportionate suspensions of girls of color: While boys receive more than two out of three suspensions, black girls are suspended at higher rates (12 percent) than girls of any other race or ethnicity and most boys." (U.S. Department of Education).

[6] There continues to be desegregation orders for dozens of schools in the U.S. despite the 1954, *Brown v. Board* to desegregate. Specifically, "from 1993 to 2011, the number of black students in schools where 90 percent or more of the student population are minorities rose from 2.3 million to over 2.9 million (Larson, Hannah-Jones & Tigas, 2014).

from a predominantly white, middle to upper-middle-class university location into a Black working to lower class location). My subjectivity, which I share here, is critical to understanding how I designed and worked on this dissertation case. My insertion becomes the initial postcolonial strategy, an activist-scholar action necessary to battle colonial systems and disrupt traditional research formats.

Crossing the U.S.-Mexico border was my first act of defiance: a type of political activism. My father lifted two rusty barbwires and helped me cross between them. At ten years old, I was the first one to cross. My mother followed, my younger brother was third, and my dad last. Our story is not unique. The type of border crossing that I experienced occurs daily across worldwide borders. People traverse physical borders to maintain their personhoods and are willing to shift identities to survive dehumanizing contexts in their home countries. The irony, and the underlying theme of this dissertation, is that the doorway to opportunity (e.g., education) often becomes a re-marginalizing, dehumanizing place and space. The following song's lyrics captures not only my family's journey across the U.S.-Mexico border, but many other immigrant families who view the U.S. as a dream-producing factory.

Empacó… seis consejos, siete fotos,	*She/he packed six advices, seven photos,*
Mil recuerdos…	*a thousand memories…*
Empacó sus ganas de quedarse	*She/he packed her/his desire to stay,*
Su condición de transformarse…	*her/his condition to transform…*
Si la visa universal se extiende	*If the universal visa is extended*
El día en que nacemos	*the day that we are born*
Y caduca en la muerte	*and expires the day we die.*
Por qué te persiguen mojado	*Why do they pursue you, wetback,*
Si el cónsul de los cielos	*If the council of the sky*
Ya te dio permiso?	*already gave you permission?*

(Intocable/Ricardo Arjona, 2010)

These lyrics show a level of political activism that defies international political regulations to construct more humane opportunities in a neighborly land offering promises. My father and mother's border crossing risked their livelihoods, escaping their home country's economic violence (i.e., poverty) because they wanted a better education for my brother and I. Little did they know that this attempt at humanizing us would be castrated by federal policies and local practices, preventing us from fully participating in U.S. culture. At the same time, they did not realize that their ability to transform their identities and actions would be a way to transform oppressive socioeconomic structures (Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000) that denied the humanity given to us by life—a humanity denied by corrupt U.S./Mexico globalized practices against agricultural farmers. It is through my parents' political involvement that today, I am completing my doctoral

degree. My parents act of defiance modeled for me an act of courage that I would learn to embraced my dark skin in a white society.

In the United States, just as many students and people of dark skin (typically described as people of color), I still yearn to feel as a human being—the normalized nature we should all aspire for in society. Anzaldúa (1987) speaks of darkskinned individuals that possess an intersectionality not only of race/ethnicities, but also of language and nationalities. The lyrics of the following song are written by an Afro-Mexican artist with heritage from my hometown in Mexico. Miguel, who speaks of the desire for people of dark skin to feel normal—a desire as a human being.

What's Normal Anyway

Too proper for the black kids, too black for the Mexicans

Too square to be a hood nigga, what's normal anyway?

Too broke for the rich kids, I don't know what normal is…

… I never feel like I belong,

I wanna feel like I belong, somewhere. (Miguel, 2015)

These lyrics speak to a desire by people of color to feel and be treated as human beings, in a normal fashion, by the mainstream society—this desire to feel normal is a thread in FÀEI and my own conception of self. Normality becomes difficult in the U.S. as the intersectionality of being (race, ethnicity, class oppression, gender, sexuality) (Crenshaw, 1989) are neglected, ostracized, and made to seem inferior—even by our ethnic/racial communities. Once in the United States of America my Mexican subjectivity was accentuated and denigrated for being darkskinned and speaking with a heavy accent and broken English. My teenage years were distraught by nicknames such a

s F.E.S. (Foreign Exchange Student—by mostly white peers) and coconut (brown on the outside, white in the inside—by Chicano teens for selling out). Educational experiences of exclusion deteriorated my inner confidence. For instance, Mr. Cooper, a white male, honors English professor denied my entry to his class even after my regular English teacher gave him a high recommendation of my abilities. My white friends were surprised because they had requested access after I did and were able to enroll in the class.

To avoid darkskinned students having experiences like mine, FÀEI's work has centered on re-shifting such deleterious narratives from peers and educators in their local public school district. They believe that a more humane narrative can be promoted for peers and educators alike. Their hope is that system change via community-based policies designed in collaboration with their district promotes the beginning of humane treatment of children of color by educators. They believe that a re-humanization process can occur through local policies. Their strategy is to use policy to shift the narrative of Black/Brown as inferior, to Black/Brown as one filled with unforeseen potential. Yet, this strategy is challenging given the uncanny racial violence against darkskinned individuals in the U.S.

Today, while living in the Midwest I am continually called "ethnically ambiguous" for my brown skin, slanted eyes, and unrecognized accent, rather than being accepted and respected for the intersectionality of my subjective being (as a darkskinned, Mexican, immigrant). Such denigration brings my humanity to its knees, desiring to feel normal and simply human: an individual with abilities and a potentiality for greatness. Overall, a demoralization affect is accentuated by how the threat stereotypes work to

devalue the psychological capacity students may feel of themselves (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The deficit-based slashes to my self-esteem have perforated my darkskinned complexion and torn my soul, one word or unexcused restriction at a time.

Slip of the tongue

… "Ethnic makeup?"

She says, "First of all, makeup's just an anglicized, colonized, commodified utility

that my sisters have been programmed to consume,

forcing them to cover up their natural state …

"Fine. I'll tell you bout my 'ethnic makeup.'

I wear foundation,

not that powdery shit,

I wear the foundation laid by my indigenous people.

It's that foundation that makes it so that past being globalized,

I can still vocalize with confidence that I know where my roots are.

I wear this foundation not upon my face, but within my soul,

and I take this from my ancestors

because I'll be damned if I'd ever let an American or European corporation

tell me what my foundation

should look like.

"So what's my ethnic makeup?

I don't have any.

Because your ethnicity isn't something you can just make up.

And as for that crap my sisters paint on their faces, that's not makeup, it's make-believe."

(Luis, 2005)

The words "anglicized, colonized, commodified utility" become part of the identity/roles that the Black mothers and I attempt to deconstruct and transform into a more humanizing being: one with a potentiality that goes beyond the identity markers given to us by colonial socialization. This poem explores the rationale of my dissertation: (1) How can I privilege the ideological reality of Black families without subjugating their roots, but rather lift and privilege them as natural foundation? (2) How can I disrupt such U.S./European/western corporative ideologies and practices that dictate which epistemological and ontological ideations scholars should formulate? My dissertation attempts to excavate the uncanny capitalist and racial violence entrenched in a cultural and political system that has been in place through the history of settlers' colonialism. Just like my parents' defiant politics, FÀEI's family involvement, though using different strategies, works to uproot the capitalist and racist policies that shape their children's education to make it become humanizing. This dissertation is an examination of how Black families and I worked to design policies to combat the racial violence that pervades the public-school system. Specifically, I examined our conjoined effort to create a "Root Our Own Teachers" (pseudonym) project, as an effort to integrate racial/ethnic diversity in the classroom.

The excavation of capitalist and racial violence requires a comprehensive set of instruments to ensure the deeper roots of capitalism and racism are extricated from the bodies and practices of nonwhite individuals. Despite its comprehensive necessity, FÀEI's uprooting is centered on a singular, yet complex factor: the subjective being (a form of identity and agency) that each one of the family members and I bring to the table.

The families' excavation process of dehumanizing roots continues as they work tirelessly with their own families, the school system, the city, and their own selves to ensure conscientious removal of such roots. FÀEI's range of personal and professional network has allowed us to expand FÀEI's reach across educational and political systems in this community. I say "us" because, although I am not a parent, the families brought me on board from the beginning.

As a preschool educator in the community for two years, the FÀEI families saw my passion for educational system change. They witnessed my love and care for my students (and their children since other from a mother-educator perspective, Dr. Serenity invited me to participate in the organization). Through my commitment to family involvement in education, the families of FÀEI entrusted in me to be part of their board and administrative team. They entrust me, a Mexican immigrant doctoral student and a male to be part of their ranks. The families and I built trust from our common marginalization and discriminatory experiences we experienced in our U.S. schooling. However, I entered their community space cognizant that I exerted a type of power and privilege as a cis-gender male and doctoral student (an academic working with community members). The juxtaposition of my identities as marginalized, yet with a level of power and privilege created the type of choque, a collision of power dynamics (colonized/colonizer) that fostered the necessary tension for my growth as an Activist-Scholar (Chapter 4 will speak directly to the border crossing between gender roles and racial/ethnic dynamics while working with FÀEI).

Over the past three and a half years our distinct subjectivities have given us the energies and motivation to challenge and work with the school district and larger

community to improve the educational experience for all students and Black children. This dissertation explores the process in which the FÀEI mothers and I challenged our own colonized being and moved into action working with a district-wide program to increase teacher diversity in the classroom.

Inquiry Questions

The overall purpose of this dissertation case was to explore the power dynamics of darkskinned (Black) families and their attempt to transform educational policies; these are policies that are governed by white supremacy and capitalist-socioeconomic structures. Specifically, through a postcolonial conceptualization (Anzaldúa, 1987), I explored the concept of Black families' identity as performative power (one that is horizontal and circulative in nature). Identity through a postcolonial lens is treated as what Anzaldúa would call a subjective being through a "deconstruct, construct" of one's identity (this concept will be expanded in Chapter 2). The phrase "deconstruct, construct" follows a fluidity of nonconformity, forcing identity to take on an unrestrained conceptualization: subjective being, where subject and being do not take on a particularized definition; instead these have the ability to always become. Thus, my dissertation focused on Black families becoming and acting (in other words families are subjective being) as policy agents in the process of policy development. This project focused on three overarching concepts grounded in Anzaldúa's (2007) choque and Patel's relational tension (Patel, 2016): (1) performative power as subjective being; (2) power as a vertical and hegemonic system of structure via educational policies; and (3) the politics of dignity based on community-based power to transform oppressive power structures. Such relational tensions promoted a series of questions that allowed for a focus on the

Black families, the inquirer, and the power structure (place-space). Power as vertical and hegemonic shaped the context in which the city (as place) and school district policies (as space) influenced family involvement. Conjointly, the relational tensions asked how the relationality between Black families, myself as inquirer, and the power structure (place-space) influenced policy development. With these concepts in mind, the following were my guiding inquiry questions.

The guiding research question focused on the interaction between FÀEI's Black families and their context. Through this question, I explored how context influences the subjective being of the Black families and myself (FÀEI and each of its members is seen as the subject in this study) to then engage in educational policy development.

The guiding inquiry question for the dissertation process was:

- How do Black families (and I) become and act (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies?

The sub-questions explored FÀEI's subjectivity (identity and agency in postcolonial frame) as performative power in their place and space. Thus, I explored how each one of FÀEI's subjective beings functioned as performative power influenc(ing/ed) by the place and space families occupy—a textual form of subjectivity will be used as place-space-subject (This conception of subject will be expanded in chapter 2):

1. How does a mestiz(o) immigrant along with FÀEI become and act (as a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies?

2. How do FÀEI individuals conceptualize their subjectivity as individuals, parents, and citizens of Little Osage City?

3. How does performativity (place-space-subject) of FÀEI shape the proposed

    policy?

Through the dissertation process and as part of producing data and analyzing

these questions, I borrow from autoethnographic strategies to examine how FÀEI's

subjectivity created educational, policy transformation.

Conceptual Framework

This dissertation case explored how Black families (and I) became and acted (as a

postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies. As these Black

families and I began to disrupt colonial ideologies in their own being, we also began to

engage in postcolonial strategies to disrupt the traditional policy development process. I

follow the recommendation scholars demanding a decolonizing process.

> [D]ecolonizing approaches to parental inclusion in schools by necessity must
>
> point out and end all forms of epistemic, psychological, and physical violence as
>
> are experienced through silencing, linguicisms, segregation, tracking, and the
>
> dehumanizing effects of the stunted academic potentials of youth of color.
>
> (Baquedano-López et al., 2013, p. 169)

Decolonization requires an overhaul of hegemonic power structures (Anzaldúa, 1987;

Collins, 2000; Dussel, 2011). The liberation of any subjugated person in a colonial state

such as the U.S. requires a materialized repatriation of Indigenous land (Tuck & Wayne

Yang, 2012). Postcolonial philosophers like Anzaldúa (1987), along with anticolonial

theorists like Sandoval (2000) and Dussel (2000) recommend anticolonial strategies to re-

conceptualize politics (where citizen and city take on a new ideology) as a process for

decolonization. I use postcolonial as a recoupling of Anzaldúa's (1987) postcolonial and

Patel's (2016) anticolonial to conceptualize ways to disrupt colonial ideologies behind the policy development process.

An ideological re-shifting of politic, where persons are viewed with integrity requires a relational tension between the colonizer and non-white persons. The relational tension enables a creation for "a space of dignity" where a "moral, ethical" ideology and behavior for all persons is demanded (Dussel, 2011, p. 545). Anzaldúa (1987) calls this space of dignity a politics of dignity, where a recovering and reshaping one's essence occurs: a belief that we are all "gente *(human)*" (p. 109). "Somos gente (*we are all human),*" is part of Anzaldúa's (1987) effort to reawaken a new human, mestiz(<>) consciousness, specifically for darkskinned people.

Although Anzaldúa (1987) is speaking more for the liberatory intersectionality of Chicana womanhood and her sexuality, race, class oppression, and nationality, she extends her philosophy by including "somos gente." Thus, in her call for "Somos gente," Anzaldúa (1987)—and in a parallel argument Patel (2016), Sandoval (2000) and Collins (2000)—demands a new politics that creates a relational tension with colonial ideology against non-white persons as chattel and fungible matter. Engaging in this relegation of meanings, a new conception of power is necessary, where individuals enter a space of tolerance and ambiguity for a relational differentiation of one another. Thus, power as performative is required to engage in an obedient and ongoing conversation with the Other. The performance of the new politics demands a more humane treatment of others. In my case, I am demanded to think of a more human research design.

Designing a Humanizing Case

Research designs have been colonizing the knowledge and intellectual property of people of color (Patel, 2016). In the U.S., a Westernized/Eurocentric, settler colonial system continues to subjugate darkskinned populations (Anzaldúa, 1987; Holland, 2012; Tuck & Young, 2012). Settler colonialism and slavery in the U.S. forced an ownership (property-based) ideology towards indigenous land and bodies of (African) Black people. As part of this system, U.S. educational research, policy, and practice cannot be treated as apolitical or ahistorical (Alemán, Salazar, Rorrer, & Parker, 2011; Apple, 2001; López, 2003). Across U.S. history, hegemonic white supremacy have penetrated the social fabric leading to racially, inequitable education policies and practices (Girioux, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Leonardo, 2002; Urrieta, 2010; Valencia, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999). One route to providing darkskinned children with an equitable education is using my own power and privilege as a researcher, educator – and stance as a Mexican immigrant—to disrupt the settler colonial system of power (Villenas, 1996). A new relegation of politics enabled me to engage in an investigation that would prioritize and honor the lived experience of *somos gente*, in this case, darkskinned families' knowledge-base and develop a "humanizing case."

As a humanizing case, this dissertation offered a solution to the exploration of power dynamics between Black families and the power structures that has denied their humanity. My own parents engaged in political activism by crossing the border (disrupting social, psychological and political structures), allowing their livelihoods and identities to produce educational opportunities for their children. Similarly, through

postcolonial strategies (Anzaldúa, 2007), I explored how Black families (and I) became and acted as policy agents for educational policies.

  Using a performative dissertation case as a methodology, my goal was to engage in Anzaldúa's (1987) "uprooting" and excavation process of Western ideologies against non-whites (p. 102). According to Anzaldúa, an uprooting process required a deconstruction of colonial systems of research, while privileging more postcolonial strategies. I formed a performative case where it enabled families to create postcolonial narratives and humanize their experience as mothers and policy agents. Through a postcolonial framework (Anzaldúa, 1987), a performative case could draw on an anticolonial (Patel, 2016) and disruptive approach to inquiry called Thinking with Theory (TwT) (Jackson & Massei, 2012, 2018).

  Thinking with Theory as a process. First, using Thinking with Theory (TwT: Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) assisted me to redo the research process. The TwT process in this dissertation became one that valued different forms of meaning-making without prioritizing one from the other. I engaged in TwT as an analytical process "of making and unmaking" the production of knowledge, without reaching a destination (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 1). Second, as part of TwT, I used <<<choque>>> as an ongoing analytical tool to produce a more human social experience for non-white persons. A choque (<<< >>>) is a collision of cultures, a type of postcoloniality that "refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs... [it] stems from a problem with authority—outer as well as inner—it's a step towards liberation from cultural domination" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 100). In turn, TwT was used as a postcolonial instrument where theory is "plugged in."

By plugging-in, the researcher's analytical eye turns outward and inward, not only towards the research reviewed, but also into her/his own position.

Together with relational tension (Patel, 2016), choque was plugged-in as an analytical tool to understand the "data" produced. These two analytical tools permitted that I disrupt the analytical process and create a more humane analysis. This humane analysis was transformed into a reflective action, where I used the process of pausing, reflexivity, and creative action to disrupt concepts like "data," "analysis," and "voice" which are settler colonial systems of intellectual, psychological and physical violence against non-whites. Reflective action as an analytical process was a necessary methodological disruption to understand the educational experience of Black persons and engage in postcolonial and liberatory politics (Dussel, 2011; Patel, 2016; Taylor, 2016).

TwT was necessary as a differentiated logic to battle the domination of a Eurocentric culture that has created systemic violence against non-European, non-white persons (Dussel, 2011), specifically Black persons (Césaire, 1972; Fanon, 1963). Research must be conducted differently to humanize the social experience of non-white persons (Dache-Gerbino & White, 2016; hooks, 2000). In the U.S., the relational tension is ever more palpable with the Black population and Latina/o population co-existing and making up the new majority (Cohn, 2016). With this project including an intersectionality of race, gender, language, and nationality Anzaldua's (1987) "somos gente," a politics of dignity for all persons permits a <<<choque>>> in the formation of who should be included in a project for Black families. To include Dr. King Jr.'s proclamation: "Black liberation is bound up with the project of human liberation and social transformation" (Taylor, 2016, p. 194). Thus, the tension must be relational amongst researcher,

participants, race, gender, language, sexuality, nationality, and colonizer. Such tension must be an ongoing encounter where dignity for all is demanded from the colonizer through the usage of performative power as a source of energy to create a politics of dignity.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this dissertation project entailed five factors. The first one is a postcolonial lens in privileging darkskinned families as essential contributors to addressing settler colonialism structures of power. The second contribution lies in addressing structures of power, where FÀEI families utilized their own source of power to become policy agents in the educational policy process. The next contribution is in disrupting research as necessary to the postcolonial deconstruction and transformation of dominant paradigms to elevate silenced and marginalized knowledge systems. The fourth contribution to the field lies on the way an activist-inquirer concurrently traversed and navigated community-based and academic spaces. The final contribution of this dissertation is in conceptualizing nonwhite families as policy actors: the framework necessitated was in conjoining postcolonial concepts with bottom-up policymaking.

Families become actors in their children's education as they address educational inequity by becoming educational policy actors (Baquedano et al., 2013). Schools have not been able to address inequity on their own (NSCC, 2015). This dissertation aspires to demonstrate the power of darkskinned, family activism in working with educators to increase educational opportunities for normally racialized/ethnicized students. Addressing educational inequity requires that work is done at all levels, including from the bottom-up, through a darkskinned ontological and epistemological lens. Framing this

dissertation on postcolonial discourses challenges and attempts to transform Western-based, colonial dominant ideologies that have rendered the "bottom's"—in bottom-up—thinking, acting, and beliefs insignificant (Césaire, 1972). Dominant ideologies, as master narratives shape the manner in which the infrastructure of reality (ontology, epistemology, and axiology) is perceived and lived (Aguayo & Dorner, 2017; Ball, 1990; Dache-Gernino, 2013; Mignolo, 2012). This dissertation attempts to re-center and uphold two types of darkskinned realities that ultimately influences them to become policy makers in their children's education: (1) families as concerned citizens and community members whose identities (e.g., daily living activities) impact the socioeconomic and racial infrastructure of educational policies; and (2) darkskinned families' contributions and actions as necessary to impact their children's education.

Including a darkskinned perspective is necessary to address a deep-rooted, historically entrenched settler colonialism that has permeated across the U.S. educational system, impacting educators, children, and families (Anzaldúa, 1987; Patel, 2016). The focus of this dissertation was to reclaim the space that denies darkskinned families' (and mine) daily practices and educational contributions as substantive efforts for educational policies (Basquedano-López et al., 2013; Cooper, 2007; Jefferson, 2013). By focusing on families' ideologies and practices, this dissertation attempted to center the knowledge and skillsets of these individuals. Concentrating on families' contributions as essential in education created a possibility produce a new set of strategies to address the racial violence (e.g., inequity) that exists in communities.

Limitations of Study

Some positivistic researchers would perceive this study as fraudulent as its objectivity is lost due to my heavy involvement with the families (Lather, 2010). This dissertation case proposed for a death in objectivity and an uplifting of subjective performance by the inquirer and the participants involved. It is only through reflexive subjectivity by the inquirer that social justice projects can produce the type of impact that create the necessary change requested (if they at all) by communities traditionally marginalized. Similarly, the usage of the "posts" (i.e., post-structural perspectives) in inquiry ventures, such as this postcolonial dissertation, have gained a reputation for an inability for seriousness and sensitivity to the pain experienced by marginalized communities. I proposed that "posts" can actually offer the necessary alternative, or what Daze and Tuck (2014) suggest "what possibilities emerge from decoupling (and maybe later recoupling) postcolonial, anticolonial, decolonial and Indigenous project" (p. 311) when conceptualization for old-age problems, such as racism in education.

Summary of Chapter 1

Most, if not all, minoritized families in the United States have a desire for their children to acquire a valuable education. Unfortunately, history shows that political systems and ideological cultures in schools have deterred non-white families from envisioning and performing school involvement that fits their needs and abilities. The system of capitalist, socioeconomic oppression and white supremacy become the culprits on why parents like mine or those in FÀEI have utilized "non-traditional" forms of involvement with the objective to provide for their children a humanizing, educational experience.

The following chapter 2 provides a comprehensive picture on the political and ideological systems that prevent non-white families from involvement. This chapter also portrays strategies used by non-white families to become involved in their children's education despite the systemic oppression of their schools. These strategies include families becoming policy agents in their children's education. Chapter 2 ends with the theoretical framework that conceptualizes non-white families' power, performative dynamism, as one that is relational in nature.

of identity and agency.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of what I am referring to a Humanizing methodology. Chapter 4, 5, and 6, become part of the analytical process and "findings," which become postcolonial answers to my inquiry questions. Finally, chapter 7 concludes with recommendations to the field of practice with families, policy, theory, and research.

Definition of Terms: A Note on Language Use and "Disruption."

Before continuing to describe this dissertation case, it is important to note that my humanity continues to be denied due to my intersectional subjective being of race and nationality, while living in a white supremacist country. Yet, today, more than ever, I walk and feel stronger because I continuously reach down to my identity, disrupt the colonizing process and privilege my indigenous heritage as the foundation of my intersectionality. To showcase my first act of disruption, I use a parenthesis in the identity producing letters "a" and "o" of the Spanish language, and insert instead a 'mestizo;' that is, slashes on words will signify a disruption of text to give priority to a different and uplifting word. Using a parenthesis in mestiz(<>), for example, permits for any gender and sexuality to utilize the root word according to their desire. The parenthesis permits a

pause for reflection and relational tension to commence the disruption of dehumanizing systems through the personhood of myself, a darkskinned person (Patel, 2016). Reflection allows for an individual to engage in conscientious awareness of difference and confront through relationality that which lends for the acceptance of ambiguity. The following terms follow a level of disruption to engage in a reframing of concepts to be more postcolonial.

Capitalism: Capitalism and white supremacy are two distinct trains of thought. Capitalism takes the form commercial ventures for violent acquisition of wealth through organized economic exploitation (Judd, 1996). However, in this project, I conjoin capitalism and white supremacy as described by scholars (Alexander, 2012; Allen, 2001; Harris, 1993; Kendi, 2016; King, 2014; Taylor, 2016) to suggest these intersecting forms of oppression cannot operate without the other. Production and profit cannot occur without first the appropriation of subjugated, inferiorized bodies—Black/Brown bodies in this case (Harris, 1993).

Colonize: I use the term colonialism and colonization with two assumptions: (1) imperial structures and practices have been set in a stolen geography for the sake of land and resource expropriation; and (2) the native people, the people used for slave labor (particularly people from continental Africa) were relegated as subhuman and without legal rights. On the other hand, when I use the term anticoloniality this becomes an active critique of settler colonialism, recognizing that it does not equate to decolonization. Let it be clear: decolonization cannot occur without materialized repatriation of Indigenous land (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Epistemology and ontology: The purpose of this dissertation is to disrupt and deconstruct normative systems. Thus, it is essential to understand and accept a new process of meaning-making (a transformation of thinking) by examining the ontology and epistemology of being (Pasque et al., 2012). Ontology refers to answering the following question: "What is the nature of reality or being?" (Pasque et al., 2012, p. 22). Epistemology asks researchers to consider the question of "How do you know that you know? And is related to the origins of and assumptions about the acquisition of knowledge and justification" (Pasque et al., 2012, p. 22).

Western ontology/epistemology, a Descartian philosophy of science, is focused on being and reality as produced from observation and transferred to an understandable representation (language; St. Pierre, 2013). For the representation to be understood, a linear logic design was created as part of a "scientific realism" that "depends on the observation of proof" (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 650). Such sense-making design, a "representational logic," produced a binary between the world (the material) and a measurable representation of it (language; St. Pierre, 2013, p. 650). Postmodern thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, and Jameson believe that because the world/reality cannot be comprehended, it is impossible to capture and measure reality in simplistic binaries (Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren, & Peters, 1996).

Family: This project uses the term families, to refer to blood kin and other important caregivers. Specifically, the definition of family takes on a more diverse and all-encompassing definition that considers all those individuals who serve in the development of children's emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual wellbeing. Such comprehensive definition fits with current literature (Aguayo & Harper, 2015) that abides

to the present reality of children who are being othered-parent by aunts/uncles, grandparents, educators, and other community members.

Inquiry. To investigate any issue under an orthodox approach, is to search, again and again, under similar methodologies and ideologies for problems with one lens (Giroux et al., 1996). Thus, investigations turn into a search and search again, turning into re-search through a systematized approach. In utilizing disruptive strategies for qualitative methodology in this dissertation, I transform re-search into an attempt for inquiry. Inquiry becomes a methodological process to explore questions and imagine a more "pluralistic vision of the world" without rigid use of the methods and the sake of understanding difference without subjugation (Said, 2000, p. 393). Thus, the inquiry process for this performative case will assist me in the attempt to center marginalized ontologies and epistemologies through a disruption of methodologies from settler colonial ideologies.

Performative Case. Using the sign "performative," rather than study, allows me to move away from an approach focused on individualized retrieval of data and focus instead in a boundless and unfinished production of data. Performativity highlights my opportunity to participate with families in the creation of an postcolonial narrative to humanize this dissertation's methodological process (I develop this point further in the next section). Through a postcolonial framework (Anzaldúa, 1987), a performative case draws on an anticolonial (Patel, 2016) and disruptive approach to inquiry called Thinking with Theory (TwT) (Jackson & Massei, 2012, 2018).

Place-Space. Place-space takes them form of a geography that is defined as "imagined geographies," where "it was made manifest over space as it was built into

colonial policy, into the institutions of governance, and more recently, into the practices of aid and development" (Sharp, 2009, p. 17). Given that geography is produced through white discourse and imagination, this dissertation views geography (place-space) as produced by the written politics and policies of its time—a geopolitical discourse and imagination. Such geopolitics give narration to the manner place, space, and subjectivity ought to operate.

Politics: The focus of this dissertation is to uncover a new form in policy making and thus politiquing. For that purpose, it is important to establish a common stance on these two terms. The etymology of politic is to be citizen and, thus to be part of a city or community the concept of citizen-being (as in human being) requires that certain rights are granted/obtained. When speaking of civil rights, these are seen as those legal procedures and structures created to order a city or community, which through history have been granted to those who are viewed as holders of certain values (e.g., property owners, male, and most recently in human history, the white race—because being a human in western cultures has not been a value on its own right; Dussel, 2011). In general, to be considered a citizen, a certain degree of humanity needs to be established by someone or a group of individuals. (Essentially, the granting of humanity is taken from mother earth—God, the spirits around us—and stolen by the hubris of people who believe power is in their hands; Napolitano, 2009, p. 29.)

Today, in the United States, rights are applicable to U.S. citizens based on the constitution and its amendments (13th and 14th Amendment to the U.S. constitution). However, not all humans in the U.S. were treated as humans. Black peoples in the U.S. were first seen as property, and thus not as human beings with all their natural given

rights. The U.S. law, when attempting to humanize slaves, still first included them as property first with a slight trace of humanity. Allen V. Freeland, a Chief Justice in the courts of Virginia declared that "[s]laves are not only property but they are rational beings and entitled to the humanity of the court, when it can be exercised without invading the rights of property." Two issues here. First, it takes an individual to draft and pass a motion of humanity, but, secondly, only if it abides to the politics of society. When a higher order, such as the 13th amendment granted Black people a sliver of humanity, the political (neo) Jim Crow political structure of the country made the humane declaration for Black people in the U.S. wither away into today's #BlackLivesMatter aspirational desire (Alexander, 2012; López & Burciaga, 2014). Thus, I use the term politics in a critical sense: if politics is for the citizens of a city, certain groups of people must be rendered/treated as human beings first—based on their natural given rights—so they can act as citizen-beings and participate in the politiquing of the city/community they inhabit.

Policy: The etymology of the term policy means to demonstrate and to show how certain ideas and processes are carried out within a pre-designed system for the good of the order. I conceptualize (public) policy as "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, [which] effectively *become* the public policies they carry out" (Lipsky, 2010, p. *xiii*). Specifically, Lipsky (2010) showcases how pre-designed systems not only follow a top-bottom logic, but the logic is then shaped and molded by the actual people interpreting and carrying out the processes (policies). The idea of street-level bureaucrats as part of policy design and implementation permits a wider conversation of policies as systems of operation that become alive and part of a shifting process based on the "daily

encounters of street-level" individuals (Lipsky, 2010, p. *xiii*). For this dissertation, the term policy includes the system and sets of individual actions performed by individuals representing their system (e.g., educators, families).

Non-white: My usage of non-white refers to Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other subjugated persons' existence within a white, hegemonic system—a settlers' colonial racial ordering (Holland, 2012). In short, the non-white designation is used to speak against the structural and ideological consignation given to whiteness. The anticolonial battle to undo settler colonialism develops an understanding of the dehumanization of Black persons by first addressing the colonial relationship with the Indigenous peoples and their lands (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). Settler colonialism and slavery in the United States forces an ownership (property-based) ideology towards indigenous land and bodies of (African) Black people. Tuck and Gorlewski (2016) describe whiteness as "having power over time and order," specifically an inherent power and ownership over Indigenous land and the bodies of Black people (p. 200). The goal of the settler is to erase cultural ideologies, practices, and identities that intervene in their capitalist venture for property-ownership (Tuck & Young, 2012). To take land, settlers must first conceptualize land as property and remake the African body a chattel (Tuck & Young, 2012), perceiving the Black body as fungible to be subjugated and owned (King, 2014). From the initial interaction with Black persons, the settlers conceptualized the black body as "property necessary for the settlement onto other people's land" (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016, p. 211). This interrelation between land and body as property creates a hegemonic power structure, ideology, and practice that perpetuates an antiblackness violence— racism—unto Black and Brown people. For this reason, when I refer to whiteness or

white, I refer to a hegemony towards Black people and the (Indigenous) space they occupy.

Black/Brown: Here, the "b" in Black and Brown will be capitalized to signal a privileging of ideologies and practices (Dumas & ross, 2016) to formulate a new conception of power structure.

white and whiteness: Through this dissertation project, I trouble the construction of race to disrupt the conception of what is Black, white, Brown, and other colorist categorizations. I use white and whiteness, as suggested by Tuck & Yang (2012) to incorporate more than just a phenotype. Instead, white, whiteness, white power is used to include a European ontology and epistemology which forced its racial dominance unto settlers' society to become what scholars call today, whiteness—a structural, ideological, and actor-based dominance (Castagno, 2014; Duster, 2001; Dyson, 1996). Like this, whiteness becomes the systemic oppression that infiltrates through society's psychosocial, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic infrastructures (Allen, 2001; Hargrove, 2009). Whiteness produces mechanisms of supremacy, "white power" (Allen, 2001, p. 472) for people considered white skinned, who in turn create a hegemonic systemic of inferiority for those who are perceived as darken skinned (Silva, 2009). Specifically, I use settler colonialism as a framework to understand the inferiority systems created by white governmentality towards Black persons (Hesse, 1997; King, 2014; Patel, 2015). Thus, I purposefully lower-case the "w" in white and whiteness to give room for Black and Brown and other classifications are elevated as power structures.

Technical-functional. This term will refer to the listing of activities expected from parents to help their children gain increased test scores and graduate. This technical-

functional term is acquired from Apple (2001, 2002) that speaks to a managerial,

business-oriented, profit-producing vision for education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review as a Conceptual Framework

This dissertation explored how Black families (and I) in one Midwestern, mid-sized town became and acted (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies. To explore the human reality of Black people in the U.S., I was inclined to use a theoretical framework that recognizes the continued economic oppression and racist system produced by a neoliberal, white supremacy (Alexander, 2012; Allen, 2001; Kendi, 2016; King, 2014; Taylor, 2016). Such a theoretical framework attempted to end the dehumanization created by the Eurocentric, knowledge-producing colonial system (Césaire, 1972; Fanon, 1963). Thus, an examination of "epistemic, psychological, and physical violence" (Baquedano-López et al., 2013 p. 169) required postcolonial strategies as a process of disrupting and transforming educational research. The objective of postcolonial strategies[7] was to examine and disrupt intersecting unequal economic and racialized structures Black families navigate to become involved in their children's education.

This chapter offers a literature review that engages in postcolonialism by examining Black family involvement and educational policies through a settler colonial thinking. Postcolonialism permitted me to use disrupting strategies to end the dehumanizing conceptualization of Black families and racially violent educational policies. In the literature reviewed, I first reviewed research on family involvement where I argue that such involvement is impacted by racist social and political factors creating an inferior system towards non-white families. Next, I provided a review of two camps of

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[7] Again, postcolonial is referring to Daza and Tuck's (2014) recoupling of postcolonial and anticolonial in order to engage in a (post)(anti)colonial project to engage in new possibilities.

familial involvement: involvement as a functional investment to family contribution and family involvement as one that contests dominant systems of power. Subsequently, I offered an overview of policy development and the actors necessary to carry out such development. Lastly, I suggested a postcolonial framework that conceptualizes family contribution to their children's education, challenging education's whiteness as a system of power.

This literature review and dissertation challenged normative, one directional notions of education as a benefit for only schools (school→family→student→school). Along with recent scholarship (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Jefferson, 2013), I attempted to expand on family involvement as more than only contributing to schools. Specifically, I explored the political agency non-white families engender, particularly as their subjective being become a tool to overcome the normative, system-based obstructions that often deny their contributions to their children's development and education.

A Brief <<< and Disruptive >>> History of Family Involvement in Schools

This section examines the literature on family involvement. Following a postcolonial perspective, I first provide a historical look at "family involvement" and subsequent related educational policies. Next, I demonstrate how scholars have differently defined and examined family involvement since the development of those policies: one approach that is functional and another political. Family involvement as functional is conceptually and empirically described as necessary for children's academic development (Ishimaru, 2014; Kiyama et al., 2015; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; López, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Weiss, López, & Rosenberg, 2010).

However, families from non-white racial backgrounds conceive of and interact with schools in ways that politically challenge the marginalizing and disenfranchising status-quo of functional involvement (e.g., homework assistance, classroom spent in classroom; Calabrese Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). A range of scholars have proposed that the concept and strategies related to parent involvement have failed to capture the social complexities non-white families navigate before and during their participation in their children's education (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Cooper, 2009).

Family involvement before the 1960s. Families' involvement in children's education has taken on different meanings and forms throughout U.S. history. Prior to the 1960s, the economic opportunities and access allotted to the adults in those families shaped the meaning and form of family involvement. In the 19th and early 20th century, a family was involved in raising a child to engage in adult skillsets for agricultural or industrial labor force, teaching habits for productivity (e.g., physical, cognitive), as well as personal attributes (e.g., responsibility). As new economic forces emerged, different abilities were required by working adults, creating employment opportunities that encouraged families out of their household (Coleman, 1991). Thus, raising children shifted from teaching them production-based skills to newly-formed educational demands (e.g., reading, writing, and arithmetic skillsets; Coleman, 1991). As new family roles emerged due to a shifting workforce, family involvement altered to consciously—or not—raising children to obtain abilities desired by the family. Congruently, educational environments adapted to the demands of the economic necessities of the country (e.g., a more globally competitive workforce: Apple, 2001) and were obligated to teach based on the learning abilities children brought from home (Coleman, 1991). The schools were

charged with teaching different types of production-based abilities, particularly those related to academics.

      <<<Non-white families' educational involvement prior to 1960s>>>. A choque is necessary at this moment to insert a non-white narrative to this time period of family involvement. In the 19th century, non-white youth entered schools only if they were permitted (Kainz & Aikens, 2007). Native indigenous peoples were violently removed from their families and placed at boarding schools (e.g., Civilization Fund Act, 1819). With an Americanization movement part of the (white) national narrative, a Eurocentric learning of English language and Christian-based principles became the dominant curriculum for public schools (González, 1997).

      Similarly, based on a settler colonial political infrastructure, many non-white families received differential and often, discriminatory treatment depending on their location in the U.S. and their racialized experience. The discrimination against non-white students and their families is evident by the segregated schools. As just an example, there were a multiple court cases by the Black population even before the 1900s, e.g., *Roberts v. The City of Boston* (1849)*, Knox v. The Board of Education of Independence,* (1891). Then, from Reconstruction until 1965, there existed Jim Crow laws, or methods such as the Faubus action (privatizing all schools, leaving out Black students) in cities across the U.S. This <<<choque>>> is important to bear in mind: given national and local policies, an exclusionary discourse towards non-white and non-Christian persons penetrated educational environments and society. As such, non-White persons' cultural ideologies and practices were diminished, and thus made inferior (Collins, 2000; Valenzuela, 2010).

Family involvement post-1960s. With new societal roles for families and educators alike, changing demands and expectations ensued. In the 1960s, through the federal War on Poverty efforts, the government saw education as a political strategy to fight-off American poverty (Weisbrod, 1966). Specifically, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) promoted parent advocacy as part of family involvement that was necessary to help low-income students gain academic success. Some politicians supported efforts that endorsed parental advisory boards in schools to help schools rightly apply federal funding (Fege, 2006). Following the political turmoil of the time, family involvement in education, particularly for communities in poverty, instilled a perspective of political involvement where low-income families were asked to advise their schools.

In the 1980s American politics was under upheaval and a conservative movement embraced governmental deregulation. There was considerable push-back against big government, especially in education (Sunderman, 2009). Through anti-regulation congressional reports, local education and familial involvement as a form of advisory boards decreased (Sunderman, 2009). With *A Nation at Risk,* the U.S. was pressured to produce higher graduation rates and standardized test scores to compete globally. Thus, family involvement moved from a political stance to a more technical-sense, i.e., reading to children at home or attending PTA meetings to ultimately raise grades, test scores and graduation. In other words, a technical-functional stance to family involvement was brought about as a strategy to increase academic achievement (Driscoll, 1995; Epstein, 1988; Ogawa, 1994; Smrekar, 1996).

During the 1990s until today, familial involvement in education—particularly regarding Title I funding—has gained national support through the federal government (e.g., NCLB, Section 1118), national professional organizations (e.g., National PTA), and researchers alike (Moles & Fege, 2011). The most recent federal education law, for example, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015), mandates districts to involve parents in committees to manage Title I funds. In our current era, family involvement in education has mostly maintained a technical-functional perspective where families are supposed to work to alleviate the learning deficits preventing children from gaining academic success (e.g., increased test scores, increase graduation rates; Jefferson, 2013; Jeynes, 2007).

Technical-functional, but deficit-based approach to family involvement. Most recently, a cadre of studies have documented the benefit of family involvement in schools (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011). However, these studies fail to examine effects (Jefferson, 2013) beyond schools' objectives (e.g., strategies to increase reading, arithmetic as opposed to community context deterring growth such as poverty) mandated by the federal government (Barnard, 2004; Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Gordon, 1979). For example, Henderson and Mapp (2002) compiled a historical list of evidence suggesting the positive impact families and communities have on students' educational development. Most of the studies examined used a variation of Epstein's (2001) six types of familial involvement: 1) parenting skills (e.g., supervising time use and behavior), 2) communicating with school, 3) supporting school, 4) supporting learning at home, 5) taking part in parent organizations (e.g., PTAs), and 6) collaborating with community. There were four overarching gains in student academic success in the studies reviewed by Henderson and Mapp (2002); with higher parent

involvement: (a) students reported higher grades and test scores in reading, writing, and arithmetic; (b) students attended school regularly; (c) students showed improved social skills; and (d) students graduated from high school and enrolled in postsecondary education. Thus, these studies have documented the strong relationship between (a form of functional) family support and student achievement. However, the primary objective of family involvement in these studies focused on the demands set by the federal government: to ensure students elevate their reading proficiency and increase their test scores.

Like Henderson and Mapp (2002), contemporary studies on family involvement overwhelmingly speak to gains on academic achievement. From higher reading scores, prosocial behavior, improved work habits, and higher standardized scores, research has shown that (certain kinds of) family involvement in children's education is related to improved students' school outcomes (Caspe et al., 2007; Kreider, Caspe, Kennedy, & Weiss, 2007). Although some of these studies did not test for selection bias, the type of family involvement examined in these studies included parenting abilities (e.g., parent-child relationship), home-school relationships, and supporting learning at home (Epstein, 2001; Epstein, 2006; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Michael, Dittus, & Epstein, 2007; Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011; Weiss et al., 2006; Weiss, López, & Rosenberg, 2010). The objective of family involvement for these studies was one to examine the general ethos of federal mandates, which suggest that communication with the school is necessary to support students' learning, and thus increase students' academic success (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Jefferson, 2013).

The discussion of family involvement, however, usually has showcased an involvement that is pertinent to (mostly understood by) white, middle-class families (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The role of familial involvement in schools demonstrates a functionality set by normative ideologies and the linear power relation on what is important in education (Kainz & Aikens, 2007). In other words, the type of family involvement that is supported is one based where white, middle class values ought to be the norm; this type of involvement protects white, middle class norms, status, and capital, benefiting and protecting the professional culture necessary for the school to gain successful academic status from their students (Barnard, 2004; Barnyak & McNelly, 2009). There is also an overwhelming focus on parenting skills and involvement related to academic achievement, as opposed to political involvement related to policy development (Dorner, Reineke, & Karch, 2009).

<<<Educational policies as systems of inferiority for non-white families>>>. The following <<<choque>>> allows a disruption of the dominant narrative behind the traditional form of family involvement: a white, middle-class technical-functional approach (Apple, 2001, 2002). Kainz and Aikens (2007) suggests that a structural power dynamic sustains the capitalist (middle-class) and white-Eurocentric (racist) narrative that excludes non-white, low-income families from participating in their children's education. Using Foucauldian power in their analysis of family involvement, the authors demonstrate the power that specific practices and policies play to construct a dominant, "common sense" narrative that fits the needs of a middle-class and white society (Kainz & Aikens, 2007, p. 308).

The white, middle-class ideology behind the common-sense narrative in family involvement has been studied since the 1970s. Studies have found that educators hold preference towards middle-class, white families who can participate using English-speaking, resource-centered and functional involvement (monetary, time-based, and curricular contributions: Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1978; Lareau, 1999, 2000). Thus, a tension between educators and families is created when non-white families contribute to education through different kinds of involvement activities (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Alvarez, 2000; Olivos, 2006). The tension exists when non-white families fail to have the white, middle-class norms, status, and capital to maintain a classroom environment that is "professional" (Apple, 2001; Mayrowetz, 2008; Yosso, 2006). Some suggest this specific tension is due to the deep-rooted, capitalist and common sense system embedded in education (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004; Baquedano et al., 2013).

Similarly, the white, middle-class common sense penetrates the U.S. education system and is exacerbated through policies created to reaffirm national, normative ideologies (Apple, 2001; Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Yosso, 2006). Educational policies dominated by political and economic necessities of our times (e.g., NCLB) neglect to capture and integrate the local complexities of schools (e.g., poverty, segregation; Lipman, 2013; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Specifically, Lipman (2013) argues that racial violence exists against non-white communities who are punished by capitalist markets (e.g., privatization of public housing, schools, and health clinics) for failing to possess white, middle-class qualities of competitiveness, individualism, and hard-work ethic.

Concurrently, technicality (e.g., laundry list of involvement) and functional, one-directionality (e.g., for the gain of school's goals) are inherent in traditional conceptions of family involvement and cofounded with deficit-based assumptions in which educational policies are drafted (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Jefferson, 2013). Sociopolitical policies in the 1960s, such as *War on Poverty* targeting low income, non-white communities and the Moynihan Report (aimed to *help* the African American families) demonized the African American family makeup. The demonizing further facilitated an ideology that undervalued cultural beliefs and practice of non-white families: such ideology became part of an inferiority complex towards Black families. During the 1980s, *A Nation at Risk* urged educators to increase student achievement. Scholars followed suit, enlisting evidence for more technical-functional family involvement to increase students' tests scores and graduation rates (The Evidence Grows, 1981; The Evidence Continues to Grow, 1987; A New Generation of Evidence, 1994). Concurrently, in the 1980s and 1990s, there was an increase of challenging attitudes towards affirmative action programs and exclusion of non-English programs from public education (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Alvarez, 2000). Together, the technical-functional strategies in family involvement and the sociopolitical policies have attempted to decrease the diversity in schools pointing to a federal, national attitude that desires a normative, homogenous culture.

Such normalized ideology towards non-white individuals produces a "'colorblind' [discourse], relieving the state and the general-public of responsibility for ameliorating racial inequality and oppression" (Lipman, 2013, p. 12). Instead, the colorblind ideology, coupled with socioeconomic, middle-class ideologies is accepted as normalized structures

that exclude and diminish non-white cultural beliefs and practices (Katz, 1989). In fact, Dumas (2013) calls such dominant, ideologies and spaces part of the system of white supremacy:

> Such racial spaces are both created by, and simultaneously the result (at least in part) of, [white supremacy, which not only constricts where people of color can live, but also privileges [w]hite racial spaces for advantage in the "free" marketplace. Thus, neoliberal formations, while on the surface racially disinterested, attribute value to certain spaces, and lack of value to others, and ultimately contribute to patterns of development, marginalization, and exploitation aligned with the racial composition of different communities. (p. 26).

Normalized structures promulgate a dominant narrative that creates national, state level, and a local inferiority complex for non-white persons (Dumas, 2013, 2016). It is through educational policies that systems of power are formed and maintained to exclude and marginalize non-white persons (Kainz & Aikens, 2007). Like this, U.S. federal educational programs have been coded with language that targets non-white citizens, systematizing inferiority complexes on these persons (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Valenzuela, 2010).

Although the family-school relationship has been known to increase the equitable education for low-income, non-white students, much work is required by educators to enhance such relationships (Oberg De La Garza & Moreno Kuri, 2014; Warren, 2005, 2011). The need for familial and school partnership demonstrates that schools in the U.S. do not exist in isolation to their communities (Engel, Kington, & Mleczko, 2013). The imperative continually grows as educators are asked to increase the family-school

relationship (ASCA, 2012; Engel, Kington, & Mleczko, 2013; Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011; Ishimaru, 2014; Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Ratts, et al., 2015). However, there exists a dearth in actionable practices which create and sustain strong relationships at the local district and school-building level (Ishimaru, 2014b; Honig, 2004; Sanders, 2009). Like this, families—along with their communities—are encouraged to be involved to strengthen the relationship and help schools gain equitable education for their children (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; National School Climate Council, 2015).

Summary of family involvement in schools. Although family involvement research is extensive, scholars have become critical of the current scholarship calling it deficit-based, functional and linear, benefitting only the academy (Patel, 2016). More research is necessary that recognizes the complex social system that disenfranchises and marginalizes non-white students and families (Calabrese Barton et al., 2004; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; López et al., 2001; Weiss, López, & Rosenberg, 2010). Failure to acknowledge the intersectionality between racial violence and capitalist, socioeconomic system of power only reifies obstructions between low resourced families and non-white families (Gonzalez, et al., 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Valuing families' involvement requires that their cultural differences are considered within an educational, inequitable and unequal social system (Olivos, 2006). With the assumption that education is for families and students, scholars have begun to examine and privilege different forms of family involvement in schools. The conversation has shifted to include other types of involvement: families as involved in in-school decision making (Carlson, 2010) or involved in curricular improvement activities

(Gonzalez, et al., 2005). Similarly, when prioritizing families and children, dominant, power systems must be challenged for families to enter a relationship with their schools (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). More research is needed that aids in shifting ideologies on family involvement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001) or challenging system-based dynamics (Sanders, 2009) in order to create a <<<choque>>> on functional, deficit-based approaches to scholarship and educational practices. Particularly, research is needed to advance the interplay of power dynamics between families and their school system, considering and focusing on the contributions and experiences of families from different cultural groups (Dorner, 2012).

Neoliberal and Racist Structures in Family Involvement—and Families' Resistance

This section offers literature that showcases non-white families' involvement taking on a more political stance to acquire an equitable education for their children. Specifically, this section explains how non-white families use their intersectional identities of race, gender, class oppression, language, and sexuality to advocate for an improved educational system.

Family involvement is not a new concept as a form to increase students' academic success in schools. In fact, in the 1960s during the civil rights movement, the federal government sought to partner with parents and families to decrease poverty rates and increase educational gains in students' academic success (Moles & Fege, 2011). During this time, educational policy recommended that educators acknowledged what parents, families, and communities brought to the school-family-community partnership. Moreover, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 provisioned the Title I program partly to create a type of parents-as-partner relationship, where the school

system would foster "meaningful consultation, collaboration, and shared responsibility" (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). The original ESEA policy insisted on developing system-wide changes that addressed "social justice, equity, and quality education," which included families and communities as necessary support for improving students' education (Moles & Fege, 2011, p. 5). Justice, equity, and quality education is what families and critical scholars continue to strive for 50 years after the first mandate. Specifically, families and scholars continue to look for justice and equity in education that merits a deeper consideration into systemic problems:

> From their position at the margins of society, these women [the families] challenge the inequalities of the educational system…These women hold on to the belief that… the margin can be 'more than a site of deprivation… it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance.' As they question the forms of racism that shape their children's educational opportunities, [these families] also offer a model that can transform the prevalent cultural deficit approach to elementary schooling. (Yosso, 2006, p. 49)

Like this example shows, an examination of systemic factors is warranted when the federal government creates programs aimed at supporting the very same families it insidiously vilifies (e.g., non-white families' cultural identities and educational contributions are devalued) (Cochran-Smith, 1999).

A growing body of scholars are taking critical stances on family involvement research, specifically on the involvement of non-white families (Kiyama et al., 2015). These families and scholars have examined and spoken out against educational inequities, which are disproportionately experienced by non-white students (Olivos, 2006; Yosso,

2006). They demand a more in-depth examination of the power structures produced by

the school system. These critical approaches differ greatly from the body of research that

takes a more functional, one-directional perspective on how to facilitate and measure

family involvement in schools. Although research on practical family involvement merits

observation, these functional strategies neglect to look at power structures—neoliberal,

socioeconomic oppression and racism—that inhibit full family engagement and adequate

children's educational development (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). What follows is an

in-depth examination of neoliberal and racist structures in family involvement.

Neoliberalism in education. Neoliberalism is the belief system that human

behavior is driven by individualistic economic motivation, to ensure efficiency of one's

actions and maximize one's economic profits (Collin & Apple, 2010). This type of

behavior lends towards a competitive attitude, whether individual or group-oriented,

which currently dictates the standard of engagement in economic enterprises—especially

as the U.S. economy is threatened by international, global, economies—and demands for

its constituents (citizens, hence students) to be actively ready to compete in such global

markets (Greider, 1997). In fact, critics suggest that the economic (business-minded)

ideology has transfused into normative (cultural) thinking that has validated and hence

required other non-business institutions, like education, to operate under a competitive-

based, rationalistic, efficiency-driven (e.g., evidence-based research), and most

importantly, individualistic attitudes (Apple, 2002; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Lareau,

2009; Smith, 2009).

Neoliberalism, a market-driven, profit-based ideological system, continues to be

the driving force for education (Apple, 2011). The neoliberal politics of student

achievement, promulgated through the national rhetoric such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983),

have rendered a nation-wide, *common sense* school culture of student-based achievement

(Apple, 2002). Neoliberalism becomes the common-sense discourse with a

socioeconomic, market-driven focus. In this manner, achievement is centered on the

individual, the teacher, and the school system, without engaging in a more

comprehensive examination of decadent social systems (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Duncan &

Brooks-Gunn, 1997). Described as an oppressive, social system, neoliberalism impacts

the socioeconomic and political ability for families to contribute to their daily educational

and civic responsibilities (Collins, 2009).

     Existing within a neoliberal agenda, the public education system becomes an inept

institution that needs the intervention of market-based procedures (Collin & Apple,

2010). Therefore, under the sociopolitical management of neoliberals, public schools,

teachers, principals, and students have been placed accountable, demanding a level of

standards, testing, and college-ready benchmarks to compete directly with those

international educational systems that are winning over the economic-driven

globalization (Baker & LeTendre, 2011). A contradiction in these benchmarks is palpable

when the national guidelines suggest they value family and community involvement, yet

only focus on: (a) addressing individual achievement (e.g., increasing students' literacy

and/or math scores); (b) failing to recognize larger contextual barriers for familial and

community-based involvement (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997); and (c) failing to see the

cultural, asset-based practices that families and communities bring to education (Bolívar

& Chrispeels, 2010).

Neoliberal, socioeconomic barriers to family involvement. Critics of the educational system have long challenged the U.S.'s economic system and its infiltration in public schools (Bowles & Gintis, 1977; Giroux, 1983). They suggest the sociopolitical system has become embedded in the local, national, and international economic system leading to socioeconomic imbalances between social classes—without considering race in this conversation—in local communities, creating a widening gap between the haves and have-nots (Bergesen & Bata, 2015; Morin, 2012). Since the 1980s, and even before, urban settings have been the recipients of fiscal and political mismanagement, where profit gain and lower taxation has ravished basic institutions known to support the daily lives of citizens (e.g., local businesses, churches, community organizations) (Jencks & Peterson, 1991; Mayer & Jencks, 1992).

In impoverished communities, policy-based and economic inequalities are shown to decrease community cohesion in the U.S. and in other parts of the world (Becares, Stafford, Laurence, & Nazaroo, 2011; Jencks & Peterson, 1991; Mayer & Jencks, 1989; Wilson, 1987). Core concepts necessary to collaborate and partner—the essence of community cohesion (Coleman, 1989)—such as relationship building (i.e., trust and respect) are difficult to foster. Necessary in education, trust and respect are difficult to achieve when there exist economic disparities and a lack of basic resources for daily functioning (Brik & Schneider, 2002; Brik, Serbring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). However, when schools and families work together, the outcomes improve students' academic performance, creating strong cohesion between family, school, and their community.

Educators' resistance to socioeconomic barriers to family involvement. The work to decrease socioeconomic barriers requires the work of families and educators alike. For instance, studies have found that relationship building and leadership development between non-white families and educators conjointly served to increase the socioeconomic and social infrastructure necessary children's educational success (Horsford & Heilig, 2014; Warren et al., 2009). Similarly, despite the lack of federal financial backing to support community cohesion and economic disparities in schools, committed school leadership and staff to social equity can build relationship and supportive activities for families (Engel, Kington, & Mleczko, 2013). Through open door policies in the school, adult classes for parents, and sensitivity to local community needs, researchers have found an increase of student academic performance and familial involvement in the school. Similar studies (Brik & Schneider, 2002; Brik, Serbring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Oberg De La Garza & Moreno Kuri, 2014) have found the importance of "authentic collaboration between low-income families and middle-class educators will require an explicit effort to address the inequality in resources and power between the two groups" (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009, p. 2212). Nevertheless, researchers take a step-forward as they recommend relationship building between and among individuals as the necessary ingredient to rebuild the social fabric that has torn families and school relationships (Noguera, 2001; Putnam, 1995; Shirley, 1997; Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). Relying heavily on social capital theories and theorists, many of these studies miss an opportunity to conduct a more nuanced analysis of socioeconomic power as interlaced in racial violence against non-white communities.

Nevertheless, in education, neoliberalism has created a separation and perpetuation of power imbalances between groups that have access and power (Gonzalez, et al., 2005; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Specifically, "[p]ower, privilege, and economic advantage and/or disadvantage play major roles in the school and home lives of students, whether they are part of language, cultural, or gender majority groups or minority groups in our society" (Cochran-Smith, 1999, p. 177). These power imbalances transfer into everyday life for citizens of disenfranchised and marginalized communities across the U.S., where their socioeconomic reality is heavily impacted by the lack of economic access. When social class is cofounded with racial, ethnic, language, and cultural identities, federal projects aimed at low-resourced communities are known to reproduce racialized, discriminatory programs targeting non-white families and individuals. Battling systems of power, such as that of neoliberal, socioeconomic barriers require that such system is examined and overhauled (Deluca & Rosenblatt, 2010; Lauen, 2007; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). This suggests that more research is necessary to explore the interplay between families and the socioeconomic system they live in. Particular focus is warranted on the manner families battle their socioeconomic system, transform it, or simply navigate it to enhance their children's education.

Racism in education. Power imbalances in the U.S. become accentuated through oppressive, racialized polices that have influenced the core makeup of communities and cities across the U.S. (Ladson-Billing, 1995). In the U.S., and since its inception, white, Europeans became part of the numerical majority so much that the white race was socially constructed to become an economic and political force. Neoliberal, Christian-based, and patriarchal values, beliefs, and behaviors (also known as a form of ontology

and epistemology) were legitimated and non-white, racial/ethnic practices where

disenfranchised (Allen, 2001). Throughout U.S. history and its present, white, European

ontologies and epistemologies have reigned as cultural and legal standards, making non-

whites' cultural practices illegal and/or inferior. Social, political, psychological,

economical, and legal structures were formed over time, fostering a racial dominance—

racism—over non-whites (Valenzuela, 1999). Forced to become racial and non-white

minorities, different groups in the U.S. have fought the involuntary and minoritized,

racial identity to which they are subjected (Alexander, 2012; hooks, 2000; Kendi, 2016;

López, 2009).

As established earlier through settler colonialism, white, European ontology and

epistemology forced its racial dominance unto society to become what scholars call

today, whiteness—a structural, ideological, and actor-based dominance (Castagno, 2014;

Duster, 2001; Dyson, 1996). Racism unto non-white racial/ethnic minorities was

perpetuated through the acceptance and reification of white structures, ideologies, and

actor-laden practices. Racism, however, has been performed unto racial/ethnic minorities,

not without physical, intellectual, and legal resistance by racial/ethnic minority

communities (Kendi, 2016; Ture & Hamilton, 1992; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).

Today, non-white, racial and ethnic minority families continue to resist racism as their

children experience forms of racial violence in their schooling. Families' resistance to

racism in their children's education has taken on different strategies.

**Resisting the intersecting power between neoliberal, economic oppression

and racial violence.** Below I describe the need for families to be involved as policy

agents as only a small base of research focuses on parents as political agents that can

directly shape their children's education and their own power in the process (Olivos, 2006; Yosso, 2006). I offer an intersection of theoretical frameworks to parental engagement and resistance in educational settings as more work is necessary to examine these frameworks. These frameworks are part of critical strategies resisting neoliberal and racist parental involvement. The following section argues a jump from critical strategies to postcolonial ones that can engage in the disrupting and transforming process of parental involvement.

Neoliberalism as a form of socioeconomic oppression (Melamed, 2011), along with racism are part of the social fabric that composes educational systems in the U.S. (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Cline & Necochea, 2001; Darder, 1991; hooks, 2000; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Yosso, 2006). Together, these socioeconomic and racist factors produce dominant—oppressive—power structures that hinder families' and children's ability to successfully navigate educational systems (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Olivos, 2006). As explained thus far, dominant power structures create deficit-laden narratives towards non-white, racial/ethnic families and their children casting their culture, knowledge, and abilities as inferior (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Valencia, 1997). Families, and students alike, have resisted this type of deficit-based thinking and action (Cooper, 2007, 2009; Pizarro, 2005; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Yosso, 2002).

Yosso (2006) and Olivos (2006) have discussed resistance as essential for non-white, racial/ethnic families to demand collaborative work from their children's schools and district. For collaboration to occur, however, families are obligated to demand a political voice to change school conditions of their children (Calabrese Barton et al.,

2004). Gaining political voice in an oppressive, power structure requires different forms of resistance and activism that speaks directly to such marginalizing systems. The two models for family resistance discussed by Yosso (2006) and Olivos (2006) demonstrate how Latina/o families have to go traditional in-school involvement (e.g., participating in PTA, classroom aid) to ensure equitable education for their children.

Yosso (2006) developed a Model of Community Cultural Wealth as an alternative to income-based capital that pertains to white, middle-class families. The community model suggested by Yosso and the Chicana/o families with whom she worked challenged the income disparities and deficit-based conceptions that the larger social structures imposes unto many Latina/o families. The families, seen as "survivors" of "ongoing inequalities" in their children's education, organized to "transform the prevalent cultural deficit approach to elementary schooling" (Yosso, 2006, p. 49). They began by first shifting mentalities on the resources they brought to education. Yosso and the families created six different forms of capital: aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, navigations, and resistant. Using their cultural wealth, families attempted to show their schools that they too can contribute to their children's education in rich/many ways.

Similarly, scholars critical of systems of oppression have joined social capital theories with critical and cultural theories (e.g., Critical Race Theory—CRT, LatCrit, Black feminist/womanist) to ensure non-white, racial and ethnic families are not examined through deficit orientations. For instance, Calabrese Barton et al. (2004) proposed an Ecological Parent Engagement (EPE) framework that considered "what parents do in terms of context, relationships, and activity, and it allows us to critically examine how all of this is framed through power and politics" (p. 5). Along with other

critical frameworks proposed to analyze racialized, oppressive power in education (Cooper, 2007, 2009; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Villenas & Moreno, 2001; Wilson, 2015), EPE considered the ecological spaces under which parents work. These spaces include the racist and poverty-ridden socioeconomic systems preventing families' from forming authentic, collaborative, family-school relationships. The strength of these racially conscious and culturally different models/conceptualizations is in introducing racialized power dynamics in the formation of relationships with others (e.g., Black mothers' *caring* as resistance: Cooper, 2009), which enhances the social capital theories proposed by earlier, more traditional researchers.

The limitation within this EPE framework is in the idea that collaborative relationships can be developed in "a deeply structured system based on relations of power" (Baquedano et al., 2013, p. 167). Thus, there are authors that recommend the promotion of individualized, familial power development to allow parents to become empowered for self-development. In turn, empowerment would facilitate families to engage in relational and collaborative relationships to transform their children's schools. Under this vein, Olivos (2006) provides a theoretical framework for Transformational Paradigm for Parent Involvement that focuses on "problem-posing that seeks solutions enabling inclusion, voice, and representation in decision making" (p. 113). The goal and focus of this model include "transformational change towards cultural and economic democracy" (Olivos, 2006, p. 113). Transformation is necessary for Olivos (2006) due to the hegemonic, racist and capitalist system perpetuating inequality and inferiority, reproducing dominant/non-dominant binary structures against non-white, racial/ethnic children and their families.

Olivos (2006) claimed that the school system reflects the social, economic, and political context of the American society. Thus, separating the school system from a larger societal analysis would undermine the historical and political structures that have induced "tension, contradiction, and resistance" in the lived experiences of non-white families (p. 25). To analyze the work of families who challenged an inequitable and racist school, Olivos used a transformation paradigm to examine how familial involvement in schools included the political, empowerment process (individual, collective, and legal social consciousness) to have their voices heard and create school-wide changes. The organization and advocacy of the Latina/o parents led to a replacement of a negligent principal, improved aesthetic school conditions, including district-wide curricular quality. Following a Freirean perspective, Olivos recommends a participatory, action-research involvement, where families become disruptors of their own oppressive system through a reflective, problem-posing strategies.

Like Olivos (2006), others have utilized a Freirean approach (Borg & Mayo, 2001; Rocha-Schmid, 2010; Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011) to promote family empowerment. Other scholars have even extended self-empowerment into a community approach to transform inequitable educational systems by using civic, asset-based, community capacity (Green, 2015; Ishimaru, 2014b; Horsford & Sampson, 2014). Together, authors using a Freirean approach have criticized the neoliberal context in which families operate, the deficit-based approaches educators utilize to engage with parents (e.g., clients rather than collaborators), and the overall lack of economic investment in education by local, state, and national public entities. Freirean scholars have promoted a series of culturally-relevant (e.g., Funds of knowledge: Moll et al.,

1992; Figueroa, 2011) and empowerment experiences (e.g., trainings) where families can learn to produce their own collective knowledge and action for a more equitable education.

     <<<Families' (non-white) identity as central to their involvement>>>. This next <<<choque>> is necessary to open a conversation on racial identity as a form of power. Families' racial and ethnic identity is an underlying conception in family involvement studies conducted by scholars like Yosso (2006) and Cooper (2009). Studies utilizing racially-conscious and culturally-different conceptualizations in family involvement (Cooper, 2007; Calabrese-Barton et al., 2004; Yosso, 2006) recognize the significance of race as a social construction and its usage by those in power to maintain a social dominance over those deemed racially inferior (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). In education, this social dominance is structured through neoliberal, socioeconomic and racists factors (Cline & Necochea, 2001; Darder, 1991; hooks, 2000), obstructing families' and children's ability to authentically navigate their educational environment (Mangual Figueroa, 2011; Olivos, 2006; Moll et al., 1992). With the assistance of critical and cultural theoretical frameworks, scholars can accentuate the differential experiences and identities of non-white families, thus validating and humanizing the racial and ethnic identities of children and their families (hooks, 2000).

     Scholars like Yosso (2006), Calabrese-Barton et al. (2004), and Cooper (2009) utilized families' experiences and conceptualized them through racially-conscious and cultural frameworks. Cooper (2009), for example, examined the identity of Black families and centralized their perception of their (who they are) African American identity and (what and how they do it) family involvement through the act of caring as

political. Cooper (2007) helped to accentuate and further differentiated the involvement of Black families by recognizing and asserting the confounding effect of gender (women as mothers), race (as Black), and social class (as low-income and working class) in family involvement. Unfortunately, in family involvement, but also in society, there is a marginalizing effect when living in the intersecting positionalities as a racialized, gendered, and class-ed individual (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 2000; Cooper, 2009).

When non-white, non-traditional families (e.g., low-income, immigrant, single mother) are involved in their children's educational lives, they do so through their lived experiences. The intersectionality of individuals' identities provides them with an array of knowledges, experiences, and skills that affords them a differentiated way to be involved. According to Cooper (2009), Black and Latina/o families in the U.S., bounded by a racialized history, have participated in educational activism, where protests, involvement in school council, and challenging school officials has led up to school desegregation and community control (Allen & Jewell, 1995; Barnes, 1997; Cooper, 2005; Edwards, 1993; Noguera, 2004; Shujaa, 1992). In other cases, families sought their ethnic identity and knowledge-base as important to integrating in classroom curriculum (Jefferson, 2013; Gonzalez, et al., 2005). As such, non-white families have had to re-shift the perspective of a traditional, white (western-European), middle class identity so non-white identity and reality is accepted and valued.

Consistent with the scholarship on family involvement of non-white families, their educational involvement takes on a non-traditional form. The non-traditional participation is to ward off the symbolic and political violence educators, scholars, and politicians perform unto non-white individuals in the U.S. (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Giroux,

1992). Black families, as well as Latina/o, immigrant individuals have had to become politically involved to ensure their black and brown histories, knowledges, and cultures are acknowledged, validated, and included in the subscripts of cultural and political reform (Fennimore, 2017; Paredes Scribner & Fernández, 2017; Wilson, 2015). In the studies reviewed, the families' contributions were different from what is traditionally accepted and were based on their "*[e]thnic [i]dentity and [p]ower* [which] can be such an instrument for developing criticalist pedagogical approaches" (McLaren, 1998, p. 429). The differentiated identities -- particularly in the intersection of race, gender, class oppression, language, and sexuality-- explored by critical scholars and lived by non-white, non-traditional individuals demand a differentiated, "oppositional consciousness" that coalesces into a methodology of the oppressed (Sandoval, 2000, p. 70). With differentiated lived experiences, we must use not only a *critical* approach, but also an postcolonial one in which epistemological and ontological systems humanize non-white individuals' ideologies. Such postcolonial efforts require a reconstitution of systems—in education produced by policies—that exert a re-centering and re-shifting of ideologies, a critical and postcolonial consciousness that challenges systems of oppression by welcoming and working with different knowledges and skills (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983; hooks, 2000; Sandoval, 2000).

Educational Policy in Family Involvement

This section offers theories of the educational policy process to highlight how local, bottom-level actors (e.g., teachers) are agentic in the policy process (Honig & Coburn, 2007). Specifically, I focused on the intersections between non-white, racial-ethnic identities and the process of policy development.

Critical to the conversation of power-creating efforts is the understanding of educational policy development since it is through policy that systems of power are formatted (Ball, 1991). From a postcolonial lens, a re-centering, re-shifting, and re-formatting of power systems is necessary to humanize the experiences of non-white, non-traditional individuals. Thus, an engagement of power reconstitution requires an observance of policy development and the actors that create such policies. It is important to inquire: in the policy development process, where do power imbalances manifest, and how do these reproduce the neoliberal and racist systems that marginalize and disenfranchise non-white, non-traditional individuals?

Educational policy frameworks. As a reminder, I used policy as "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, [which] effectively *become* the public policies they carry out" (Lipsky, 2010, p. *xiii*). Along with Lipsky (2010), Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011), I offer a wider conversation of policies as systems of operation that become alive and part of a shifting process. The section below argues for a policy development process that is inclusive of of individual actions performed by actors representing their system (e.g., educators, families).

U.S. social policies are known to create systems of operations (Tyack & Cuban, 2009), particularly in education where policies create "governing texts" to enforce delivery of needs demanded by societies (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009, p. 767). In education, the state and local governments have traditionally been responsible for establishing educational policies (e.g., curriculum, budgetary) suited for their citizens, with the federal government incrementally participating in the process (mainly as a funding source).

Particularly since National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA), Elementary and

Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), Title IX of 1972, and the re-authorizations of

ESEA as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), and most recently *Every Student Succeeds Act*

(ESSA), educational systems have taken more rigorous assignments from federal

mandates, despite a constitutional onus traditionally reserved for state-based decision

making (USDE, 2017). Over the past decades, the federal government has controlled

more of the educational policy process of localities, demanding standard-based

curriculum, data-driven assessments, and school accountability from districts and schools

(Ball, 1991). Overall, the federal, state, and local school boards have controlled the

educational policy process, designing and implementing educational systems intended to

create a society with the following three values: "equity, efficiency, and the balance

between local and federal authority" (Datnow & Park, 2009, p. 354).

Although the meaning of policy can have different forms (economic, political,

educational; Carnoy, 2009; Hanushek, 2009; McDonnell, 2009), it carries with it value-

laden narratives and ideological perspectives that determine the design and

implementation process (Lester, Lochmiller, & Gabriel, 2016). Values and ideologies are

central to the policy process and it is critical to interrogate how they are applied to the

intended recipients (e.g., students, their families and communities, as well as educators:

Apple, 1982; Ball, 1991; Dorner, 2011; Giroux, 1992; Yanow, 1996). In the U.S.,

educational policy development has been shifted from technical approaches designed by

professionals to ones constructed by professionals and those receiving the policy. Sense-

making/co-construction perspectives have also been part of this policy trajectory,

including a political/discursive approach to studying educational policy. From technical

to discursive, these approaches are understood by examining their sphere of influence, direction of change, policy process, role of context, and values (Datnow & Park, 2009). Along with Datnow and Park (2009), others agree of the need for a policy development process that captures the complex nature of schools (Cohen, Moffit, & Goldin, 2007; Diem, 2012). Like this, sense-making and co-construction offer a counter to a system that captures the intricate relationship between policy design and implementation (Coburn, 2001; McLaughlin, 1990). Moreover, these policy processes focus on the reciprocal and interconnected relationship between policy actors and the context in which the policy is situated (Datnow & Park, 2009).

Sense-making focuses on the cognitive process, giving credence to individuals' cognitive processes and the way they alter their environment (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). It places value on individuals' potential and ability, providing tools for local agents (e.g., educators) to learn, interpret, and change the policy based on the needs of their environment (Coburn, 2006; Spillane, 2000, 2005). Sense-making as well as co-construction approaches to educational policy view policy making and implementation as "bottom-up" processes (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Shields, Knapp, & Wechsler, 1995) that foreground human agency and individuals' abilities to create change (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). However, focusing solely on cognitive approaches to sense-making obscures the dynamics of power, including ideology, in the development of the policy process (Honig, 2004).

Like sense-making, the co-construction policy process assumes an intricate relationship between local agency and their context through the policy process (Datnow & Park, 2009). The difference between sense-making and co-construction stems in

recognizing actors' positionality, access, and their ability to influence policy throughout

the process. Conjointly, co-construction values the influence of external social and

political forces on the policy process. Specifically, "[p]olitical dimensions of race, social

class, language, and culture shape—and are shaped by—educators in interaction with

their local context" (Datnow & Park, 2009, p. 353). The co-construction policy process

attempts to invite and address issues that trouble the power dynamics policy agents have

based on their position, identity, and context (Dumas & Anyon, 2006; Dumas, Dixson, &

Mayorga, 2016; Stovall, 2009).

Policy actors in the policymaking process. Power enables policy makers and

implementers to value, privilege, and legitimize or discount and suppress certain policies

based on their positionality, access, and ability (Ball, 2015; Datnow & Park, 2009;

McLaughlin, 2006). Overall, the co-construction policy process recognizes policy actors

and agents as those individuals at the top, the middle, and the bottom with the *power* to

influence policy based on their positionality, access, and ability. Specifically, evidence

suggests that local policy actors' at either the district level (Dorner, 2011; Honig &

Coburn, 2007), the school level (Honig, 2004), or classroom level (Datnow, Park, &

Wohlstetter, 2007) interpret, modify, and actually implement policies within their

particular contexts, not always reflecting a policy's original intent or purpose. Viewing

policy from a bottom-up, co-construction approach allows for greater understanding of

how local, policy actors use their individualized power to shift a policy's course of action

(Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). Thus, analyzing the policy process through a co-

construction perspective affords an observance of policy actors' power dynamic and how

such intervention can shift deleterious narratives that continue to perpetuate certain subjugating identities (González, 2005; Lincoln, 2003; McLaughlin, 2006).

   <<<Families as policy agents (who transform/disrupt)>>>. This <<<choque>>> is essential to introduce non-white families as actors in their children's education, thus changing the traditional narrative of deficient and inept families. Like this, non-white, racial and ethnic families may have been involved in their children's education in a non-traditional manner through policy. For instance, families have used their voices and resources to challenge deficit-driven narratives (Olivos, 2006; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Wilson, 2015), while following a non-linear process of policy making (Kingdon, 1995; Lipsky, 2010; Walford, 2002). Having to force their voices into the decision-making process of local-district policies, minoritized families attempt to insert their anti-racist narrative into the wording of local policies and the policymaking process, though they are not often successful (e.g., Dorner, 2011). When families attempt to influence policy, they engage in "planting hope" as a form of policy advocacy. One family member speaks to her goal as a policy advocate: to promote "communal benefit and collective uplift rather than the individualistic values and goals of market-oriented educational policies and systems" (Wilson, 2015, p. 22). Like this, non-white families have used their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities to influence or change policies. In most cases, families desire to change deficit-laden narrative and practices in educational policies that promote inferior treatment towards non-white students and families (e.g., curricular, disciplinarian, quality of school building).

   Following the literature on local policy agents that challenge the top-down policy process (Ball, 2015; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009; Wilson, 2015), this dissertation

attempted to explore families' attempt to influence district-level, educational policy. I

plan to expand on the educational activism Black and Latina/o families have engaged in

(e.g., involvement in protests, school council, curricular assignments: Wilson, 2009) by

focusing directly on the strategies Black families used to disrupt colonial perspective of

Blackness and the families' strategies to collaborate with the school district. As a choque

to traditional policy development, I focus on families as policy actors, a similar concept

used by Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins's (2011) conception of as entrepreneurs.

Specifically, I center this dissertation on the process that Black families engage in to

become and later act as these policy actors—policy entrepreneurs. The literature speaks

to the families' practices to resist and disrupt power structures that diminish the

educational development of their children. Like this, non-white families have had to re-

shift the perspective of a traditional, white (western-European), middle class identity so

their identity and reality is accepted and valued. However, the process and power

dynamics of families becoming and acting as policy agents in their children's education

continues to be under-explored. Adding to the limited literature on families as policy

agents (see more on enhancing families' resilience; Landau, 2007) is a shift of thinking

from minoritized, subjugated individuals to ones with valuable knowledge, beliefs, and

skills that can promote and enhance the education of children. This type of thinking

requires a paradigm shift from emancipation from the oppressor to survivance with the

oppressor (Patel, 2016).

Theoretical Framework: Postcolonial Strategies to Familial Involvement

Settler coloniality fabricated a system of power that prevents non-white families

from engaging in differentiated family involvement (Baquedano-López et al., 2013;

Jefferson, 2013). The literature review described how non-white families are forced to overcome systems of oppression so their children receive an equitable education; they confronted education's systems of power (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Wilson, 2007, 2009; Yosso, 2006). Specifically, I described families' attempt to challenge neoliberal, economic oppression and racist educational systems of power that have obstructed their attempts to impact their children's education (Collin, 2000; bell hooks, 2000). These power structures, generated through national (educational) policies become the contextual factors—a series of complex matrices of domination—that families navigate around their children's education. These examined power structures in schools are a mirror of the disenfranchising, societal infrastructure that postcolonial theorists contest (Feinberg & Soltis, 2004). As non-white families are forced to apply different strategies to influence their children's educational system (Yosso, 2006), policy development literature provided an understanding of the manner educational systems are constructed to include or exclude local political actors, such as families, specifically, non-white families. In general, I referred to educational policies as a system of power that families are *allowed* to contribute to and are able to influence (Jefferson, 2013; Yosso, 2006). Thus, as families battled against systemic powers in education (Jefferson, 2013; Olivos, 2006), this dissertation focuses on understanding Black families (and my own) involvement as they/we become and act (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies.

This theoretical section examines the relational tension produced by non-white, normally-subjugated people and the system of power imposed through settler colonialism (Patel, 2016). This tension is captured by a <<< choque >>> in theories: empowerment

versus liberatory. Within this tension surges a new type of power, one that flows fluidly horizontally-continual rather than vertical, top-down: power *becomes* dynamic, rather than structural. Such horizontal-continual power dynamism authorizes a postcolonial strategy to spring forward and introduce a politics of dignity: such politics consent a differentiated humanity, sanctioning non-white families' involvement.

A choque on concepts of empowerment. As part of postcolonialism, I will utilize <<<choque>>> to contest, disrupt, and strive for liberatory practices against dominant ontology and epistemology (Anzaldúa, 2007). A <<<choque>>> of theories allows me to engage in a "shift of imagination" to create an "apprehension and unsettling of coloniality" (Patel, 2016, p. 7). The unsettling of coloniality permits a "darkskinned" <<<choque>>> that fosters a necessary relational tension between white, settler colonial power structure and non-white individuals' power (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 100). Being <<<Darkskinned>>>, a mestiz(<>), someone who is "tricultural... speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition" requires a relational tension that constructs something new—a type of transformation to improve the wellbeing of all. The transformation foreseen is a shift from empowerment-based frameworks and an entrance into an postcolonial framework. Through a <<<darkskinned>>> postcolonialism, an amalgamation of concepts and actions render the postcolonial liberation of a darkened ontology and epistemology (Dussel, 2011).

From empowerment to liberation. Critical theories have attempted to understand individualized power (e.g., Freire, 1970) and power structures (Coleman, 1988; Warren, 2005), all within an oppressive and marginalized socioeconomic and political context of community/familial engagement in children's school system (Lareau

& Horvat, 1999). Particularly, Freirean strategies assume that self-empowerment can occur within the same power structures that create marginalization or disenfranchisement (Patel, 2015; Sandoval, 2000). Baquedano-López et al. (2013) enlist the self-empowerment approaches (i.e., Freirean frameworks) as essential instruments to challenging and transforming systems of oppression for family involvement in schools. Freirean frameworks and other approaches such as community empowerment, civic, asset-based, and community capacity, are known to transform inequitable educational systems (Green, 2015; Ishimaru, 2014b; Horsford & Sampson, 2014; Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011). The Freirean approach alone is recognized as "a paradigm that seeks to transform parent involvement into a meaningful act of empowerment and political involvement with the goal of making education a democratic and reflective action" (Olivos, 2006, p. 112). Together, empowerment authors criticize the neoliberal context in which families operate, the deficit-based approaches educators utilize to engage with parents (e.g., recipients rather than collaborators), and the overall lack of economic investment in education by local, state, and national public entities.

However, scholars utilizing an empowerment approach dismiss re-marginalizing, specifically, re-colonizing strategies. Researchers suggest there exists interpersonal power structures between researcher/trainer and families that cannot be undone, and if ignored, re-colonization occurs (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Bowers & Apffel-Marglin, 2005). These interpersonal power structures, inherently built within a western-based ontology and epistemology, must be disrupted to allow other perspectives to gain traction. Such critique follows Freire and Macedo's (1995) proposition that education cannot be transformed without disrupting the inherent value-laden systems in which we

operate. Bowers and Apffel-Marglin (2005) contends, "Who are the oppressed—the Freirean agents of emancipation or the people who were to be emancipated from the intergenerational knowledge that is the basis of their identity and culture?" (p. 6). As researchers and scholars, we must recognize that even our critical consciousness—our desire for empowerment—operates under a western-based system (Bowers & Apffel-Marglin, 2005) that exists within a dominating power structure: the same system of operation that once colonized the Americas and other parts of the world. Liberation from settler colonialism—neoliberal, socioeconomic oppression and white supremacy—dictates a disruption of Eurocentric, western power system. A liberation from such colonialism requires for scholarship to first transform the settler colonial power structure involved in knowledge-production. Thus, a <<<darkskinned>>> postcolonial strategy will assist non-white family involvement to move away from a colonial power structure (Baquenado-López et al., 2013).

From coloniality to postcolonial, liberatory strategies. The western culture, through colonialism, created the Orient (the East)—the Other—as a project of the west to "extend to a world scale the competition of its antagonistic economies" (Césaire, 1972, p. 33; Said, 2000). The purpose was not civilization, for if it were, human value to all persons would have been attributed (Césaire, 1972). Rather, the Other was an invention of the west to colonize and subjugate non-white persons and their lands. Colonization was substantiated through academic—theory and practice—writings, becoming a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said, 2000, p. 69). Colonization produced a "universal regression" towards the colonizer as it worked "to decivilize the colonizer, to

brutalize him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism" (Césaire, 1972, p. 35). Western societies -- through colonizing, ontological and epistemic systems -- constructed and authorized a violent distinction between whites and non-whites.

The west manufactured a nuanced difference of the Other by producing its history and culture with an authority over—what Europeans believed were—savage peoples who needed to be dominated, violated, and dehumanized. Using Foucault and Gramsci, Said (2000) demonstrates how western culture developed a coercive system of power in colonial countries. The west's system of power stripped away localized politics, sociology, ideologies, science, and other forms of theory and practice, replacing those with European politics, ideologies, and practices essential to develop civilizations. Through Christian, capitalist ventures, the west "laid down dishonest equations *Christianity = civilization, paganism = savagery*" (Césaire, 1972, p. 33). The west's religious and economic ventures became normative, common sense, and oppressive systems in its Eurocentric ideology and domination. The west continues to maintain its strength and ideological superiority in former European colonies through such "cultural hegemony" (Said, 2000, p. 73).

Western culture/colonization created an inferiority complex (Césaire, 1972) towards the non-white person. In subjugating and other-izing non-western and non-European colonies, the west configured a power dynamic that continues to penetrate non-white peoples' sociocultural, historical, and psychological realities creating a "relationship between the Occident and the Orient…of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (Said, 2000, p. 73). The complex hegemony discussed by Said

(2000) and Césaire (1972) produced physical and intellectual "violence" enacted against non-white people, their practices, and their ideologies (Fanon, 1963, p. 37). The hegemonic practices of stolen land, cultural erasures, and racial ordering created a system of subjugation and inferiority towards non-western, non-white people.

Colonialism in the Americas. Western power is perceived by colonial scholars as a violent, material and immaterial force that has physically destroyed non-western cultures and strategically erased non-western knowledge-systems by imposing their dominant force on African, Latin American, and Asian peoples. Colonialism, under settler colonialism, is not an event, rather it is "a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs a rage of historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct—invasion is a structure not an event" (Wolfe, 1999, p. 163). A hegemonic structural project is thus created to erase and eliminate non-white individuals and their cultural ideologies and practices: the intention is to replace non-white persons with the superior race of the colonizer.

In the U.S., cultural hegemony against non-white peoples has been long understood and experienced by non-white, where "the primary structure of people, land, and relation is through settler colonialism" (Patel, 2016, p. 6). Other scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Patricia Hill Collins, and bell hooks speak to the systemization of racial subjugation and inferiority against Black persons and other non-white individuals. As presented in the literature reviewed, U.S. national policies aimed to create an inferiority complex of non-white individuals. Specifically, U.S.-based settler colonial practices continue to view non-white persons as chattel needed to be own and operated for profit-making purposes (e.g., school-to-prison system, Black athletes as property) (Alexander,

2012; King, 2014). Fanon (1963) and Said (2000) called colonization a complex cultural

hegemony. Today, a settler colonial system continues to fabricate systemic erasure, a

"racialized violence and dehumanization" towards non-white people (Patel, 2015, n.p.).

Postcolonial, liberatory strategies. Non-white people were not completely

docile and complacent (Dussel, 2011; Fanon, 1963). Many of the colonized, non-western

countries (in Latin America, Asia, and Africa) engaged in decolonizing strategies to

liberate their land and people from an oppressive, colonial regime. In the U.S., liberation

has not occurred (Taylor, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012). However, intersectional,

emancipatory ideologies have been developed to resist colonizing systems of power

(hooks, 2000; Collins, 2000; Sandoval, 2000). Specifically, Black feminism has

introduced a politics where "embracing a paradigm of intersecting oppressions of race,

class, gender, sexuality, and nation, as well as Black women's individual and collective

agency within them… reconceptualizes the social relations of domination and resistance"

(Collins, 2000, p. 292). The ideology of liberation requires a violence against violence

(Fanon, 1963). Violence, whether physical or ideological, must be achieved through a

newly awakened consciousness of a humanity where "man is the most precious of all

possessions" (Fanon, 1963, p. 99): like this, liberation becomes "unending" (Fanon,

1963, p. 94).

A <<<choque>>> is required even within Fanon's interpretation of liberation,

given that in his written discourse (which could be the fault of the times) used one

gender, men, must be prioritized in the liberatory project. It is for this reason that I utilize

Anzaldúa (2007) to unravel and construct a liberatory project. As a queer, Chicana, and

feminist scholar, Anzaldúa offers the intersectional strategy necessary to encompass the

complex and beautiful nature of identity, politics, and ideology. Here I borrow Fanon's strategy of the need for violence for liberation, but I disrupt his male, colonizing privilege. Liberation demands a transformation so a "natural rhythm [enters] into existence, introduced by new [<<<humans>>>], and with it a new language and a new humanity" (p. 36). Fanon's violence for liberation, aligns with Anzaldúa's (1987) collision of cultures, which can include Daza and Tuck's (2014) recoupling of (post)(anti)coloniality. Anzaldúa's postcolonial <<<choque>>> can produce a rhythm, one that is organized by a new order (ideological and practical) and "its geographical layout," that humanizes and centers oppressed and marginalized peoples (Fanon, 1963, p. 38).

    <<<Disrupting the ideology of politics and policy>>>. Allow me to insert another <<<choque>>> here to expose the concepts of politics and policy. If the etymology of politic is to be citizen and be part of a city and policy's etymology is to demonstrate and to show how, can non-white people do politics and policy when they, in postcolonial terms, are disenfranchised and dehumanized? For non-white persons to engage in policy, they first need to be seen as humans to, subsequently, attain rights as citizens. Under a postcolonial framework, non-white people must disrupt and engage in decolonizing strategies to free our/themselves from an inferiority, dehumanizing complexion instilled in us by the colonizer. That is, they/we desire a right to politics and policy. For this reason, a <<<darkskinned>>> postcolonial strategy is obligated.

    From power as hegemonic structure to power as performative dynamism. Liberatory practice requires new language and with it new conceptualizations of power (Dussel, 2011; Giroux et al, 2013; Sandoval, 2000). Power systems, as discussed by

Fanon and Said, depict a top-down, vertical power structure that hegemonically inhabits and separates humans. Anticolonial scholars (Dussel, 2011; Sandoval, 2000) re-shift the conceptualization of structural power to one that encompasses a horizontal and egalitarian power dynamism. Sandoval (2000) explains:

> This shifting away from a conception of power that Foucault has called its hierarchical 'sovereign model' means that… power can be perceived as doing something other than situating in a vertical, up-and-down, and pyramidal position, with white, male, heterosexual, capitalist realities on hierarchically top levels" (p. 72).

Instead, Sandoval (2000) argues for a power that circulates horizontally with everlasting possibilities, turning into a "performative" dynamism (p. 76).

Dussel (2011), in observing the latest Mexican-Mayan Zapatismo movement (the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, the EZLN), described an postcolonial ontology of power. Even in recent times, the Zapatistas have moved away from the conception of power as sovereignty and focus on a power that is based on "order obeying" (Dussel, 2011, p. 546). Such order obeying is centered on Sandoval's (2000) circulative, horizontal power of community, a performance of power based on "human relations" (Dussel, 2011, p. 546). The performance of horizontal power becomes the center of this dissertation case. Specifically, I focus on the relational tension created by communal necessity, which required a dynamic performance of power that is "continually regenerating, and intervened in differentiality" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 76). This dissertation uses power as a performance that is centered on a social experience that changes based on the relational tension created by the ongoing transformation.

A <<<darkskinned>>> Postcolonialism: Politics of dignity. The liberation of any subjugated person living in a still colonial estate such as the U.S. requires a materialized repatriation of Indigenous land (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Together, decolonization requires an overhaul of hegemonic power structures (Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 2000; Dussel, 2011). Postcolonial thinkers like Anzaldúa (1987), along with anticolonial theorists like Sandoval (2000) and Dussel (2000) recommend a new conception of politics to begin the decolonizing process. The new politics produces a new ideology about citizen and city.

Speaking about the Mayan world and the Zapatistas revolutionaries, Dussel (2011) points to the politics of dignity:

> More than the distribution of the wealth or the expropriation of the means of production, the revolution begins to be the possibility where the human being has a space of *dignity*... Dignity is not what is valuable nor value itself; it is the basis of all values… In recognizing the Other, the first thing to affirm is the sacredness of its distinct subjectivity. (p. 545).

The ideological re-shifting of politics requires that persons are viewed with integrity. The ideological re-shifting turns into a process of relational tension between the colonizer and non-white persons. The relational tension is a creation for "a space of dignity" where a "moral, ethical" ideology and behavior for all persons is demanded and granted (Dussel, 2011, p. 545).

Anzaldúa (1987) calls this new politics of dignity, a recovering and reshaping one's essence: a belief that we are all "gente *(human)*" (p. 109). "Somos gente (*we are all human)*," is part of Anzaldúa's (1987) effort to reawaken a new human (mestiza)

consciousness, specifically for people of darkened skin color. Although Anzaldúa (1987) is speaking more for the liberatory intersectionality of Chicana womanhood and her sexuality, race, class oppression, and nationality, she extends her philosophy to include all people, through a "Somos gente" ideology (p. 108). In her call for "Somos gente," Anzaldúa (1987)—and in a parallel argument Dussel (2011) and Sandoval (2002), including Collins (2000)—demands a new politics that creates a relational tension with colonial ideology against non-white persons as chattel and fungible matter. To engage in this relegation of meanings, a new conception of power is necessary, where individuals enter a space of tolerance and ambiguity for a relational differentiation of one another. Thus, power as performative is required to engage in an obedient and ongoing conversation with the Other.

A new consciousness produces "intense pain, [and] its energy comes from continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 101-102). The postcolonial, ontological perspective of power shifts to one that is a performative dynamism, centered on a relational tension that permeates an authority of servitude and obedience for the community's transformational wellbeing. For this reason, the new consciousness in politics of dignity gives the dark skins of the families and myself a <<<darkskinned>>> power, where our subjectivity has the potential to produce a new ideology for postcolonial policy.

In the U.S., this relational tension is ever more palpable with the Black population and Latinx population cross-existing and composing the new majority (Cohen, 2016). With this dissertation including an intersectionality of race, gender, language, and nationality Anzaldúa's (2007) "somos gente," a politics of dignity for all persons permits

another <<<choque>>> in the formation of who should be included in a project for Black families. Again, I bring back Dr. King Jr.'s proclamation: "Black liberation is bound up with the project of human liberation and social transformation" (Taylor, 2016, p. 194). A space for relational tension must be created between the colonized and the colonizer for a liberatory and transformative project to occur. Such tension must be an ongoing encounter where dignity for all is demanded from everyone involved in the colonizing process. Each individual must take on a responsibility to relegate a new conception of identity and enter a space where ambiguity is accepted from one another.

Subjectivity as performative dynamism between place, space, and subject. The dynamic nature of power as performance produces a new conception of identity, where identity becomes a subjective being (a form of new consciousness). Such subjective being is arranged and articulated by a need to purposefully disrupt structural power through the "shock of displacement, trauma, violence, and resistance" narrated by the needs of the community (Dussel, 2011; Sandoval, 2000). Given that the social body is always becoming due to the relational tension of <<<choque>>> one's subjectivity is always shifting to give narrative of the lived experience. Subjective being is performed through a postcolonial becoming. For Anzaldúa (2007), subjective becoming is produced through a "tolerance for ambiguity" that fosters a new consciousness, one which engages in a "[d]econstruct, construct" (p. 104).

The subject is created by the performative dynamism or relational tension between subjectivity, place, and space (Anzaldúa, 2007; Patel, 2016). The process to produce a postcolonial methodology begins with conceptualizing the contextual place-space as giving shape to the individual (Sharp, 2009). The place-space is considered the

essence of geographical matter and is an indispensable component to the formation of the subject. The developed geography can be defined as "imagined geographies," where "it was made manifest over space as it was built into colonial policy, into the institutions of governance, and more recently, into the practices of aid and development" (Sharp, 2009, p. 17). Given that geography is produced through white discourse and imagination, this dissertation views geography (place-space) as produced by the written politics and policies of its time—a geopolitical discourse and imagination. Such geopolitics give narration to the manner place, space, and subjectivity ought to operate.

Place and space take on a Foucauldian, sovereign power (Sandoval, 2000; Sharp, 2009; Soja, 1996). The hegemonic place-space enters into tension as it encounters a subject desiring to re-shift the direction that place-space has prescribed. Thus, the incorporation of subject to place and space creates a horizontal-circulative power dynamism (performative dynamism) (Dussel, 2011; Sandoval, 2000). With this conceptualization of subject, place, and space can be described as a relationship between place and space and its impact on someone's subjectivity. Vice versa, someone's subjectivity has the potential to impact place and space according to the relationship being fostered. Such relationship between place, space, and subject is shaped by a myriad of factors that each one brings to the relationship at any given moment. However, place and space are more structural and sovereign (per Foucault) and subject can be flexible to bend and shape based on need of subsistence (per Anzaldúa and Sandoval). Such relationship can be depicted below:

place   ← →   space
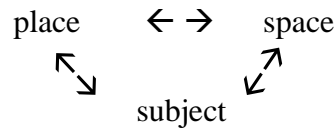
subject

Diagram 1. Place, Space, Subject

or simply

place-space-subject

Such postcolonial, subjective conceptualization refrains from capturing the essence of subjectivity's sole identity (Anzaldúa, 2007). Rather, it follows a (postcolonial) shift towards "not accept[ing] unexamined human experience as the source of meaning and the making of meaning as an unproblematic thing" (Spivak, 1990, p. 789 as cited in Jackson & Mazzei, 2018). Instead, each one factor—subjectivity, place, and space—have the power to produce an impact on the other. It becomes a subject-becoming. Anzaldúa (2007) suggests that "[d]econstruct, construct" of being does not mean an end of reason, but rather a differentiated part of an unlimited whole (p. 104). In this vein, Butler (1991) speaks to this fluidity of subjectivity as a constitution of parts (e.g., place-space-subject): a subjectivity that can act according to its necessity (p. 13). Such subjectivity turns into a dynamic performance of power that produces newness: a subject becoming.

Summary of Chapter 2

Using a postcolonial strategy affords me to intersect and examine the continued oppression of Indigenous people and their land (Patel, 2016; King, 2014), with a conception of non-white persons as fungible matter. Postcolonialism (Daza & Tuck, 2014) permits the usage of strategies to disrupt the dehumanizing conceptualization of non-white families and racially violent educational policies. Postcolonialism disrupts the continual settler colonial system produced by educational systems of power (e.g., policies), inherent in family involvement.

As part of a postcolonial, liberatory project, I am required to utilize strategies and techniques that engage in a relational tension against the status quo of white, middle class ontologies and epistemologies. Specifically, Anzaldúa (2007) and Dussel (2011), along with other anticolonial, womanist scholars (Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000) suggest that a new politics of dignity begins with "cleaning one's own house." If non-white individuals are desiring a decolonization effort, a politics of dignity can be used, and it begins with one's own conception of the self. Because epistemology and ontology are part of the power system of operation, I focused on a reconceptualization of an ontological sense of power. Thus, conceptualizing power as performative, rather than structural allows me to enter a new conversation about relationality between the colonizer and non-white persons. The transformation of settler colonial ideology requires that I ask where does this relationality and counter (postcolonial) narrative disrupt and transform colonizing thoughts, actions, and policies? I suggest that a methodological tension, a <<<choque>>> is created between theory, methodology, myself, and my participants. In the next chapter, I use Thinking with Theory by coupling Anzaldúa's (2007) theoretical <<<choque>>>

with Patels' (2016) methodological tension and pause which will enable me to create a

disruption of Western research-based ideation.

Chapter 3: Humanizing Methodology

This performative dissertation case was an excavation process: an uprooting of capitalistic and racist ideologies and systemic (policy-based) practices that dehumanize non-white families in U.S. public schools. Specifically, this dissertation examined how Black families and I worked to be involved in policy-making to combat the racial violence that pervades our local public schools (as described in Chapter 2). Anzaldúa's (2007) uprooting of system-based ideologies and practices required that I privilege the ideological reality of Black families without subjugating their roots, but rather lifting and privileging their roots as a natural foundation to survive and thrive in colonial reality. To privilege Black families' ideologies, this dissertation explored the subjective being (a postcolonial form of identity and agency) as performative power in changing neoliberal and white supremacy policies. Specifically, I examined the conjoined effort of FÀEI to create a "Root Our Own Teachers" policy design, as a strategy to increase racial/ethnic teachers in the district.

The leading inquiry question of this dissertation explored how Black families (and I) in one Midwestern, mid-sized town, Little Osage City (pseudonym) became and acted (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies. Focusing on the becoming and acting as postcolonial subjective being of Black families, I utilized a conceptual framework of politics of dignity and <<<choques>> (Anzaldúa, 2007; Dussel, 2011; Sandoval, 2000). This conceptual framework helped me create a performative case which prioritized and privileged the ontological and epistemological forms of the subjective being of families to "reclaim, rename, and reinhabit" their educational ideologies and practices that had been minimized and discredited (Said, 2000, p. 299).

Through an postcolonial discourse, I desired to re-conceptualize—uproot and transform—ontology and epistemology of the Other from its colonized, inferior complex (Fanon, 1963). Simply stated, ontology refers to the way of *being* in one's life; epistemology is the way of *knowing* in one's everyday existence. To accomplish a re-conceptualization of the Other, I implanted marginalized ontologies and epistemologies. Such implantation required the uprooting of settler colonial (westernized) ideologies through the processes of disruptive methodologies (Brown et al., 2014). Concurrently, liberatory theories and methodologies were implanted by consciously privileging them (Anzaldúa, 2007) to counter such settler colonial ideologies (Patel, 2016). As part of the uprooting process, I also situated myself in a political conversation regarding methodologies.

The following sections will explain the rational for a new methodology. Specifically, I detail the political shift from colonizing "re-search" to one that is more humanizing. The rest of the chapter details the data production process, including a rationale to disrupting traditional analytical processes and the way I engage in a reflective action as a postcolonial form of analysis.

Rationale for Methodology: The Politics of my Methodology

To disrupt the western-based, methodological process, I first provide a rationalization on the politics of inquiry in which scholars currently base research (Baez & Boyles, 2009). I must be transparent about my politics to ensure that I avoid the re-colonizing of my participants. Although I hold position in a non-white group while in the U.S., as part of a cadre of non-white researchers, I, too, "carry [my] baggage with [me]— a baggage of marginalization, complicity, and resentment, as well as *orgullo* (pride) and

celebration… straddling multiple worlds" (Vallenas, 2010, p. 357). Such baggage makes me "stradd[le] multiple worlds, trying to break from colonized identities formed against [w]hite supremacy and male dominance and to form a new consciousness" (Vallenas, 2010, p. 357). Avoiding re-colonization as a non-white researcher required me to utilize a significant degree of reflexivity in my dissertation process: design, data production, and representation. Without threading reflexivity throughout my dissertation process, I would only be re-colonizing my participants (Giroux, 2011; Freire & Horton, 1990). The following is my rationale for disrupting western-based methodologies.

Disrupting traditional, western-based methodologies. My initial reflexive move is to acknowledge that I have been educated in western-based institutions, where psychologically, emotionally, and academically (even spiritually), my body has been colonized through a Eurocentric, western-cultural hegemony (Said, 2000). Studies focusing on the relationships between families and the school continue to utilize western-based approaches as their methodologies (Baquedano-López et al., 2013), reifying western knowledge production, thus preventing the creation of new knowledge (Baez & Boyles, 2009). Situating this dissertation process in postcoloniality, I critiqued institutionalized worldviews, and therefore, disrupted and transformed a singularized reality to "a more generous and pluralistic vision of the world" (Said, 2000, p. 393).

Disrupting western-based approaches to methodologies is shifting away from a traditional (or also referred as orthodox) approach (Baez & Boyle, 2009; Giroux et al., 1996). The traditional conception of research utilized a systematized logic of researching—the previous chapters discussed traditional and orthodox as Cartesian knowledge production (St. Pierre, 2013). To investigate any issue under an orthodox

approach, is to search, again and again, with the same set of ideological lenses (e.g., Cartesian knowledge). Using one lens forces scholars to utilize analogous methodologies and ideologies for age old problems such as racism and poverty (Giroux et al., 1996). Under one lens, the investigation turns into a systematic search for differences. A systematic approach uses the same tools and within the same frame (e.g., searching for one (T)ruth via post-positivism rather than utilizing other paradigms) the difference found is a nuanced reality of the same whole rather than a new perspective to the issue being investigated. Thus, investigations turn into a systematized approach to searching without differentiation of ideologies and methodologies. The search turns into a search that perpetuates a desire for sameness or the whole, rather than difference: it becomes a re-search[8]. To re-search, under a systematized approach, forces researchers (or re-searchers) to use logics that conceive knowledge-building as pragmatic. In education, a system of re-search commonly used is one that necessitates "an applied and interdisciplinary field of study" (Pasque et al. 2012, p. 17). The systemic notion of re-search requires rigid conceptions of instruments to produce applicable knowledge. Re-search instruments become systematized and necessitate strict definitions and operationalized steps for re-searchers' roles (e.g., objective vs. subjective), collection and analysis of data (e.g., validity, free of error), methodological boundaries (e.g., looking for one (T)ruth via statistical probability or qualitative triangularity), and distinct disciplinary frameworks (e.g., anthropology, sociology, psychology, medicine versus multidisciplinary inquiry) (Spivak, 2003).

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[8] I will use the spelling of re-search from this point forward to signify the perpetuation of sameness, where "re" is a doing again and again without attempting newness.

Part of the re-searching approach comes with political oversight by ongoing impacts of neoliberalism (Baez & Boyle, 2009; Pasque et al., 2012). There exists an economic politics that has played a role in the fundamentalism that permeates in educational scholarship, similar to the rubber stamping of the federal presence (via court rulings and presidential projects, i.e., Race to the Top) in social and educational policies (Lerma et al., 2013). Under such economic agenda, research for societal benefit becomes counter-intuitive (e.g., re-searching with same tools in the same arena), yet hazardous when voices and realities of diverse and marginalized populations are taken for granted (Pasque et al., 2012). Thus, the shift from a western-based approach forces a push for humane research, disrupting the cultural hegemony of neoliberalism (Said, 2000). This dissertation's performative case focuses on a disruptive shift from traditional re-search approach to one that accentuates difference through an alternative paradigm. Such alternative paradigm is a disruptive approach to knowledge production and addresses the following strategies as a methodological approach:

- "disrupts dominant notions of research roles and relationships;"

- "disrupts dominant approaches to the collection and analysis of data;"

- "disrupts dominant notions of (re)presenting and disseminating research findings;"

- "disrupts rigid epistemological and methodological boundaries;"

- "disrupts disciplinary boundaries and assumptive frameworks of how to do educational research." (Brown et al., 2014, p. 5)

These disruptive strategies transform re-search into an attempt for inquiry. Inquiry becomes a methodological process to explore questions and imagine a more "pluralistic

vision of the world" without rigid use of the methods and the sake of understanding difference without subjugation (Said, 2000, p. 393). Thus, the inquiry process for this performative case assisted me in attempting to privilege the differentiated realities of non-white ontologies and epistemologies through a disruption of methodologies from settler colonial ideologies. The disruption of re-search into inquiry utilized Thinking with Theory (TwT; Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, 2012) focusing on the Politics of Dignity and <<<choques>>> to create tension between western-based methodological ideations. The objective was to transform the methodological process and include new ideologies for inquiry and developing policies alongside non-white, Black families.

Performative Case Approach

Using the sign "performative," rather than study, allows me to move away from an approach focused on individualized retrieval of data and focus instead in a boundless and unfinished production of data. Performativity highlights my opportunity to participate with families in the creation of a postcolonial narrative to humanize this dissertation's methodological process (I develop this point further in the next section). Through a postcolonial framework (Anzaldúa, 2007), a performative case draws on an anticolonial (Patel, 2016) and disruptive approach to inquiry called Thinking with Theory (TwT) (Jackson & Massei, 2012, 2018).

Thinking with Theory (TwT). One manner to conceptualize a postcolonial and disruptive performative case is through the guidance of TwT (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, 2018). TwT, parallel to performative dynamism, is in constant movement. In this way, TwT is a deconstructive "process of making and unmaking" the production of knowledge, without reaching a destination (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 1). TwT becomes

an embedded tool through this dissertation that is "both its own generative movement as well as its own effect" turning into a "process methodology" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 719). TwT's process methodology becomes one that values different forms of meaning-making without prioritizing one from the other. Honoring differential (postcolonial) meaning-making or ideologies becomes part of the disruptive and transforming strategy.

The purpose of TwT. The goal in utilizing TwT is to break away from traditional qualitative research assumptions where "voice" and data gives way to a sole truth and reality of participants. In TwT, "data [and voice] is partial, incomplete and always being re-told and re-membered" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 3). As an postcolonial and disruptive dissertation, data production is demanded to "prompt researchers to ask question related to the data's potential energy to shift things and transform research" (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016, p. 49). As a process method, TwT plugs-in as data (e.g., <<<choques>>> in this dissertation), data becomes potential theory (e.g., families' told experiences), and the inquirer's analytical eye turns inward and not only towards the data, but also her/his own practice and experience. Allowing space for other considerations of "data," theory and inquirer-action are able to

> produce knowledge differently; in this way, [I] focus on the constitutive and generative aspects of texts. By refusing a closed system for fixed meaning (transferable patterns and themes generated from coding data with reductive language), [I] engage the threshold as site of transformation. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 7)

TwT for this dissertation became a threshold where relational tension (Patel, 2016) and <<<choques>>> (Anzaldúa, 2007) enabled a "[d]econstruct, construct" of knowledge-production.

TwT as data production. In using Jackson and Mazzei's (2018) TwT, this performative case disrupted the methodological process by allowing a postcolonial approach to do the following: (1) thinking and writing this dissertation process; and (2) data production as a performative case with the help of institutional ethnography and autoethnographical strategies. First, thinking is used as part of the process methodology to create, not to signify or give meaning (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018). I utilized the chapters in this dissertation as spaces in thresholds, where these (through me) create information with one another, not in the traditional sequential format, but as <<<choques>>> with one another to produce newness as opened ideas, texts, data, and theory. The chapters of this dissertation, through my written intervention, enter a conversation and create newness. Secondly, data production through TwT required that I stay attuned to the threshold between the postcolonial theories of performativity to maintain an ongoing shaping of data production. Subsequently in data production, institutional ethnographic (Smith, 2002) and autoethnographic strategies (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008) produce humanizing data. What follows is my attempt to produce an <<<encapsulated>>> meaning to a fleeing reality.

<<<A choque on my ownerability >>>. I must introduce a <<<choque>>> here to discuss the possibility of research as ownerability: a research approach Patel (2016) calls colonizing and rather recommends, inquiry as answerability (Patel, 2016). When I say, "produce an encapsulated meaning to a fleeing reality," I am colonizing my dissertation

for the sake of graduation—a product required by an educational machinery that is based on capitalists' ventures, where education occurs for production (or profits') sake and not to produce answers for social justice; the answers provided are for convenience that pursue an academic status-quo (I spoke about this in an earlier section called Rationale for Methodology: The Politics of my Methodology). Thus, I have become a product of a profit-making machinery: a public, PhD education whose intention is reproduction of dehumanizing, western-based ideologies, rather than the valuing of (socially just) humanity (Pasque et al., 2012). At this point, if I don't challenge and disrupt knowledge production, my Brown body becomes the chattel (King, 2014) that serves the master, rather than serve my community. This <<<choque>>> becomes a reflective pause to wrestle with the relational tension between a colonizing tool, the Ph.D. and my intersectional mestiz(o) body working with Black families to restore humanity. Following the recommendation of scholars such as Villenas (2010) who also grapples with the colonizer/colonized complexion, the postcolonial strategy of <<<choques>>> offered an answer-ability rather than ownership of information as my attempt to wrestle with this colonizing machinery (Patel, 2016).

Performativity in TwT. The ideological and material necessity to decolonize this inquiry process through postcolonial strategies allows me to use TwT to humanize the realities of non-white persons (Anzaldúa, 2007). In using TwT as a guiding source for this performative case I shift from conceptualizing "study" in case study and utilize performance to permit the action-laden strategies necessary for knowledge production. I move away from the term study--defined by Oxford dictionary as a detailed investigation and analysis of a subject or situation--as it signifies collection and examination of

information for an individualistic purpose. Even as this is written in the past, the dissertation continues to be performative as it enters into a relational tension between the (lived) experience of three Black families and a mestiz(o), Mexican immigrant researcher, theoretical concepts, and the reader of this text. Performative signifies the boundless and unfinished living experience of four of us who are working to change policy in collaboration with a school district, while understanding that each time the text is read newness is formed. Using "performative" rather than study, moves away from an approach that focuses on individualized retrieval and examination and creates the necessary tension and <<<choque>>> to develop something new and humane (Anzaldúa, 1987; Fanon, 1963). Engaging in performativity offers an opportunity to explicitly use postcolonial strategies to value families' narrative: the humanization of public education for Black and other non-white children.

TwT assisted me to conceptualize performativity and the postcolonial strategies of Politics of Dignity and <<<choque>>> as schematic cues (theoretical concepts used to disrupt and guide the analysis) to humanize the inquiry process. Politics of Dignity is first discussed. <<<choque>>> is discussed thereafter.

Politics of Dignity as TwT. Politics of Dignity applies Anzaldúa's (1987) new consciousness to focus on humanizing knowledge production, where differentiation of one's being is not marginalized, but rather privileged. A new consciousness enacts an intellectual disruption from dominant, settler colonial conception of subjectivity, commonly known as identity and agency. This disruption "'promote[s] new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of the kind of individuality which has been imposed on

us"' (Sandoval, 2000, p. 163). Through Politics of Dignity, a new consciousness conceptualizes subjectivity as one where one can produce:

> … a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She [the new subject] communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. [The new subject] interprets history, and using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives towards the darkskinned, women and queers. She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity… She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct. (Anzaldúa, 2007, pp. 102-103)

The "She" spoken by Anzaldúa is the new consciousness for subjectivity: the individual desiring to recreate a she/he self (from now on transformed into <<<ze>>> to rupture the binarism of gender) for the sake of adopting ze's own subjectivity. Subjectivity becomes a performative dynamism with power of self-transformation.

<<<choque>>> as TwT. Concurrent to the Politics of Dignity, decolonizing scholars Fanon (1963) and Said (2000) recommend an act of physical and psychological violence towards western-based traditions and ideologies to obtain a freedom from their colonial, hegemonic culture: one composed of place, space, and practices (Patel, 2016). Therefore, <<<choque>>> becomes the anticolonial action and create a tension between places, spaces, and time. A relational tension in my inquiry is a <<<choque>>> where "closer attention and rigor [are] paid to questions of coordinates and ongoing responsibilities and relations among peoples, places, and practices" (Patel, 2016, p. 57). A responsibility is given to place and space as conduits for the creation of culture, whether hegemonic or empowering to its inhabitants.

Together, in this dissertation, Politics of Dignity and <<<choque>>> were the schematic cues required by TwT to give performativity its functionality. Thus, the relationship between place, space, text, the reader of the text, and myself as inquirer produced the answers to the inquiry questions. Particularly, the reader and myself, must attend to the relational responsibility that "our role within shifting contexts, our own shifting roles, in a constant state of flux with each other is, at the onset, a seemingly daunting task, particularly when we understand the premise that there cannot be a pure knowability of any phenomenon" (Patel, 2016, p. 68). Therefore, the main objective of (a postcolonial) performativity is to create a space where marginalized narratives are valued and prioritized: such space between relationality and responsibility is the methodological process (Paris & Winn, 2013) that offered a possibility to humanize inquiry as well as policy design.

A case in TwT. This case was neither a case study nor a Participatory Action Research (PAR) due to its boundlessness and management by me. The case in case study -- either by Yin (2002), Stake (1995), or Merriam (1998) -- hold individuals as sole contributors to their reality as "researchers hold that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered" (Stake, 1995, p. 99). As already discussed in the previous section, performativity prevents knowledge to be either constructed or discovered. Instead, knowledge (of self, others, and things) is a fleeing concept through each interaction produced by subjects with their social world. This dissertation became a case as I worked with three individuals, their organization (FAIE), and their efforts to create policy. However, under performativity, the case is boundless and more like Yin (2002), it is one where "a phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher had little control over

the phenomenon and context" (p. 13). Although "case study" maintains a level of control (either by a bounded concept or attempting to control) (Yazan, 2015), the case in this dissertation becomes performative due to its inquiry process being a "rhythmic opening onto and into newness" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 722). Although I did exert control in this performative case, from design to production, I have chosen a paradigmatic choque in order to interrupt my "control." This dissertation's case has been designed to insert postcolonial strategies to remove control from me as author. Thus, the data produced entered into relationship between other factors (e.g., theoretical concepts, the reader) that permit a (postcolonial) becoming. In this performative case, the meaning and results of the analytical process are unfinished, particularly as the reader of this text produces *ze* own results: such unfinished product allows for a performative case.

This case of Black families becoming policy agents did not attempt to identify a singularized static identity of Blackness or agency of the families. Holding identity and agency as something to be understood would be following a western-based (Cartesian) proposition of "a supposedly coherent narrative (flowing from a conscious, reflective, stable subject) that represents truth—something to be served up, prior *to* analysis and *for* analysis" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 723, emphasis in original). Thus, I used Jackson and Mazzei's (2018) TwT, a performative case functions in an anticolonial way to treat "theory/data/concepts" as "agential, rather than something to be captured" (p. 724).

Similar to case, this performative case was not a Participatory Action Research (PAR) given that it was me (with the assistance of my committee) who conceived and directed this dissertation process. What is distinct, and yet could resemble a PAR project, is my collaborative nature to create policies with the families. A PAR project would be

one conceptualized and managed by the collective work of the families (Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2010). The collective work of families to impact policy is participatory in nature and I as the coloniz(er/ed) inquirer used PAR strategies to work with the families (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). In working alongside these families, I witnessed the families, including myself, become policy agents. This performative case dissertation is an exploration of the purpose and methods utilized by families and their organization, FÀEI, to develop policy alongside the district. It is not a PAR, however, as I did turn a gaze inward—observing from a distance-within—how the families and I entered into a working relationship with the district to formulate policy. My attempt was to produce a conception of how non-white families become policy agents, while a scholar-activist like myself avoids colonizing their process (Patel, 2016).

Institutional and auto-ethnographical strategies in TwT. Constructing part of an unfinished, unbounded, and unlimited whole (Butler, 1991)—in this case, subjectivity—requires that we observe the subject-place-space performative dynamism using institutional ethnographic (IE) and autoethnographic (AE) strategies. IE refers to the relational aspect of traditionally marginalized people within dominant institutions that through discourse determine people's livelihood categories and forms of expression (Smith, 2005). Specifically, IE "is designed to create an alternative to the objectified subject of knowledge of established social scientific discourse" (Smith, 2005, p. 10). AE strategies serve as the more explicit counternarrative to the same westernized ethnography that I am using. AE assisted me to break down "the colonialist precepts of ethnography" by disrupting the nature of ethnography and creating a counternarrative from dominant representations of being (Russel, 1999, n. p.). Henceforth, I utilized

strategies of ethnography and autoethnography, while not employing these traditions as my sole methodology. In slicing methodologies and piecing them together differently, I did not value one particularized method, rather I am suggesting their potentiality for exposing information. It is important to clarify, as Jackson and Mazzei (2008) assert, inquiry strategies do not have to privilege performed experience, spoken voice, or revealed (T)ruth. Rather, it is a privileging of a temporal construction of the alternative: experience as hidden in its performance, voice as silent by what was spoken, and (t)ruth as undermined by what was revealed (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008). The temporal construction of the alternative cannot occur without a collaborative work of TwT's schematic cues used in this dissertation. The purpose was an attempt to explore the strategies used by non-white families to be visible, heard, and revealed, however, only for a moment in time.

In using IE, I "explored into the social *from where we are* in our everyday lives and to discover how what we can experience locally is shaped by what we cannot know directly" (Smith, 2005, p. 409). Traditional ethnography attempts to explore and discover a part of an infinite and moving whole just as Butler (1992) admonishes. Thus, IE offered me a "standpoint" strategy acknowledging the endless and ongoing construction of reality (DeVault & Gross, 2007, p. 185). For this dissertation, I used the interviews to explore how individual conceptualization of subjectivity and activities produced by FÀEI's mothers gave weight to the larger place-space dynamism through "their experiences at that point of entry" (DeVault & Gross, 2007, p. 185). As with TwT's performative dynamism (Politics of Dignity and <<<choque>>>), with IE I explored the "coordinated action in the complex and interlocking institutional formations that coordinate

contemporary societies, putting in place 'ruling relations' that reach into people's daily (and nightly) activities" (DeVault & Gross, 2007, p. 185). IE's method aligned with this dissertation's performative case which explored how the relationality of non-white families (through their subjective-becoming) allowed them to be involved in their children's education (a school district situated within a larger context of neoliberal, socioeconomic white supremacy) (Taylor, 2016). IE, and thus this dissertation explored the conceptualized power dynamics conveyed by marginalized groups and validated or refuted by the dominant system in which they operate.

I, too, become a point of entry as the researcher and member of the FÀEI group. I chose AE to help explore my own subjectivity as I navigated spaces and places with the attempt to re-construct oppressive spaces and create new frontiers in education (Alexander, 2015; Jackson & Mazzei, 2008). AE can be a critical method to challenge oppressive systems (Alexander, 2015), but I chose a deconstructive strategy to re-think power and mainstream ideological structures/norms of the "I." Such deconstructive AE gives space and acceptance to subaltern forms of power and ideology (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008). Through a deconstructive AE, I utilized the strategy of "resist[ing] the desire to present a 'satisfying' account" to narrate an "I [that] might be decentered enough to make space for autoethnographers to ask different questions of experience" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 304). For AE, experience, voice, and (T)ruth were deconstructed using Politics of Dignity and <<<choque>>>. The deconstruction of "I" gave me room to explore the subjective-place-space dynamism produced by Politics of Dignity. The AE used in this dissertation became a methodological strategy that explored and challenged the

interconnectivity and relationality of my own place-space-subject along with my
participants.

Inquiry Questions

The guiding inquiry question for the dissertation process was: How do Black
families (and I) become and act (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for
educational policies? The sub-questions then explored FAIE's subjectivity (identity and
agency in a postcolonial frame) as performative power in their place and space. Thus, I
explored how each one of FÀEI's subjective beings functioned as performative power
influenc(ing/ed) by the place and space families occupy—a textual form of subjectivity
will be used as place-space-subject (This conception of subject is expanded in chapter 2):

1. How does a mestiz(o) immigrant along with FÀEI become and act (in a
   postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies?

2. How do FÀEI individuals conceptualize their subjectivity as individuals, parents,
   and citizens of Little Osage City?

3. How does performativity (place-space-subject) of FÀEI shape the proposed
   policy?

In analyzing these questions, I used deconstructive autoethnographic strategies to
examine the development of a collaborative effort to re-imagine FÀEI's subjective being
to create educational, policy transformation.

Together with data production instruments, the dissertation questions were
answered in the following manner: (1) using TwT throughout this dissertation, the
schematic cues of Anzaldúa's (2007) <<<choque>>> and Dussel (2011) Politics of
Dignity allowed for a disruption and humanization of knowledge and knowledge-

production; (2) institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005) assisted me in listening to the

voices of the families as we, together learned about our subjectivity and how shaped our

involvement in their children's education; and (3) I embedded into the entirety of this

dissertation my own intersectional subjectivities through a deconstructive

autoethnography (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008) to highlight how a colon(ial/ized) scholar

shapes the dissertation process and the work with the families.

Data Production Process

Part of the data production process for this project required the insertion of

theoretical concepts within thinking about the methodology used and working with the

actual "data" itself. By placing theory, methodology, and data together, I am

acknowledging my intentionality and ability to produce information—knowledge. The

following describes the different techniques that I used to author data: such as

interweaving IE and AE, along with TwT.

IE and AE facilitated an exploration of the subjective, focusing on the dynamics

between the auto (personal), ethno (cultural), and graphy (inquiry process) to examine the

relationship between the self within one's context and in relation to others (Ellis &

Brochner, 2000). Using IE from May 2017 to November 2017, I relied on interviews,

field observation, archival data (e.g., meeting notes and minutes), demographic

information, my own journals, and personal communication produced with the FÀEI

families[9]. The primary co-founders of FÀEI, who I focused this dissertation on are Dr.

Serenity, Miss Anne, and Melanie (all names are pseudonyms). However, I also

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[9] As mentioned in chapter 1, families consist of a broader definition, which is the case for the FÀEI
mothers who have become adopted mothers to many students and children that come into their lives.
However, from this point forward, I will refer to them as mothers.

interviewed the rest of the FÀEI board, specifically, Granny and Dr. Kosher. I paid close attention to how place, space, and subject (place-space-subject) produced power to humanize policy development. Through AE strategies, I explored how my experience was "performative and becoming rather than only narrative" and paid "attention to the plays of power that constitute truth-telling" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 309).

> In analyzing IE and AE through TwT, I entered
>
> … at the point where people's everyday experience is joined to and shaped by relations and organization that coordinate what we do with others' work elsewhere and elsewhen… creat[ing], explor[ing], and explicat[ing] social relations and powers from the standpoint of people in their everyday worlds (Smith, 2007, p. 413).

The objective of this performative case explored Black mothers' strategies to navigate a colonial system of power through their own performative (power) dynamism.

Using TwT, I subscribed to the schematic cues of Politics of Dignity and <<<choque>>> to conduct this performative case. I used these cues in each subsequent chapter to enable the data produced to create new meaning. In chapter four, using my journal entries, I examined my growth as an activist-scholar and how this impacted my collaborative work with FÀEI. In chapter five, through mothers' interviews, field observations, and personal communication I explored how the families became policy agents. Lastly, chapter six describes how the mothers interacted with the school district personnel in order to begin collaboration for the new policy, which they called "Root Our Own Teachers." Such schematic cues helped me explore the relational tension that existed within/between families, inquirer, and school district and the type of power used

to navigate such relationships. Specifically, I observed the relational tension between traditional roles and identities (e.g., researcher, educator, deficit-based conception of Black, asset-based conception of Black) and any attempts to share power: a power shift from a vertical, top-down/bottom-up power stream to horizontal power-sharing—order obeying (Dussel, 2011; Sandoval, 2000). Through TwT, the goal was to embrace and explore a newly conjoined methodological process that would launch to the forefront humanizing strategies by non-white families to become policy agents in their children's education.

Place and Space as Context

As discussed earlier, this case was not just a case (in the traditional sense). It was a postcolonial case to humanize non-white persons in a Midwestern, mid-sized town. As I worked to produce data, I not only observed and spoke with members of FÀEI, but I also produced an understanding of the place and space we worked through unearthing perspectives and histories related to geopolitics. The process towards decolonization proceeds with a conceptualization of the material place-space as giving shape to the individual (Dussel, 2011; Sharp, 2009). The local geopolitics as a settler colonial place-space (Patel, 2016; Sharp, 2009) needs to be understood. To maintain anonymity of my participants I will use pseudonyms for all people, places, and spaces in this dissertation.

Place as Geography

Based under a settler colonial conceptualization (capitalist, socioeconomic oppression and white supremacy), this case is centered in a Midwestern, mid-sized town, Little Osage City (pseudonym). The region where Little Osage City sits has been

commonly known as Dixieland[10] (pseudonym). The name Dixieland was given to the

region of Little Osage City due to migration of southern farmers, along with their

families, agricultural business, and slaves, including the transplantation of Antebellum

Southern ideologies and practices. A prominent historian depicts how the nickname

Dixieland was given to Little Osage City and its surrounding region due to the Jim Crow

practices displayed in their business, cultural, and political practices. Today, it is evident

how such Jim Crow laws deprived African Americans from acquiring full emancipatory

liberties such as voting and education (Chafe, Gavins, & Korstad, 2011). A Black

historian in Little Osage City (Personal Communication, February 2017) and a renowned

city-policy activist (Personal Communication, February 2017), described Little Osage for

its white supremacy reign: local high school housing KKK rallies in the 1930s, to racially

restrictive covenants, and the local university preventing Black students from enrolling in

their law school and journalism school through the 1930s. These personal narratives are

confounded by national reports suggesting that in current times, the past Antebellum

ideologies of white supremacy still hold true today in states like Little Osage (JBHE,

2009).

In contrast, at the time of this case, there was a city-wide effort to focus on equity.

For example, one of the efforts on economic development for the city stated: "Reduce the

medium wage gap between white and minority households in Little Osage City by 5% in

three years" and "Increase number of under-represented groups in labor market by 10%

in three years." The policy of the city also became the politics of the Little Osage School

District, one aimed to recruit more racial/ethnic minority teachers (Local Newspaper,

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[10] Dixieland is the name given to the states that made up of the Confederate States of America.

2016). The data produced for place are summarized in Table 1 and included maps,

graphs, and informal interviews.

Table 1	
Data for Place	
Map 1	African American Population Change by Number
Map 2	Affordability Based on Household Income (1)
Map 3	Affordability Based on Household Income (2)
Personal Conversation	Local Black historian Policy-activist
Graph 1	Educational Attainment by Race
Graph 2	Child Poverty by Race for Little Osage City
Graph 3	Median Household Income by Race
Graph 4	Poverty by Race in Little Osage City
Graph 5	Rate of Mothers with Less than 12 Years of Education
Graph 6	Teen (Ages 15—19) Pregnancy Rate per 1000 Population 2010-2014
Figure 1	The Geography of Upward Mobility in America
Table 1 Data for Place	

Materialized geopolitics in Little Osage City. With a growth of population, both

in K-12 students and university students, a capitalist venture for land-space has brought

about a politics of housing development, but only accessible by a population:

middle/upper class students and families in the south of town (see Maps 1. African

American Population, Map 2. and Map 3. Affordability Based on Household Income).

Map 1. African American Population Change by Number

Provided by: Department of Public Health and Human Services
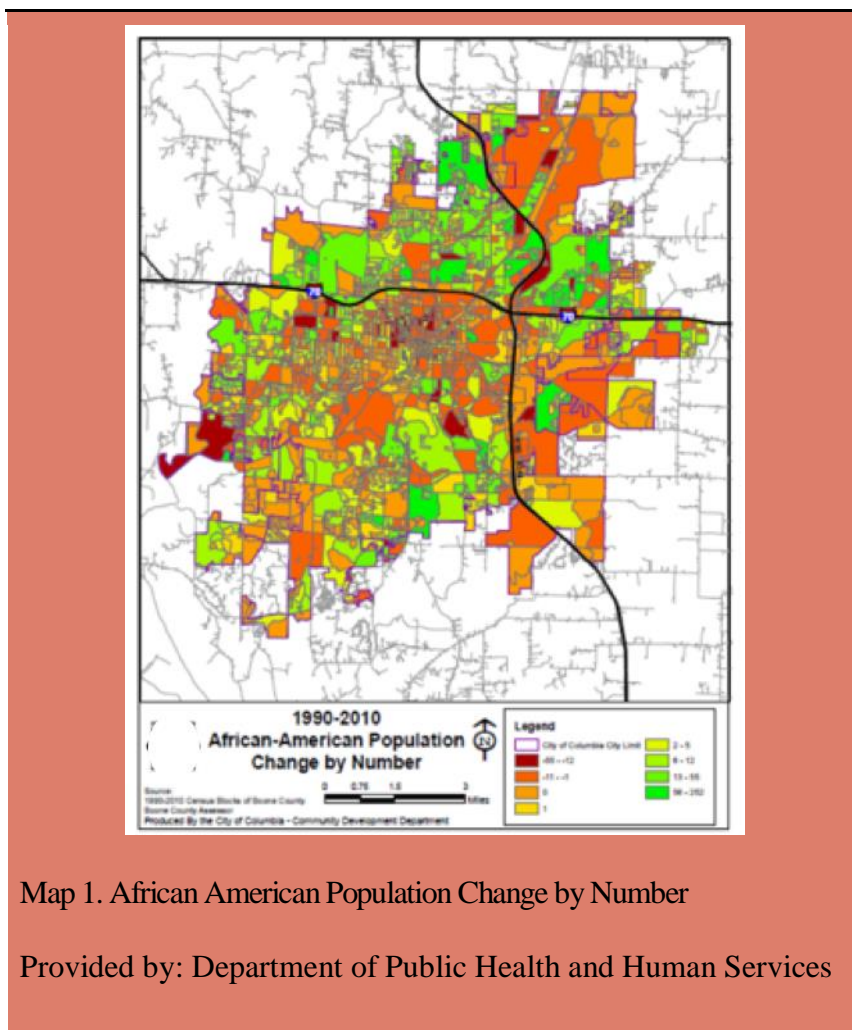
Map 1. African American Population Change by Number demonstrates how African

American households migrated to the periphery, particularly north and northeast of Little

Osage City. The affordability factor is important information given that it correlates with

Map 2. and Map 3. Affordability Based on Household Income, which depicts that as

African Americans are moving to the periphery of Little Osage City house prices where they are moving are dropping. See maps below.

Map 2. Affordability Based on Income (1)

Provided by: Department of Public Health and Human Services
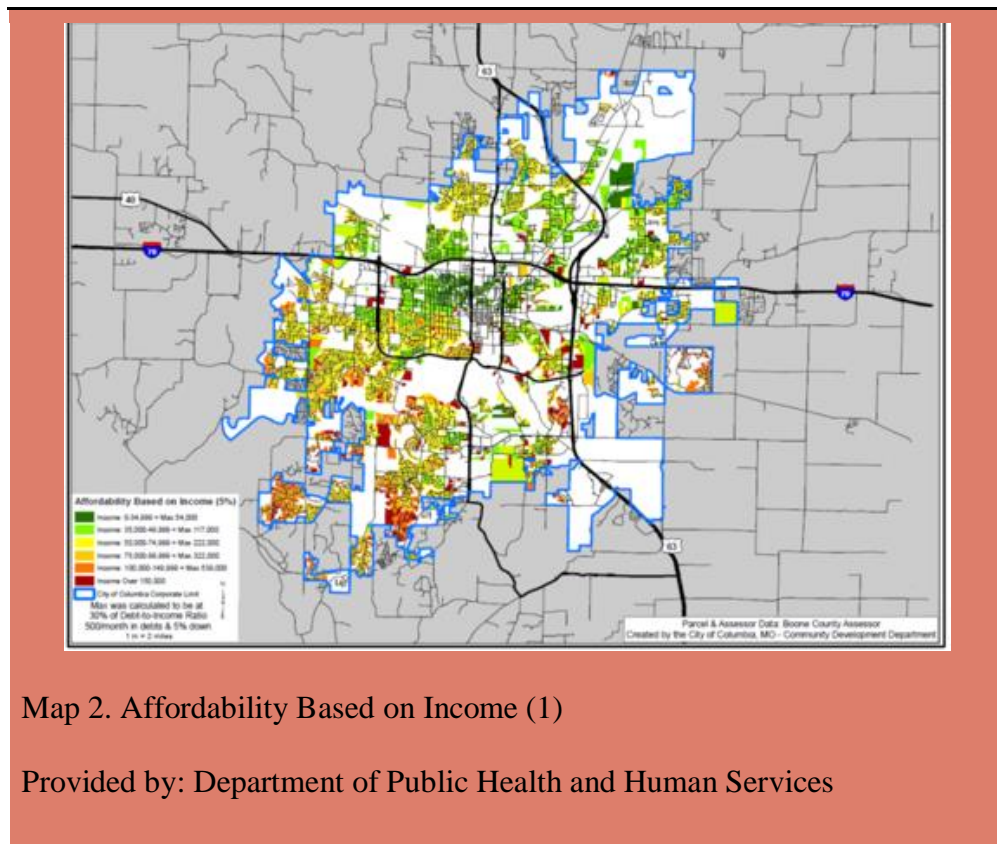
Map 2. Affordability Based on Income (1) demonstrates a distribution of affordable residential parcels throughout Little Osage City with dark green being the most affordable and dark red the least. There is a correlation between higher cost housing and the racial and economic distribution pattern as depicted in Map 1. Map 2. shows a heat map of affordability under the assumption of a buyer having 5% down and $500 in non-housing debt with a back-end ratio not to exceed 45% and paying no more than 30% of

their monthly income on housing costs. Based on county assessor data on residential

parcel values.
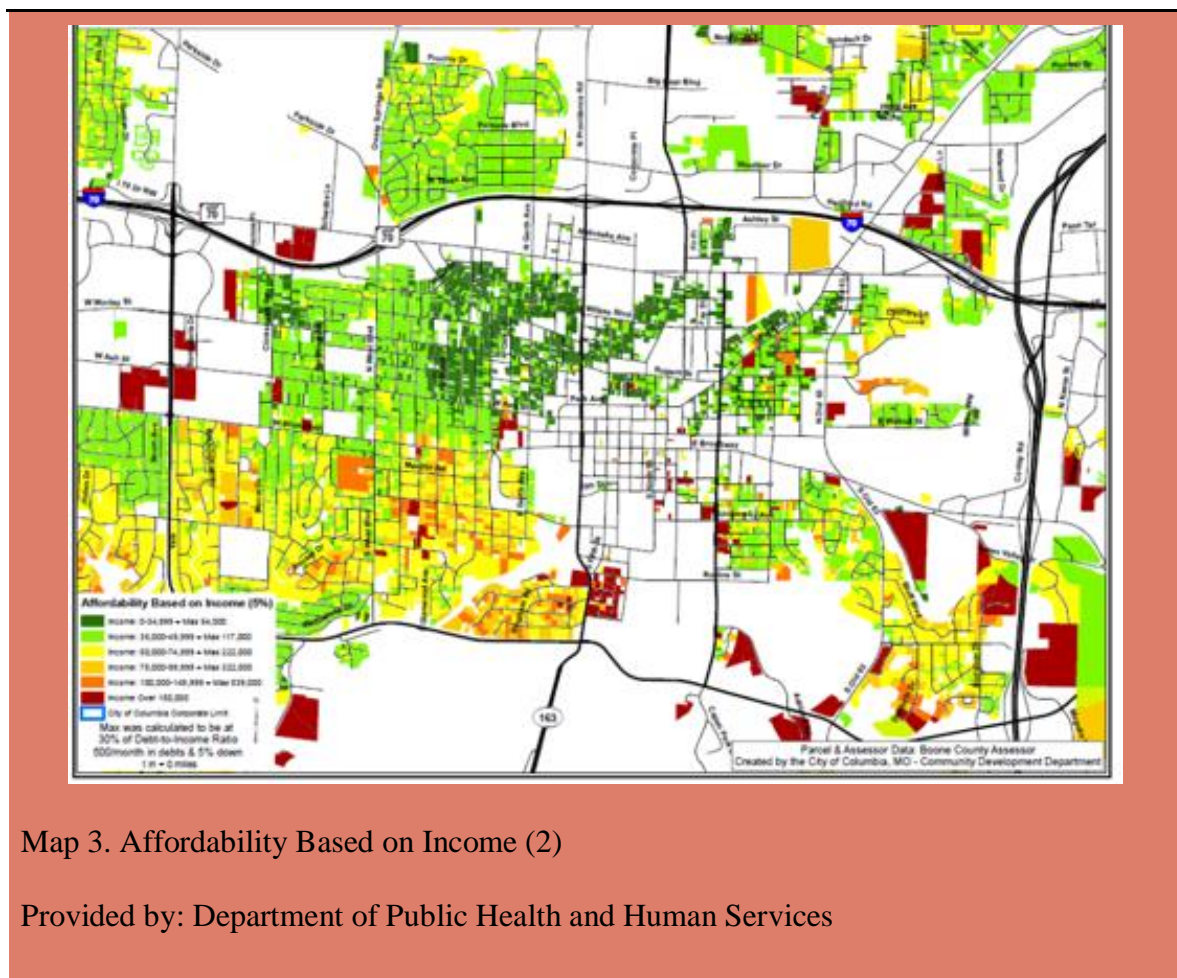
Map 3. Affordability Based on Income (2)

Provided by: Department of Public Health and Human Services

Map 3. Affordability Based on Income (2) is the same information as in Map 2.

Affordability Based on Income (2) but is zoomed in on central Little Osage City. Again,

we can see that Grand Boulevard (pseudonym) represents a clear line of affordability,

which correlates with Map 1.

FÀEI in Little Osage City. The combined histories of city-school wide racism

and employment, economic disparities and discrimination in Little Osage City, brought a

group of Black families together and formed Families' Àṣẹ through Ethnic Identity (FÀEI). FÀEI started in September 2014, during a warm, Sunday afternoon dinner, when Miss Anne (considered an elder Black leader in the city) gathered her friends, church pastors, educators, and community leaders for a discussion on what to do about Black boys and girls being over disciplined in their public schools. A month after the Michael Brown inhumane shooting in Ferguson, Missouri (Justice Department, 2015), and after having lived through the increased of Black murders by police, the people gathered were bursting in desire to prevent another violent police brutality. Most importantly, the people who gathered wanted to intervene in the school violence against Black students that had contributed to the school-to-prison pipeline for many of them or their children. Moreover, on this occasion, the town met the gown: community members and leaders joined in concern with public school educators and university scholars to discuss an intervention to school violence against their Black children. FÀEI was birthed from this fiery passion to humanize the public-school experience of their Black children and other non-white children. As a local community educator and teacher of some of the parents' children, I was invited to partake in this beginning discussion.

Space as Non-traditional Family Involvement in Little Osage City

While "place" is understood as the geographic and material realities surrounding individuals, space is known to be more symbolic in nature. In this dissertation, I utilize Soja (1996) to conceptualize space and produce data related to the following question: In what kind of school district and its policies (place-**space**-subject) do FÀEI individuals perform their subjectivity? Specifically, I will consider "a third existential dimension… provocatively infusing the traditional coupling of historicality-sociality with new modes

of thinking and interpretation" (Soja, 1996, p. 3). In this case, I consider family involvement as a space provided by the school system for families to engage and interact with their children's schools. In Little Osage City's single public-school district, there were three designated spaces for families to be involved in their children's education. First, there were the schools' PTAs. However, based on the narrative of FÀEI and the families with whom they worked, non-white families felt excluded or did not have enough non-white families to represent their needs and concerns in these PTAs. Second, families were able to become involved through Families for Public Schools. In attending these meetings personally for multiple months, I did not see non-white families represented in these meetings. Instead, I saw community leaders and former school principals organizing and managing an organization that was supposed to be for parents. Finally, the public-school district contains Title I programming, through which, according to federal mandate under Every Student Succeeds Act (Section 1010. Parent and Family Engagement), the district must involve families in planning and decision making of certain aspects of schooling (Anderson, 2015; Leadership Conference Education Fund, 2016). When examining the composition of the Title I schools in the district at the time of this performative case, the majority of the students were non-White. However, I saw little evidence of parents of these children having access to policy-related discussions or meetings regarding Title I services. As I had been working with non-white families for over three years, as a former pre-school teacher and currently as part of FÀEI, their concern had been unequivocal: their children were having academic and/or disciplinary issues, but families had not felt included by their schools to address the issues.

For these reasons, the families of FÀEI decided to create their organization as one that would include the concerns and humanization for all students, especially non-white students and their families. The humanization aspect of this project encompasses FÀEI's mission: We, the Families' Àṣẹ through Ethnic Identity, are working as a village kneading students, parents and organizations with the public-school system to create sustainable ways to help children succeed academically, socially and spiritually (Mission statement recrafted to create anonymity for FÀEI). For FÀEI, a child is not made up of only academics. Instead, this community group believed in the holistic view of the child, which included children's family and the family's village (who and whatever that may be).

Becoming FÀEI as Data Production

The following data production explored the becoming process of FÀEI. The process explored the becoming of subjectivity of the FÀEI members in relation to their place-space as they conceptualized their being individuals, parents, and citizens of Little Osage City. Members of FÀEI were interviewed to answer the following question: How do FÀEI individuals conceptualize their subjectivity as individuals, parents, and citizens (place-space-subject) of Little Osage City? The following mothers were interviewed multiple times through a go-along interview method (Kusenbach, 2003). (See Table 2. Data gathered from FÁEI mothers) The interviews occurred at their homes, over the phone, and in their work settings (see Appendix A for interview questions).

| Table 2 | | | | |
| Data gathered from FÁEI mothers | | | | |
Mothers	Personal Interview	Workplace interview	Archival	Field Notes
Dr. Serenity	1 home interview 1 walking interview	2 workplaces	In speaking with the mothers, they directed me to retrieve conversations they had in their social media sites.	29 pages gathered through out informal conversations
Miss Anne	1 home interview 1 phone interview	1 work place 2 public speaking sessions;	2 video recordings were accessible regarding her work and public speaking engagements	None
Melanie	1 home interview	1 work place observation and recording		6 pages gathered throughout informal conversations
Other FÀEI member	3 home interviews			7 pages gathered throughout informal conversations
Table 2 Data gathered from FÁEI mothers				

Go-along interview. A go-along-interview (Brinkmann, 2018; Kusenback, 2002) was utilized to observe the contextual interaction the individual has with her employer, city, and school system. A go-along interview was suited given that a traditional interviewing format (as stationary, off-location, and unattached observations) limited where, how, and when the interview was conducted. Go-alongs provided an access to

"parochial realms… and informal networks as opposed to strong social ties… [as well as] the many contexts and symbolic qualities of everyday spatial practices; and they render visible some of the filters that shape individual environmental perception" (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 478). Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, as well as the audio recorded (when permitted by participants); 42 pages of field notes were taken before, during, and post interview according to the ordinances of ethnographic field inquiry (Emerson, 2001). These two non-traditional forms of interviews enabled a data production that focused on the place-space-subject dynamism, rather than a static sense of self. The guiding question for this data production was: How do FÀEI individuals conceptualize their subjectivity as individuals, parents, and citizens (place-space-subject) of Little Osage City?

My entry point to FAIE was Dr. Serenity. Dr. Dr. Serenity, Ph.D. was raised in Little Osage City since birth. She is a mother of four elementary age children, a spouse, and a former elementary educator and summer school principal. She is the co-founder and president of FÀEI. As an educational leader and community activist, Dr. Dr. Serenity feels a deep connection with her ancestors and a calling to move all individuals to obtain an education that liberates them. For her, a liberatory education would dismantle a mentality of fear and worthlessness and build a mindset of empowerment to enrich a community. Dr. Dr. Serenity activism stems from issues she has experienced in classrooms and schools where dreams have been deferred due to bias; both conscious and unconscious. Her goal is to help the community fight against the gravity that is pushing against them. Such fight must occur in both arenas, at the community level and with the power structures that prevent certain individuals from excelling in their strengths.

I conducted four interviews with Dr. Serenity: (1) walking to work; (2) at home; (3) an interview after teaching; and (4) an interview after talking with the superintendent. I attended one of her summer teaching sessions to understand her role as educator. During this time in her classroom and in the playground, I took field notes. I also attended a speaking session she did to women in difficult situations. At this meeting, Dr. Serenity shared her story of surviving gang life. In total, 216 minutes were recorded speaking to Dr. Serenity on her becoming subject.

I continued my ethnographic work with Miss Anne. Miss Anne is a long-time resident of Little Osage City. The mother of five adult children and a grandmother of 20, she is known a co-founder of FÀEI, a motivational speaker, minister, and a dreamer. Miss Anne has worked for two main goals: to empower and enlighten. First, her passion lies to empowering those who are caught off and disenfranchised by society. In the same vein, she is called to enlighten others to understand the experience of those who are marginalized in the hopes that a real difference is made on a personal and political level

I conducted two interviews with Miss Anne: (1) one at her home and (2) another over the phone. I attended two speaking sessions addressed to Christian women and business women that Miss Anne also attended. I attended a work session where she was teaching healthy eating habits through an Afrocentric method: I took field notes, along with audio. A total of 85 minutes were recorded on Miss Anne.

Finally, I worked with and interviewed Melanie. Melanie was raised and grew up in Little Osage City. A mother of two adults and two elementary age children, Melanie holds two master's degrees and is an Air Force veteran. A co-founder of FÀEI, the bulk

of her professional experience has been working with an investment company, particularly as a coach and trainer around diversity for the company.

For Melanie, I conducted an interview at her home and attended a work session. A total of 120 minutes were recorded on Melanie becoming subject; field notes were taken of her home space and work environment; archival data was retrieved from Miss Anne and Melanie as these are public leaders in the community: newspaper articles and broadcast news videos were collected.

FÀEI Acting as Policy Agents

The third aspect of data production explored the policy design process and how FÀEI individuals shaped the process. For this, I attended two policy meetings where FAIE members, Dr. Serenity, Miss Anne, and Melanie were having a conversation with school-district officials. The inquiry question addressed was: How does performativity / place-space-subject shape the proposed policy? This dissertation focused specifically on one of FÀEI's current projects: Root Our Own Teachers (pseudonym), a non-white teaching recruitment effort designed by FÀEI and the school district for the community. I chose to focus on this policy project as it discussed the need for more non-white teachers in Little Osage Public Schools. The belief by the FÀEI families and the school district was that an increased representation of non-white teachers in the schools would increase the humanizing treatment towards non-white students given the cultural understanding of these teachers.

The purpose of this data production process was to understand how FÀEI was engaged in educational family policy involvement. My point of entry in these meetings was as an activist-scholar. Before entering the meeting, I had conversations with FÀEI

members (Miss Anne, Dr. Kosher) to discuss why this meeting and this policy were important. I attended two Root Our Own Teacher gatherings: (1) a signing of scholarship for graduating seniors from the program and (2) a banquet dinner organized by FÀEI to recognize new selected students. Field notes were taken for these events. News articles (e.g., local periodicals, 2017; local periodicals, 2014) that depict the growth of FÀEI, email exchanges between FÀEI members and the superintendent, all which signaled the impact FÀEI has had on the Root Our Own Teachers. Five interviews were conducted with members of administrative team that participated with Root Our Own in order to understand the rationale behind Root Our Own teachers. Finally, I was able to access two archived recordings (80 minutes) of FÀEI's board meetings where Root Our Own Teachers was discussed.

Positionality Deconstructed: A Leap into Postcolonialism.

Over the past 20 years, qualitative methodologies have instructed re-searchers to include a positionality statement or "personal research stance... [where] researchers choose how they will position themselves in relationship to the research, the researched, and the research context" (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013, p. 38). A research position or stance, theoretically, suggesting a stagnant position suggesting idle movement, one removed from the inquiry and involved as an observer. My leap from re-searcher to inquirer attempted to elucidate how the identities and roles that I brought to this inquiry--Mexican American, well intentioned educator, and an unconscious racist-- were transformed into an acceptance of my indigenous, immigrant, and activist being. To do this leap, I followed Jackson and Mazzei's (2008) deconstructive approach to AE where

[r]ather than more and more reflexivity that would reveal more and more about

the researcher's ways of knowing, we argue that autoethnographers might

question what they ask of voice (or the narrative "I"), confront what they hear and

how they hear (their own privilege and authority in listening and telling), and

deconstruct why one story is told and not another. (p. 300)

Jackson and Mazzei (2008) are demanding a leap away from over-reflexivity, for which I

responded by deconstructing AE through a plugging in of Politics of Dignity and

<<<choques>>>. Engaging in deconstruction helped me explore how my identity and

role as activist-inquirer attempted to avert a colonizing project. I deconstructed AE and

my traditional identity markers by re-imagining and re-constructing the way I

conceptualized analysis (I discuss this further in the section below under Thinking with

Theory: Reflective action as data analysis). I explored my transformation of being by

following the auto reflection of self and its intricate relationship with the ethno of culture

(in this case the subjective becoming of FÀEI as an organization). Such description

attempts to signal how FÀEI was formed and its significance in my journey to become an

activist.

The guiding inquiry question was: How does a mestiz(o) immigrant along with

FÀEI become and act (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational

policies? Using a dissertation journal (over 300 pages: electronic and on paper), ongoing

reflexive journaling, and a plugging in of choque, I entered and demonstrated an--

analytical--reflective action (explained in the following section) of my experiences in

relation with FÀEI, place, and space (see Table 1.). Deconstructing AE fostered a

performative space of my "I" rather than only a stagnant positional narration; the

performance enabled me to challenge and transform "the plays of power that constitute truth-telling" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 309) around my subjectivity from re-searcher to activist-inquirer.

Thinking with Theory: Reflective Action as Data Analysis

Jackson and Mazzei (2018) have called inquirers to engage in methodological disruption and its ontological and epistemological adherents:

> While we have tried to distance ourselves from conventional meanings and uses of many words from our vocabulary in the writing of this text, we are still burdened with much of the language that comes from our humanist history--such as analysis. And surely, we cannot think 'analysis' different without also disrupting notions of 'data,' 'voice,' 'experience,' 'representation'... each of these concepts and practices, although they have been deconstructed, assumes its own structure and carries its own ontological and epistemological weight. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 718).

I used the Thinking with Theory (TwT) tool of "plugging-in" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to disrupt the analytical process. Plugging-in is a "practice of activating, or thresholding, always in-between… [where] a 'plugging in' of ideas, fragments, theory, selves, affects, and other lifeworlds as a nonlinear movement, always in a state of becoming" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 728). If an analytic method is required for plugging-in, the following is as close as a method becomes:

1. Putting philosophical concepts to work by disrupting the theory/data binary by decentering each and instead showing how they constitute or make one another,

2. Being deliberate and transparent in what analytical questions are made possible by a specific theoretical concept and how the questions that we used to think with did not precede our analytic practice (as research questions might) but emerged in the middle of the "plugging in,"

3. Working the texts repeatedly to "deform [them], to make [them] groan and protest" (Foucault, 1980, pp. 53-54) with an overabundance of meaning, which in turn not only creates new knowledge but also shows the suppleness of reach when plugged in,

4. Disrupting "when" and "how" this work occurs--refusing it as a stage in a procedure and using it as the process itself. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 728)

I chose <<<choque>>> as the philosophical concept that I used to plug in with "data" in this dissertation.

Choque, a relational tension between two cultures, permitted me to conceptualize a different[11] form of analysis that is not a prescribed methodological template. With choque, I inserted "pause" as an alternative to analysis. Inspired by Patel (2016), pause is a type of reflective stage and space where ideas ruminate, create newness, or are simply idle for the sake of being. I re-conceptualized analysis as a reflection, an active pause that disrupted my own data production process. Such reflection or reflective action allowed me to "engage in a more risky methodological practice during field research, and to re-

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[11] Creating newness in a methodological process (e.g., analysis) is warranted if, as inquirers, we are "to suggest that our concepts of research methodology are always capable of doing more, of becoming something even more '[i]nteresting, [r]emarkable, and [i]mportant'" (Schulte, 2018, p. 194).

think the usefulness of critical ethnographic paradigms" (Rodriguez, 2016, p. 236). Using

this reflection, I engaged in re-thinking the usefulness my ethnographic-type of

dissertation project. The creative, new, and risky methodological practice symbolizes my

work as an activist-inquirer or activist-scholar (I used these two interchangeably) since I

began working with the families of FÀEI.

Working with FÀEI and the mothers for over three years, I operated in the

following process:

(a) creating tension between ideas, concepts, actions,

(b) reflexivity, and

(c) action-based disruption.

The process of reflection with these three action items enabled me to engage in a

humanizing project that moved away from colonial (capitalist + antiblack) ideologies of

production and violence against those seen as inferior human beings (Patel, 2016). The

process became a reflective action: one where my reflection was part of a "process of

exceeding itself in its own carrying forward" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 718). For this

dissertation, reflection as an analysis "[did] not come at anything but is emergent and

immanent to that which is becoming" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 718). The reflective

action allowed me to engage in the similar fashion I worked with FÀEI. This dissertation

and its methodological process took on the form of an activist-scholarship: one that

moved beyond "the confines of language" provided by the acquired "data." Instead, I

produced a relational tension between interview-text-analysis and a reflective action of

tension, reflexivity, and action to push boundaries in academia with an idealistic intention

to conduct a type of decolonizing venture.

My role as an activist-scholar was to work with the ontology and epistemology that prioritized the lived experience of those with whom I did inquiry--Black families (Rodriguez, 2016). Instead of focusing solely on colonizing identity markers (e.g., gender, race, religion), I used choque as a schematic cue to decenter my identity and that of the families. The decentering of identity required a continual disruption of analysis. Disrupting analysis and decentering identity demanded a fluidity of a new type of analysis: a reflective action.

I processed the reflective action by plugging in a choque to decenter my intersecting identities. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 give detail of the reflective action for each one of the inquiry questions. To answer each inquiry question, I focused on role/identity[12] as community and family member (family in the non-traditional form), as an educator-scholar, as an activist-scholar, and as a reader (which includes you, the reader on this last marker). As the reader, you experience it in this format:

			Reader's Production
		Activist-Inquirer	
	Educator, Re-searcher		
Community/Families			

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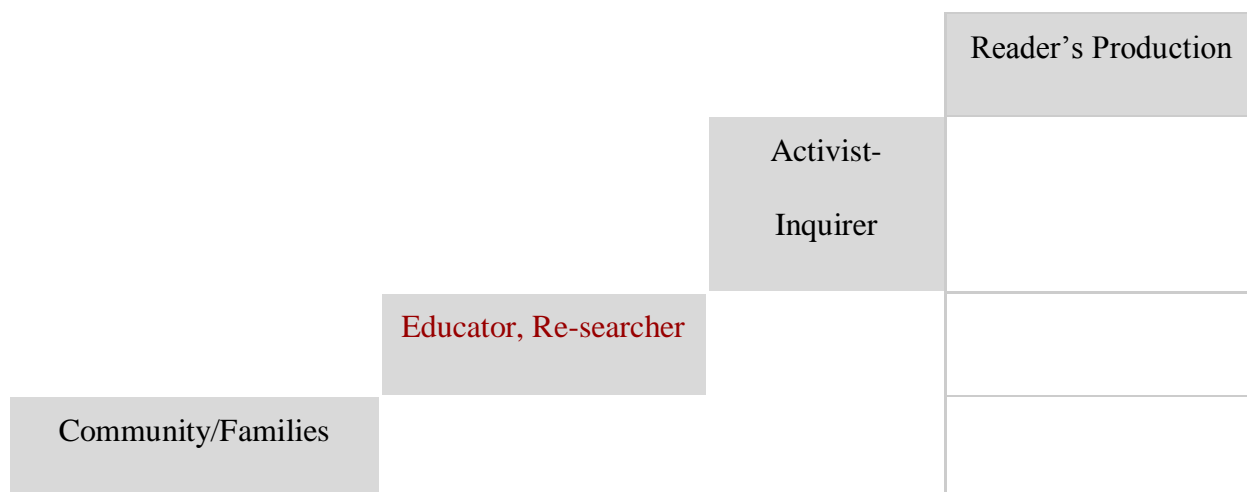
[12] I chose my professional roles as an identity, with the conception that my traditional characteristics (e.g., male, Mexican American, heterosexual) were part of each of my role, adding complexity to role/identity.

I turn to the middle of the page to symbolize my entering into a place and space where I was invited to attend.

The shape of the column is intended to increase or decrease importance.

I ask that you keep this section in mind, however, it will not be shown below. Although your production is there, it becomes marginalized.

Each identity/role enters into relational tension with one another, permitting a reflective action to occur, turning into a subjective being.

Reflective action: My uprooting, Your Excavation

Reflection as a methodology has allowed me to become an activist-scholar that relies on a <<<choque>>> to pause (Patel, 2016) and disrupt my work with the Black families. The reflective action in chapters 4, 5, and 6 are what I call an uprooting of racial and capitalist forms of research, by using a reflective method of creating tensions between ideas, reflexivity, and action-based disruption. As described in the preceding section, the uprooting takes the form of columns engaging in a relational tension with one another (Families←→Educator, Re-searcher←→Activist-becoming←→Reader's Production). In this relational tension, the mothers refer to Dr. Serenity, Melanie, and Miss Anne, along with FÀEI and the data collected with them. Educator, Re-searcher becomes my voice, one which follows a more traditional, procedural (western) training,

which I discuss in chapter 4. The voice of the activist-becoming counters the Educator's

thoughts by being able and willing to engage in critical and disruptive thinking: a

thinking that is non-western and unorthodox. Finally, the last column is giving room to

your own production and creating an acknowledgement that as the reader, you are

bringing to the reading of this dissertation your own biases and experiences, thus

producing a different type of knowledge that I have detailed. The goal is for the column

of families, educator, activist, and reader to form a reflective action: creating tensions

between ideas, reflexivity, and action-based, all which formulate an ongoing disruption, a

<<<choque>>> and thus a space for reflection and a pause.

My form of writing, thus showcases an uprooting, where I begin by writing up my

reflection to symbolize an upward moving direction; it is a lifting of ideological roots; a

building of ideas, feelings, and other productions that I make of my experience with the

families. For you, the reader, it is meant for an excavating experience, where as you read

left to right and downward you are producing your own meaning of the information

presented. Rather than try to understand and create a cohesive product, I'm attempting to

signal the subjective form of knowledge production: one form created by the inquirer--

myself--and the other form created by the reader, yourself. The empty spaces if nothing is

written it creates a pause; a moment of reflection, a production of uncomfortableness for

something missing, a choque to our ingrained ideology to fill in an empty space. In each

section of my analysis, you, as the reader, will begin in my end as you attempt to

excavate racism and capitalism from educational research.

As you, the reader excavates downward, a relational tension is also formed between the imagery provided and the expectations of traditional writing to be read (a reading of left to right, moving downward).

Uprooting in chapter 4. In chapter 4, I used IE's strategy of an entry point, began with a memory as an educator, and uprooted (the analytical action to uproot is explained the subsequent section called Reflective action: My uprooting, your excavation). I focused on the verbal invitation Dr. Serenity extended to me as her child's preschool teacher to attend a community meeting. The purpose of the gathering was to discuss the racial educational disparities Black children were experiencing in Little Osage School District. In Dr. Serenity's invitation, her voice contained a fiery passion, one that contained fervor to incite a necessary change in the school district. To signal this fiery passion, I selected the feeling of (cou)rage to explore its significance.[13] I specifically focused on rage, to give an alternate credence to a common stereotype that some Black folks receive by U.S. mainstream culture: "angry Black man/woman." Although different from angry, rage gives the feeling of anger a forward movement that elicits transformation, such as the formation of FÀEI and the creation of Root Our Own Teachers. By centering on the feeling of rage, I wanted to value its function, while acknowledging the role it had in shaping the transformation of my identity.

In reading my journal entries, I plugged in a choque that helped me formulate analytical questions that created a relational tension between the colonial desire of my

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[13] Overall, I gave feelings a precedence to engage in an antithesis of capitalistic and anti-black ventures (feelings are not a productive force; showing feelings demonstrates weakness). Relational tension, as part of choque, guided me to focus on a conception that would clash against capitalist and anti-black values.

"I." The analytical questions guiding chapter 4 were: (1) How did my "I" perpetuate colonial power? And (2) how did I end such perpetuation during my work with FÀEI? These questions are answered through a reflective action that inserts a tension between ideas (e.g., journal entries, experiences, and memories), reflexivity (an introspective voice that challenges my scholarly experience), and action-based disruption (e.g., a counter action that reformulates colonial desire).

Uprooting in chapter 5. In chapter 5, I began with the research question for this dissertation, which focused on Black families and myself becoming policy agents. The reflective action in this chapter includes the following: (1) there are three columns representing Family, Inquirer, and Activist-Becoming. Inquirer and Activist-Becoming have transferred from chapter 4 to signal a new perspective had been developed and was now in relational tension with Family; (2) columns take different forms to demonstrate importance—the wider the column the more important; (3) the column titled Families is now colored Black to represent the "being with Blackness" and the letters are red to represent the bleeding that occurs due to injury or wound that come into a choque with inquirer and activist-becoming; and (4) these columns are, in turn, engaging in relational tension with one another to create meaning.

In my uprooting upward, I chose an entry point that reflected the reality surrounding these families (e.g., teen mothers, raised in the ghetto, enduring poverty). Immediately after describing these realities, I focused on the experience of Miss Anne since she spearheaded the creation of FÀEI. Subsequently, Melanie's and Dr. Serenity's experiences followed to uproot their experiences with colonial racism. In this uprooting, I plugged in Politics of Dignity which demands a new consciousness to be formed "using

new symbols" and adopting "new perspectives towards the darkskinned," surrendering "all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct" (Anzaldúa, 2007, pp. 102-103). For me, the new perspectives and consciousness occurred as I began to deconstruct my childhood stereotypes of Black people and construct new meanings based on their reality. I demonstrate the deconstruction of these stereotypes in chapter 4. The deconstruction occurred as I encountered the families' values and dispositions through my work with them in 2014.

In our working together, I also learned how the families deconstructed a colonized mind and spirit, while constructing one that prioritized their Blackness. The FÀEI families constructed new meaning in their lives by threading values and perspectives they exuded in their everyday life and the disposition. The forming of FÀEI materialized the re-construction of a consciousness that elevated their darkskinned complexion and the culture that accompanied it. As we created FÀEI, the mothers and I spent nearly 10 hours on a weekly basis discussing issues related to the racism they and other families experienced in their children's schooling. In discussing their schooling experience, the mothers also mentioned their personal histories.

Working with them at a personal level for over 3 years, there was a theme that was consistent: Black people have abilities that are kept buried due to systemic and personal forces, yet these mothers did not allow such system and personal problems from holding them down. Throughout our work, the families described how Black people in the U.S. and in Little Osage City encountered a public system that had belittled their humanity and deprived them of resources: a "plantation.[14]" Acknowledging such

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[14] The term plantation is used often in our talks, yet, when discussing in public, as public figures they would not refer to the system in these terms. I will trouble such disconnect a different section.

discriminatory system, they would not surrender to such endemic reality. Instead, these mothers had spent their adult lives unraveling the systematic dehumanization and deprivation by tapping into their Black culture and the "genius inside" of them (Miss Anne, Dr. Serenity, and Melanie continuously used this phrase). I observed how these mothers embraced their Black identity and culture, along with navigating their work and personal relationships: they used their identity, their culture, and abilities to navigate their everyday lives, even the formation of FÀEI.

Plugging in Politics of Dignity to understand the lived reality of FÀEI families, I created analytical questions that helped me further explore how these Black mothers used their subjectivity as a form of survivance from the "plantation" system they referred to. The analytical questions were: (1) which family values and disposition did these Black mothers used to combat the "plantation" (endemic system) they faced? (2) What impact do families' values and dispositions had on battling the endemic system they felt and believed they were entrenched in? To answer these questions, chapter 5 re-centered the ontology these mothers used to create a different perspective over their lived reality. I used the following sources of information to help me create this new perspective: my daily encounters with these mothers, listening to interviews, the mothers' presentations to the public-at-large, and field notes. There were six key words and phrases that FÀEI families used to invoke a new consciousness: (a) Motivated (b) Inspired, (c) Zealous, (d) Be Brave, (e) Be Bold, and (f) Be Fierce. In my work with these mothers, these keywords and phrases became (and continue to become) themes in their lives used to follow an inner voice that desires a better life.

Uprooting in chapter 6. Following the uprooting format of chapter 5, chapter 6 includes the families' experiences, the inquirer, and the activist-becoming with the reader as a marginalized author. The black color formatting is to signal a prioritizing of Blackness with red letters symbolizing an opening of wounds due to a choque that is occurring in relation to inquirer and activist-becoming. Chapter 6 specifically disrupts the "'when' and 'how' this work [chapter 6] occurs--refusing it as a stage in a procedure and using it as the process itself" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018, p. 728). There is a temptation, a colonial desire to place this chapter in a timeline fashion, which cannot occur given that the enterprise of policy making does not take a linear model. In fact, I am following a conception of policy by Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011)

> Policy then cannot be reduced to an algorithm (iterations, community, learning, influence or whatever) and the school cannot be reduced to policy. What comes across in our analysis is school as a creaky social assemblage, that is continually re-validated and shorn up and moved on by the various efforts of networks of social actors with disparate but more or less focused interests and commitments. (637)

Ball et al. (2011) advocate to a similar assemblage as required by Jackson and Mazzei (2018) for a type of analytical process. A process without procedure, rather one engaged in an interwoven process with many actors and their context. For this dissertation, FÀEI members take the role of what Ball et al. (2011) calls a policy entrepreneur: "These are actors who originate or champion…principles of integration. They are charismatic people and 'persuasive personalities' and forceful agents of change, who are personally invested in and identified with policy ideas and their enactment" (p. 628). Both the subjectivity of

FÀEI, their role, and context are interwoven in chapter 6 to showcase the creation of a policy agent or as Ball et al. (2011) names them policy entrepreneurs.

Together, chapter 4, 5, and 6 "data," text, and analysis created an opportunity to, what Jackson and Mazzei would say, produce a relational tension, a <<<choque>>>, and became an analytical opportunity to reconstruct what analysis could be.

Summary of Chapter 3

The methodology section presented aimed to provide an opportunity to humanize the research process, with the intention to prioritize and value the lived experience of Black families. Entering into a more humanizing methodology required a shift of western research approaches to one that I called politics of dignity. Through a Thinking with Theory approach, I plugged-in choque and relational tension to create a disruption between traditional methodology to one that would assist in the creation of new.

Chapter 4: Becoming an Activist Inquirer

In September 2014, I entered the lives of the FÀEI families in the middle, as a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. Concurrently, I entered as an educator, teaching preschool for socially economic oppressed, white and non-white children. At that point in time, I entered with a training in counseling psychology, one that relies heavily on the traditional aspects of science (e.g., quasi-experiments, reliability, validity). I entered into an unknown world to me--as Mexican American--that of Black families after receiving an invitation filled with a fiery passion: a passion of (cou)rage.

I entered with a *desire* to "help" children reach their full potential as students: my focus would be their families' wellbeing. Through my work in prevention science, I had learned of the importance of parent training to decrease students' psycho-emotional distress that students brought to the classroom (Borden, Schultz, Herman, & Brooks, 2010). In working with students and my clinical counseling practice, I noticed that their psycho-emotional experiences stemmed from larger socio-political dynamics such as poverty. Prior to working with the Black families, racism was never an issue for me. During the time that I entered the lives of FÀEI's families I was uncomfortable discussing race and racism, partly because I grew up with a Mexican culture and a family that was silent about the topic. Yet, my Mexican culture and family members instilled in me anti-black and colorist sentiments (e.g., "el negrito," "el morenito" [*the little black person, the little brown person]*), of which I was unconscious (I will expand on this sentiment on the section below). Joining FÀEI in 2014 challenged my role as educator, my racial/ethnic identity, and unconscious prejudices, inadvertently shaping my activist-

inquirer being. This chapter explores the relational tension between families' Black experience and livelihoods and the identity/roles I brought to their lives as FÀEI was being formed.

I asked the following question to understand the transformation that FÀEI helped spark in my becoming an activist inquirer: How does a mestiz(o) immigrant along with Black families become and act as policy agents for educational policies? In plugging in choque (a relational tension, a form of disruption), it prompted me to create a relational tension within my identities/roles and my (colonial) desire to "help" the FÀEI families. The analytical questions that I conceived by interweaving colonial desire and my intersectional identities were: (1) How did my "I" perpetuate colonial power? (2) Did "I" interrupt such perpetuation during my work with FÀEI? If so, how? If not, what prevented me from interrupting colonial power to occur during my involvement with FÀEI? The answers to these questions addressed this project's overall objective to explore Black families' parental involvement and policy development at a local district level. The section below invites you to enter a tension between the community/FÀEI, the educator, re-searcher, the activist-inquirer, and you, the reader. Such tension is aimed at offering answers to expand the role of the inquirer when working with families.

Below, readers will experience an answer to the analytical question posed above by creating a reflective action; I call such action an "uprooting upward" of my experience as I work with the FÀEI families. The uprooting upward is my analytical form that (1) allowed me to engage in a symbolic uprooting of racism by disrupting the traditional sense of the analytical re-search process of writing down an analysis; while (2) enabling you, the reader, to co-produce with me a symbolic dismantling of settlers' colonialism

through an excavation process by reading down. What follows are four columns that depict the different roles that I experienced: (1) the column titled Community/FÀEI provides direct quotes from FÀEI members, excerpts from the city, or draw on personal memory related to the larger Little Osage city and FÀEI; (2) the column titled Educator, Re-searcher includes my personal journals and memories from when I began working with FÀEI; (3) the column titled Activist-Inquirer draws on my memories and feelings as I chose to act different despite my distressful experiences as an Educator, Re-searcher; and (4) the column titled Reader's Production is yours, the readers' conception and creation of the other three columns. The reader's column is left blank to give that person an opportunity to insert their own creation and render the meaning you are creating important.

There is also white space in the next pages. The white space is part of the relational tension between the reader and the information provided. The objective of the white space is to create a discomfort: a temporary pain and anguish that the brain will experience as the text is out of place, out of order, and different. The following writing, a choque, shows a glimpse of my journey from re-searcher to an activist-inquirer.

Entering in the Middle of FÀEI Families' Lives

Community/FÀEI	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader's Production
The families (and other members of the community) have always been by my	I turn to the middle of the page to symbolize my entering into a place and space where	This section below and above is my own reflexive production	

side. Here I share
their voices.

I was invited to
attend.

of acting and
becoming agent.
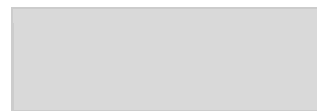
There were 50 or more people at the first gathering as FÀEI was being formed.

FÀEI began at the house of Miss Anne through a gathering of 50 or more educators, leaders, and other community members enraged by the experiences that Black children continue to have in their school district.

Dr. Serenity described the forming of FÀEI as such: "It really was birthed out of my and other [Black] teachers' experiences in Little Osage… As much as we are all fans of Little Osage Schools, we all have been HURT in some way or have seen some way the schools have failed students." (Newspaper, 2014)

I wonder how many more have already met prior to this for the same reason--to discuss the wrongdoings of public schooling against their children, Black children, in the safety of their household?

It was an event that looked like a Sunday picnic at a church event. However, it was held in the front and back yard of Miss Anne's house. I joined with a DESIRE to "help out."

This desire is what immediately received a challenge by the families. I entered the meeting wanting to "help," yet the families and leaders did not need helping.

In sitting there and listening to the horror stories that different generations had endured in their schooling, I encountered (a SILENT) rage in their voices.

I sat frozen. Not knowing what to do.

They wanted something more. My desire to help rendered a savior-mentality and feeling: here I am, a doctoral student, trained as a counselor and educator, I imagined I was invited to "save." Yet, in listening to their experiences, I sat frozen, needing rescuing.

For the first time, I saw rage (disgust, anguish, perseverance) in the eyes of people: rage out of injustice and inhumanity. Yet, the feeling of rage was filled with a DESIRE for self-improvement.

It is this rage and desire that I turn to as reflective action to share a glimpse of the becoming and acting of policy agent of these family members.

Rage is combined with desire. Below, I'll describe the families' and my desire.

Family/Community	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader
.	In working directly with the families; in sitting and just listening to their pain, I soon gained the fortitude to also feel rage and visualize their humanity to slowly begin speaking up against the racist system that was condemning them to what Dr. Serenity had expressed: "We are in a spiritual warfare that is bringing my family down… The plot of the enemy against us [Black people] as people."		
		Listening to the rage (disgust, anguish, perseverance), the humanity, and the fortitude of the families, gave me fortitude to speak up.	
	I was frozen—not knowing what to do—by the families' pain.		

I entered the middle of these families' lives who have endured pain and have been enraged by the inhumane mistreatment of public places towards them; families who have endured a spiritual warfare against their Black bodies, minds, and spirits. The battle is beyond material and the school system: it is a multigenerational spiritual battle to reclaim a humanity stolen by the place they've inhabited, and the spaces they navigate on a daily basis. Acting as an agent of policy is more than just an educational feat; first, it becomes an acting as an agent for their own humanity: an act that gives them the fortitude to enter into conversation with the school district, a micro-system within the larger macro-system. The act for agency is first towards an act for dignity and respect by the place and space they inhabit. As an educator and researcher, I did not know what to do with such demand for

I remained frozen by the families' pain.

I was frozen by the families' pain.

respect and dignity. Yet, I continued to desire to "help" them improve their educational experience.

I was not listening.

The families' pain gave me a motivation to "help them." Yet, I couldn't find a way to heal such intergenerational wounds.

I was not listening.

Family/Community	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader
Dr. Serenity, in our second interview together, described her experience growing up in her mostly-white elementary school: "I fought [white] kids at Little Osage Elementary and in my neighborhood [for] calling me nigger."	I wanted to "help" Dr. Serenity and the other parents with similar racist experiences heal from the pain. I couldn't.	Every time we met, these families recounted stories about either themselves or their children experiencing micro-aggressions or overt disciplinary aggression towards them (inside or outside the school).	
Melanie, during our interview, described the internalized self-hate for being of Black skin: "Internalized self-hate, self-loathing… It's because of all the reasons society told me I was not beautiful. And it's because of so many layers: media, history, the present situation of our people, my SES."	The strategies I learned in my counseling degree and prevention science were of no help. How could I help heal such deep wounds and memories?		

It was a desire to "save."

Save who?

Listening to the families, I sat frozen—not knowing what to do.

Save Educator, Re-searcher.

I was frozen by **Blackness**.

Educator, Re-searcher

Activist-Inquirer

Community/Families

During the time of our first FÀEI meetings, I was teaching in a Montessori preschool that served predominantly Black children.

Save the Educator, Re-searcher.

As a male educator, I had chosen to receive my Montessori preschool certificate to "help" ameliorate children's learning issues before reaching school age: as a male educator, I also wanted to be that positive role model in their early years.

I entered the classroom with the desire to "help."

I was frozen with **Blackness**.

I was not listening.

Save the Educator, Re-searcher.

I entered the classroom and was taken aback by my thoughts as I worked with the Black 3-5 year old students. I was surprised of their intellect and abilities.

Part of the Montessori philosophy is to observe the children while they work, paying close attention to their body mechanics, their emotional response, and their process of completing tasks. I took individual notes of my students.

I wanted to help, yet I noticed my inner thoughts questioned not only the Black children's abilities, but also the parents.

I was distraught by my doubting thoughts of these children.

Listening to my thoughts, I was frozen by my own prejudiced ideas.

Save the Educator, Re-researcher.

Working with the
children brought me
closer with many
families. I was so
close with the
families that some
invited me to share
dinners with them. In
attending those
dinners, I saw and
briefly experienced
the living conditions
of my students.
Conditions of single
parents working two
jobs to make ends-
meet; small and
disorganized
apartments in
deteriorating
neighborhoods.

I pulled out of their
houses wondering,
why were they living
in these questions?
My Mexican culture's
conception of Black
people in the U.S. had
always been that they
were lazy and did not
work hard enough?
Was my culture and
family right about
these Black families, I
wondered?
I began questioning
these parents abilities
to parent and raise
their children.

Save the Educator,
Researcher.

I was frozen by
Blackness.

Community/Family　　　Educator, Re-searcher　　　Activist-Inquirer　　　Reader

My not knowing and not saying was paralyzed because I had not learned to talk about racism. Similarly, as an educator, I was not used to speaking about race and racism--I didn't grow up talking about it in Mexico.

At the time as a counselor and later a preschool teacher, I didn't see racism happening. I saw disparities happening in education based on poverty and the mistreatment children received by parents.

I categorized the racial mistreatment that I saw happening in my school as the poor disciplining by the parents. I blamed the parents for not trying. That was my assumption. Like this, my desire to help was misguided by a deficit assumption of the parents.

I was not listening.

Save the Educator, Re-searcher.

Miss Anne talked about growing up

with "a desire to want something more out of life."

"A desire to want something more out of life:" (Cou)rage

(Listen!)

Listen.

She continued by stating: "I was hungry for so much more in life. I knew I had to fight and scratch to get out. And I kept making screwed up mistakes that would keep me captured in the cycle of poverty. Having a baby at fifteen, 'come on! Living in the projects; not having a good relationship with my dad, who I idolized. There were so many things against me."

(Listen, sit, and work with **Blackness**).

(I was not listening).

Community/Families   Educator, Re-searcher   Activist-Inquirer

Although I kept hearing, over and over again, stories of poverty, racism, and a desire for more, I did not listen.

"A desire to want something more of life." Miss Anne

Listen.

(Cou)rage.

I was not listening.

As a researcher and educator, how am I supposed to listen when I have been trained to provide standardized curriculum and treat the patient based on evidence-based treatment.

Standards for whom? By whom? Treatment designed by whom?

If I did listen, was I supposed to feel anything? How about anger?

Wasn't I supposed to be objective? Yet, these families have generational angst against an educational system that has mistreated and mislead them into a school-to-prison pipeline.

My bias against Black people and my

professional standards were incongruent with my desire to "help" students.

How could I help the Black students of my preschool if I did not listen to their actual needs: needs produced by generational poverty and racism.

"I was hungry for so much more in life." Miss Anne exclaimed during one of our home interviews.

Listen.

(Cou)rage.

By not listening, did I ignore my students and their families' realities? Did I not value their human experience?

(Sit and work with **Blackness**).

Trust the families.

Sit and work with **Blackness**!

(Listen to their reality).

(Listen to their human experience).

Trust **Blackness**.

Sit and work with **Blackness**.

In working with the children and their families, I immersed myself in their lives and culture, disrupting a misguided ideology I had developed as a child; an ideology that was regenerated when I came to the states by peers and media, and later my own colleagues.

(Listen…to families' feelings).

Listen to families' feelings.

(Listen… to families' (cou)rage).

Listen to families' human reality.

Listen to families' (cou)rage.

Trust the families.

Trust **Blackness**.

Trust the families.

I was brought up to have racial biases

towards Black people since I was in Mexico. When I came to the U.S., I had a discomfort and fear of being with Black people.

I was socialized to dislike Black people and I could not understand my feelings.

(Sit and work with Blackness).

Sit and work with **Blackness**.

LISTEN and TRUST **Blackness**!

Listen
and
Trust
Blackness.

In sitting with my Black students in the preschool and reading to them one on one, I saw a glimmer of light in their eyes; I saw a spark of love and care in their eyes; I saw a flicker of joy in wanting to learn; in their eyes, I saw a little human being waiting to become someone productive, just like their parents, aunties, and grandparents.

SIT and WORK with **Blackness**.

Sit and work with
Blackness.

LISTEN to
Blackness.

(Cou)rage.

Listen to **Blackness**.

Listen and trust
(cou)rage.

Listen to my desire.   Trust the families.

Listen to my desire.

Listen and trust
(cou)rage.

Community/Family	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader
		In working directly with the parents and families, I quickly realized that they were doing more to discipline their children than the credit I gave them.	
		I began to see love and care by the families towards their children.	
		What I saw in the children was a mistrust towards their teacher.	
		My co-teacher spoke of Black boys as "troublemakers" and a need to "break them of their misbehavior	

so they are ready for public school.''

The Black children reacted to the coldness that the teacher brought about into the classroom.

Similarly, the children reacted poorly to the singling out of their behaviors by the teacher.

As I worked with the families and the children outside the school, they told me of the disrespect happening in the classroom by the teacher. Trusting the parents, I soon noticed that it was only Black boys being reprimanded for the smallest fidgets.

Listen and feel (cou)rage.

I began to feel rage for my students' mistreatment.

My desire to educate soon turned into a desire to speak out against the disrespect that I saw in the classroom.

I wrote in my teacher journal: "So, I've finally gained the

courage to talk to Rose about her approach to redirect/correct children across the classroom. She noted that it is one of her shortcomings, but I did not hear anything about fixing it."

Save the Educator, Re-searcher.

Community/Family	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader

Listen to rage.

Generational mistreatment into a school-to-prison pipeline:

Miss Anne's ex-husband was in and out of jail, along with her two sons. Now her grandson was beginning to be treated by his teachers and principals with disdain and negligence.

Listen to rage.

Rage was felt by these families by such mistreatment. I saw it

first hand as an
educator, when my
white colleague
insensitively punished
several Black
preschool boys.
I saw this happen for
a year, even though I
learned to give
children a more
loving treatment.

I talked with my co-
teacher:
I felt ignored.

Listening to these
families' recount their
experiences, and
seeing mistreatment
happen with my own
eyes an educator, I
began to harbor rage.

Yet, was I not the
educator and
researcher? Was I not
supposed to be
objective and know
how to treat families?

The (cou)rage
families allowed me
to see in their
vulnerable moments
of recounting their
experiences gave me
permission to also be
enraged.

Community/Family   Educator, Re-searcher   Activist-Inquirer   Reader

Be enraged.

Feel...Rage.

Listen to rage.

Feel...Rage.

Be enraged.

Feel...Rage.

Listen to rage.

Feel… Rage.

Be enraged.

Feel… Rage.

Listen to rage.

Feel… Rage.   .

Be enraged.

… pause...   Feel… Rage.   Listen to rage.

The rage stems from the continual mistreatment of

It is the year 2017 and according to Dr. Serenity "[w]e're in a spiritual warfare. Always have been. … avoiding the TACTICS that are wanting to bring us [Black individuals] down. Bring my family down, bring us

Rage.

Black students mistreated by their public schools. The rage is part of the sentiment for a mechanism—over disciplining, endemic poverty—that dehumanizes individuals to make

as a people down… and there" Dr. Serenity shared with me in our first interview.

them believe they are "bad."

Rage is towards that entrenched system that zaps the spirit of an individual from an earlier age.

"TACTICS that are wanting to bring us down."

Rage.

Listen.

...pause...

Rage.

Dr. Serenity's young Black son asked his mother, "Am I a bad student?" Without an intervention by his mother, this young boy could have been destined to the prison-to-school pipeline.

In 2015, Dr. Serenity's Black 2nd grader was punished and sent to the office for laughing at a white peer's joke; this same child, being reprimanded and sent out of the room for straightening his legs during criss-cross session because his legs were numbing. This was not unusual treatment. The young boy had been experiencing this type of discipline since entering public school. The young boy once asked his mother, "Am I a bad student?"

A child reprimanded for being a child is sign of a larger issue in the school system; however, a Black child being reprimanded and sent out of the room continuously since entering public schools signals an education system, a school, and a classroom teacher that has an issue with **Blackness**.

"Schools gave 156 black students out-of-school suspensions, representing 58 percent of students receiving the punishment. Black students represent around 20 percent of the student population. The black students also represent 66 percent of those suspended who qualify for free and reduced-price meals." Little Osage School District

Rage.

The Black families showed rage for being treated as less than human; I began feeling that same rage, as I remembered being treated with the same level of inferiority.

The families shared how they healed the feeling of inferiority, while being reminded, daily, that they were inferior. A wound being sawn yet opened again, day in and day out.

...pause...

Listen.

How can a person with education still feel inferior? These Black mothers have master's degrees and PhD degrees.

How can a person with intellectual abilities, sociocultural capital, and other personal gifts feel less than?

...pause...

Rage.

I am not Black, I'm an immigrant;
I'm not Black, I'm brown;
I'm not Black, I have an accent.

Yet, I'm an educator and PhD candidate.

…pause...

I listened. I learned. I was (en)raged.

I was enraged for seeing the mistreatment against Black children.

I was enraged because I began to remember those similar tactics used against my own brown and immigrant body.

As an immigrant, I internalized an inferiority mindset due to my social class, my accent, and my skin color.

...pause...

I listened.

I did not know what to do or how to react to this information. I simply reinstated, what the families said: it's unfair; it's not right.

		My desire to help turned to a listening and learning.
TACTICS that are wanting to bring us down: imagined geography, desegregation, forced integration, Black as criminal.	Tactics: Ingrained mentality of inferiority (of criminality).	...Pause...
Dr. Serenity explained to me how her mom moved all of them, as children, from the South of town into the inner city of Little Osage city with the hope the children would be with peers that resembled them: more Black children. The rationale for the move was because Dr. Serenity and her siblings were being called nigger by white children. While in the inner-city school, Dr. Serenity bought into a notion that to be a Black person, one needed to be tough and criminal. She began living two lives: of a good student, but a gangster in the playground. She just wanted to fit in; she wanted to survive.	Tactics. Black as criminal; Black as tough. Black is bad?	The mentality of Black as bad was ingrained in Dr. Serenity's through her own father and brother, who role modeled criminal activity as a way of survivance. Because Dr. Serenity wanted to survival the bullying of other children, especially other Black children who called her white-washed, she took on a persona of gangster.

Miss Anne discussed her experience being bussed from the inner city in Peoria, IL to the suburbs. Only 20 minutes away, driving into the suburbs she felt she had entered an entire new world. She immediately felt like an outsider. As her friends and her, mostly Black students, got off the bus she saw how each one of them dispersed into different classrooms. She entered her classroom and became the only Black student in her class.

Tactics: Forced integration.

Entering a new world as a Black student, imprints in the mindset a mentality of difference. Miss Anne knew she was different and she owned it to her own advantage.

Granny talks about how during segregation, her primary and secondary education was taught by the finest Black educators, people with doctorates and master's degrees. After desegregation, not one Black educator was hired and she was taught by white teachers.

Tactics. Desegregation.

...pause...

Politics as tactics for what purpose?

Moynihan (pseudonym) Street— the one street in Little

Segregation. Desegregation. Marginalization.

	Osage City known for separating Blacks on the North side and whites on the Southside—promotes a notion of Black as poor and Black as criminal.	Mistreatment. Inferior. Dehumanized.
Tactics.	A segregated geography in Little Osage City makes it a tactic to keep Black people "down."	We forget that geography, just like knowledge, was also created by us humans. In this case, Moynihan Street was created for what reason?
...PAUSE...	Listen.	Tactics.
Moynihan Street	Known as the Black street, ridden with crime.	Today, Moynihan Street is gentrified.
Moynihan Street	According to FÀEI families, Moynihan Street has been one of the principal roads in Osage City, allowing school administrators to access the school district office.	Section 8 housing sits on Moynihan Street; it houses MLK Park. These two areas are commonly known to be inhabited by Black people—as well as African refugees.
Moynihan Street	Geography gives life to rage FÀEI families feel.	Moynihan Street has been an important street in Little Osage City since over the past several decades it separated Black residents and white residents. Post segregation and during the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s, Moynihan Street was known as a high crime area and

Community/Family	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader
		predominantly known for Black residents.	
Geography as tactics. Politics	How does living in the Midwest, in State of the Osage, specifically in Osage county, prevent Black people from living simply as human beings?	State of the Osage; Osage County; Little Osage City. These are three regions in one geography.	
"...avoiding the tactics that are wanting to bring us down." Dr. Serenity	Listen. Trust.	How do we avoid the tactics of dehumanization? This is where I examined beyond material reality. Which tactics was Dr. Serenity referring to? In chapter 5 I turn to historical evidence of tactics keeping Black people down, in modern day slavery.	

… [pause]...

Community/Family	Educator, Re-searcher	Activist-Inquirer	Reader
...rage...			
	Listen.		
		...rage...	
	Trust.		
...rage...			

Listen.

...rage...

Trust.

...rage...

Listen.

...rage...

Trust.

...rage...

Listen.

...rage...

Trust.

...rage...

Listen.

Save the Educator,
Re-searcher.

Listen. Trust. Act.

Reader, join me to
action: Listen, Trust,
Act.

| Community/Families | Becoming Activist | Inquirer(s) |

… PAUSE…

As an educator and researcher, what does it take to feel?
How does it feel to not know what to do?
In embracing feelings and not knowing, one enters a realm of reflective action: one that activates listening, feeling, and trusting.

Breathe.

Feel not knowing.

… PAUSE...

Listen.

Listen.

Trust.

Trust.

… PAUSE...

Listen.

Listen.

Trust.

… PAUSE...

I'll admit it, as an educator and re-searcher, I was used to acting and doing; I was used to solving.

Listen.

… pause...

I entered an educational ideology that values the growth of students holistically and more comprehensively.

The Montessori curriculum allowed me to view the learning student as one with innate potential.

… pause...

In shifting careers from counseling psychology to

As an educator and researcher, I had become part

	school policy, I hoped for a disruption of my capitalist desire: to help. To help, which I would define as hegemonic-masculine professionalism.	of chattel, bounded by professional standard guidelines threaded between a professional organization and a client. I wanted more of my profession than being bounded by professional guidelines that prevent a more comprehensive treatment of an individual.
… pause...	I had difficulty feeling. I rushed through events in my life with a need to fix. Fix and solve—such a patriarchal, hyper-masculine trait. Think and fix: being solution focused was a trait that was encouraged in my training through the many different awards and scholarships I received. In fact, in my psychology training we had an assessment sheet with the following: data, assessment, plan (of action). When I saw clients, I was trained to listen (with an empathetic ear) for solutions. In fact, in most cases, we would only see clients for between 7-10 sessions and then they would get referred out due to a wait-list and severity of the presenting issue.	To help became a need to fix: a solution-focused mentality, hyper-masculinity. I began to wonder if we as professionals are taught under a hegemonic masculine trait? The FÀEI families have taught me that the fixing and treatment of mental health does not have a timeline. The current timeline and treatment plan for healing is based on a production mechanism to solve: a capitalist venture, where, as the professional, I am expected to produce healing of the mind. My client is then treated as just that, a client, a recipient of services that ze bought with monetary currency.
… PAUSE...	Listen.	Listen.
… PAUSE...	How did I begin to listen and feel as an activist?	… Listen...
… PAUSE	As an educator and researcher, I heard the	

negligence Black people experienced in their public education.
After pain and discomfort, I began to listen.

My desire to solve was stunted by not knowing. I didn't know what to do with the anger the FÀEI families were referring to; I didn't know what do with the pain the FÀEI families were reliving when talking about their schooling experiences.

...PAUSE...

In the beginning my DESIRE to act as an educator was one to resolve: one to help. During the beginning of FÀEI I became frozen; I froze listening to families' experiences about the "tactics wanting to bring us [Black people] down."

Can my desire to solve inequities be easily accomplished through logic and materiality when, according to Dr. Serenity, the problem is in the spiritual realm?

… PAUSE...

I'm not spiritual; at least, I was beginning to explore spirituality when FÀEI started. When Dr. Serenity talked about spiritual warfare, I didn't have the slightest idea of what she was referring to. How would I be able to understand what Dr. Serenity was experiencing when I couldn't even fathom neither the idea of spirituality and warfare? Warfare against who?

.... PAUSE ….

Today, as I understand spirituality, there is this notion of transcendence. Moving

beyond the material reality; spirituality requires leaving logic and materiality.

...pause...

Spirituality, **blackness**, and death.

The death of an ideology; the death of a hegemony against Blackness.

Is death of hegemony necessary for Blackness to live?

… PAUSE...

Spirituality, **Blackness**, Death?

"Black is a modifier that changes everything. The power of blackness to change all that comes after is part of its close relationship to death. To be preceded by death is to pull meaning into 'dense and full space' (Ellison, Green, Richardson, & Snorton, 2017, p. 166).

Blackness as meaning bearing.

… (pause)...

Blackness as power producing.

Blackness as "a modifier that changes everything."

What do we, as scholars, do with such concept as **Blackness** as modifier?

Listen.

Trust.

From Dr. Serenity, "We're in a spiritual warfare. Always have

Listen.

been. … avoiding the tactics that are wanting to bring us down. Bring my family down, bring us as a people down… slavery in general.. The plot of the enemy against us [Black people] as a people… We got the residue around that. How we're living now, the modern day slavery right now. All of that is spiritual… I got to dismantle those beliefs."

Spiritual warfare? Tactics? Modern day slavery? Is it just information? No. It's the lived experience of Dr. Serenity and many Black families. But, I don't understand it. What do we do with this information?

… (Listen) ....   … (feel) ...   . (trust)...

50 plus people attended the first initial invitation by Miss Anne. It was 2014 and 50 plus attended enraged, disgusted that their school system continued to discriminate and mistreat their children.

What does rage feel like?

… pause …
a harboring of (cou)rage
(an emotion).

RAGE as the foundation to becoming and acting agent.

A Desire TO HELP AND FIX no more.

Miss Anne exclaimed she grew up with "a desire to want something more out of life."

(COU)RAGE

A desire to want more than a generational aggregate of inflicted wounds.

In September of 2014, after Michael Brown's murder, Dr. Serenity invited me to attend

<p style="color:red; text-align:center;">the community meeting to
discuss racial educational
disparities and mistreatment
of Black children in Little
Osage School District.
With hesitation, I attended.</p>

<p style="color:red; text-align:center;">Reflective action:
listen, feel, trust.</p>

A Desire… Listening, Feeling and Trusting Blackness.

The objective of this chapter was to understand how my mestiz(o) immigrant being became and acted as a policy agent along with Black families. As a form to disrupt the traditional form of asking a research question, I used TwT to "plug in" theory to ask different questions that would offer more or different answers to be conceived. I proceeded to plug in a <<<choque>>> and created the following two analytical questions: (1) How did my "I" perpetuate colonial power? (2) Did "I" interrupt such perpetuation during my work with FÀEI? The "I" became the identity that I took when first interacting with FÀEI families. To disrupt my "I" of identity I crafted a relational tension between Community/Family, Educator, Re-searcher, Activist-Inquirer, and you, the Reader,[15] which produced the reflective action shown in the previous section. While I engaged in an uprooting of my coloni(zed/zing) Educator, Re-searcher being, you, the reader engaged in an excavation process that experienced my transformation into an Activist-Inquirer: one who co-founded FÀEI, along with Black families and gave shape

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[15] The main difference between Re-searcher and Inquirer is the former has traditionally relied on a (predetermined) systematic approach to investigating a question, where the latter is an open-ended asking and exploring allowing answers to serve as guide, rather than a system (the difference is discussed in detail in Chapter Three under Politics of Education).

to local district policies. The relational tension between my identities/roles shifted from a (colonial) desire of "helping" Black families into an anticolonial being and doing: an activist-inquirer who listened, began to feel, and trusted Blackness.

With the uprooting and excavating written process, I wanted to artificially demonstrate a shift of perspective that interrupted colonial power. Your experience with the disjointed written form and the white space was to disrupt and interrupt colonial power in written re-search. The intention was to experience the being of an activist-inquirer. The white space was part of the relational tension between the reader and the information provided. The white space was aimed at creating discomfort: a temporary pain and anguish that the brain should experience while reading without order. The relational tension and choque aimed to create discomfort, pain, and anguish to assist in the creation of new. The objective of the tension was to help the reader experience move theory into action: action being the feeling of discomfort. However, the purpose is not to stay in discomfort, but to use the feeling—just as (cou)rage was used—to facilitate an individual transformation. I challenged not only my professional training, but also the anti-blackness sentiment I was inculcated in Mexico and in the U.S.

Pausing, listening, and trusting: A challenge to my masculinity. The initial interruption of colonial power occurred during my transition as an educator to be a trained Montessori early childhood teacher. Bounded by stereotypical notions of masculinity, I gathered the energy to push through my cis-gender masculine socialization and enter a field I perceived it to be only for women. The shift to early childhood education immediately helped me disrupt the traditional expectations of a male, particularly in education. It was made known to me by my colleagues that my presence in

the early childhood training and in my preschool classroom was an act of defiance against social norms for men. Yet, I immediately encountered a privilege I was blinded to: a type of hegemonic masculinity.

I entered the lives of the FÀEI families with an awareness that I shared with them a level of marginalization due to the discriminatory experience I too had in my schooling. Yet, my early childhood training taught me to recognize and check my status as a male. During my training, again and again, I was reminded that because I was the man in the room I was asked to take the lead in many occasions. Such experiences created a hyper-awareness of the privilege and power that my male identity had on other people, especially being around women.

With an awareness and sensitivity of my cis-gender masculine privilege, I began to participate with the FÀEI mothers. The analytical process that I created for this dissertation—the reflective action—attempted to highlight the same awareness and sensitivity that I used when working with the FÀEI mothers. The reflective action was part of an acknowledgement that my cis-gender masculine traits created a different sensation in a room filled with mothers. A different dynamic also played out during our encounters since I was the only one without children. I had earned the mothers' trust, yet it could have been due to our shared marginalization or still more insidious, that fact that I was a male academic validating their experiences. To this day, there are many times that Miss Anne introduces me as "the researcher" or the "doctorate student." Regardless, I was attuned that the intersection of academic and cis-gender masculine traits that I embodied created a level of hesitation that I sensed as mothers would speak around me: a cautious tone, yet with conviction. Nevertheless, similar to my early childhood training,

the FÀEI mothers looked to me for leadership. Because I still felt like I was learning the mothers lived experiences, I chose to pause and listen, hence the reflective action.

In listening to these families' stories, I remained cognizant that my male identity produced a subconscious level of authority over the mothers. So much that as we were forming FÀEI, the mothers chose me as one of the organization's leaders. The mothers entrusted in me, not only their lived experiences, but many personal stories filled with trauma and survival. The trust towards me was palpable. And I chose to accept their trust and the leadership position they assigned to me. I question whether the trust that I offered to the mothers was one imbued with a subconscious desire to exert my masculinity: an exertion of a socialized authoritarian, protective trait as a cis-gender male to "help" those in need. In acknowledging my socialized authoritarian masculine trait, working with the FÀEI mothers, I began to question that desire to act as a helper.

Challenging my desire to help. I entered the FÀEI families' lives with a desire as a trained school teacher and counselor to help: the helping notion that I imagined was one based on improving the school conditions of children, in particular their household conditions. Specifically, I imagined evidence-based solutions and treatments, which was how I was trained as a counselor. I was trained to deliver an evidence-based series to families called "The Incredible Years" (Webster-Stratton, 1992). Focusing on the concept of "evidence-based," I learned and practiced solutions or treatments to anxiety, depression, and other psychopathologies that followed protocols and routines. According to current scientific trends, evidence-based research requires longitudinal, valid and reliable tests that demonstrate a desired outcome for a particular problem (e.g., decreased anxiety through the usage of mindfulness techniques). Such professional-focused

solutions taught me the *ideology* that I had the ability to change students' and families' deteriorating conditions through protocol treatment.

The desire to "help" stemmed from a savior mentality that as a professional in education I held the solution to resolve students' problems. I genuinely had the belief that only my training and abilities were needed to improve the learning conditions of students. I believed that by training parents on The Incredible Years, they would be prepared to raise their children (e.g., discipline them, create routines, give praise). I was trumped by so many factors each time I provided an intervention. The training I had received as a classroom teacher and later counselor did not prepared me for the systematic anti-blackness that Black families experienced. For example, I would provide support for bedtime routines but the mothers would not follow through; either they were exhausted from work and they let the children watch TV until they fell asleep, or they were frustrated with their personal situations so they did not have the mind for creating routines. Likely, it was not new "routines" that the families wanted. There was an instance when a mother showed up to my school telling us that the child had not eaten or slept because of a neighborly conflict where guns were fired; she didn't have time to feed the child because both were stressed and afraid.

I was stunted by the situations because they were out of my control. Many of the families I was working with were Black and/or Latina/o; some were white families. In any case, the families' situations were beyond mine or my schools' abilities to alleviate a larger issue. I grew disappointed because I could not "help" families "fix" their problems. Some of these situations included harassment by the city or police while another mother reported her situation to a news outlet where she spoke against the mistreatment by the

city. I became disappointed at my inability to "help." I grew exhausted of the problems my students presented (e.g., hunger, sleepiness). I was frustrated I could not become the savior.

In moments of disappointment at the larger societal system and in my inability to "help," I reflected on my conception of empowerment. If my evidence-based training could only do so much for the students and parents and the rest must be done by them, how much was I believing in the capacities of these individuals to take care of their own situation? The disappointment, frustration, and exhaustion was a masculine, paternalistic, and egotistical necessity to be a savior. How could I shift my focus from empowerment— an act of providing power—to simply listening—an act of lending my space and time so their power (potentiality) had room to be heard and expanded? What would happen if I only listened? What would happen if instead of only meeting in the classroom, I trusted the families enough to meet in their houses?

In my situation, after working with the FÀEI families, I began to listen to their stories without a need to "help" or fix. Then, in the space we shared, ideas came to the forefront. I took these ideas and experiences, and continued to listen. I began to feel with the families: a feeling of rage for years of daily mistreatment and discrimination. I listened, witnessed, and felt aspects of families' Black experience.

Challenging anti-blackness. My ideology of helping and empowering socioeconomic oppressed families soon changed when I began working directly with Black pre-school children. I immediately saw my bias against the young children and their families. Rather, I felt it. I felt an initial fear. Immediately, images and words from my childhood that spoke against Black people raced through my mind. From my older

siblings to media, I was socialized to be afraid and dislike Black individuals. I noticed a hyper-vigilance towards the activities of Black children, questioning whether they would actually do their work correctly or not (a disbelief in their abilities). When looking for aesthetically pleasing work, I noticed a preference towards the white children over the Black children (I saw beauty in white children over Black children). In working with the children directly, I saw in their eyes a sparkle of beauty, joy, love, and a desire to learn—not for Black children, however.

When I caught myself having these prejudiced and inhumane thoughts: I was distraught. I had learned a Montessori curriculum that harnesses the potential of every child, so that each child achieves their own greatness. At the same time, a doctoral course was challenging me to examine institutionalized racism in the classroom. In reflecting on my thoughts about Black children, I realized I was being part of that institutionalized racism, a racism that treats Black individuals based on unexamined prejudices. The instructor challenged me to examine my prejudices and to act on the contrary. The weeks that followed, I began forcing myself to sit, work, and allow my discomfort be washed by the Black children's desire to show me they could do work. As I sat challenged my prejudice and discomfort, the children began taking a special fond of my instruction. We began to connect with more warmth and care for each other.

Trusting and working with Blackness. As I began to connect with my students, the families invited me to their houses to get to know them. When I finally shared time with the families inside and outside my classroom, I learned about the systemic hindrances shaping their lives. For example, several parents had low paying jobs because they were not being promoted given a lack of education, despite their tenure and

expertise at the job. There was also a mother attempting to complete her online education while working two jobs and taking care two young boys.

Over the course of two years, I shifted my ideology from seeing the children and their families as trouble-ridden to one where they were being trapped by the mistreatment of different systems: underemployment, miseducation, criminal system, social services. While meeting in these families' houses, I saw in their faces joy, curiosity, hard work, perseverance, and much love towards their children, one another, and even me. I began building relationships with the families. I began to babysit the children and share meals with the families and the children. I found a care and appreciation for the humanity that I failed to see earlier in my career as an educator. The families and I began to trust each other.

In trusting the families' stories, I learned that I, too, had been socialized to feel inferior as a Mexican immigrant in the U.S. And like the families, I also had strengths and abilities beyond my cultural identity marker. The socialization of inferiority had been done through certain tactics. For instance, the families discussed the impact of desegregation in theirs and their children's schooling, leading to little teacher diversity in the classroom. The families also discussed the mistreatment they and their children had received by their white teachers and peers. I was too familiar with these stories. I, too, had experienced the lack of teacher diversity and had witnessed the mistreatment of my Black students.

Slowly, over the course of two years, my initial anti-blackness stance began to shift. I began to value the humanity of my Black students and their families. My desire to "help" soon shifted towards examining my intersectional identities and how these

impacted the place and space that these families inhabited. I began to ask myself, how did "I" perpetuate colonial power? How would I end such perpetuation? These self-reflective questions allowed me to shift from a dominant researcher to a collaborative facilitator along with the families to shape local district policies. As I began to acknowledge and appreciate the humanity, potentiality, and power of Black people, I began to ask myself where did such anti-blackness come from: Why was such anti-blackness so ingrained in me?

Summary of Chapter 4

My work with FÀEI helped me witness the Black mothers' desire to obtain a better life: a life without anti-blackness. Witnessing, listening and trusting the Black mothers' experiences assisted my transition from Educator, Re-searcher into an Activist-Inquirer. As I began to trust and listen to the mothers gave me the (cou)rage to also confront and transform my own colonial, anti-black sentiments into an appreciation of Blackness. Similarly, the artificial uprooting and excavating of the writing process of this dissertation was also an opportunity for the reader to confront colonial formats of doing re-search. Most importantly, the mothers' desire to tackle and purge anti-blackness from their identities turned into a salient strategy of their daily livelihood while I was working with them. The following chapter focuses on these mothers' strategies to uproot what Dr. Serenity calls their "modern-day slavery" identities.

Chapter 5: "Deconstruct, Construct" One's Humanity

I begin this chapter with an acknowledgement of growth: a deconstruction and construction of a rigid professional identity/role to one that pauses, listens, and trusts. Over the years in working with FÀEI mothers, I learned to trust. It is this trust that enabled me to transition into an activist-becoming. With this mentality and part identity (a characteristic I'm still developing), I was able to continue the work with FÀEI families, which led me to co-create with them a district-wide program to increase diversity in the teaching force of Little Osage District. This chapter focuses on the families' deconstruction and construction of their selves. Specifically, I explored how Black families and I become policy agents in our school district. I was interested in how FÀEI individuals conceptualized their subjectivity as individuals, parents, and citizens (place-space-subject) of Little Osage city. I share a glimpse into Black families' continual becoming (human being) within the structure they lived in: a structure created between geopolitics (place-space) and the conceptualization of subject (place-space-subject). I begin with Dr. Serenity's narrative, once again, because it is through her invitation that I entered the lives of these families. She reminded me:

> We're in a spiritual warfare… Always have been. … avoiding the tactics that are wanting to bring us down. Bring my family down, bring us as a people down… slavery in general. We got the residue around that. How we're living now, the modern-day slavery right now. All of that is spiritual… I got to dismantle those beliefs.

I want to highlight this "residue" of slavery that shaped the becoming-subjectivity of FÀEI's co-founders. As an educator, trained to follow protocols and standards, if I had

followed these protocols, I would have dismissed Dr. Serenity's concepts of "spiritual warfare" and "modern-day slavery" as just symptoms of depression due to an overwhelmed lifestyle given that she's a working mother, with four children, and a past as teenage mother with a criminal past—a recipe for an anxious-ridden individual or someone who might be prone to depression. Rather, instead of "diagnosing" Dr. Serenity, I paused, listened, and trusted her.

The choque that follows is created by a theoretical conceptualization of subject, a Politics of Dignity, as created by the performative dynamism (relational tension) between subjectivity, place, and space (Anzaldúa, 2007; Patel, 2016). This Politics demands a new consciousness to be formed through a constant relational tension between dominant culture and culture as difference, in order to adopt "new perspectives towards the darkinned" (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 102). The objective is to "[d]econstruct" the residue Dr. Serenity discusses and "construct" a new consciousness that gives priority to difference and elevates one's humanity (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 103).

In using an anticolonial conceptual framework (Patel, 2016), I began uprooting the colonial systems of power by first recognizing that the United States and State of the Osage sits on stolen land. The recognition allowed me to enter into a relational tension between the geography of Little Osage City, the State of the Osage, and the U.S. and the politics that are applied to such geography. The tension is immediate from the inception of the United States of America when the politics of a stolen land attempts to liberate certain people (White males with property) while erasing the humanity of others (Indigenous People, Black slaves). In the subsequent sections, I share a glimpse of local and national anti-black sentiments bounded to geography and politics that cement a

modern-day presence of colonial reality that have impacted the sociopolitical treatment of Black individuals.

Geographical Place as Segregation

In order to reflect on a modern-day slavery suggested by Dr. Serenity, I will follow an anticolonial theoretical conceptualization, where geographical place and political space shaped the behaviors and aspects of the identity of Black people. In today's modern slavery, according to Dr. Serenity, darkskinned people continue to operate with ingrained ideologies that seem as though one is the property of a master, to the point of feeling inferior and subhuman. Allow me to pause and create a reflective action on why Dr. Serenity may be feeling this way by providing historical evidence for her rationale.

Locally, antiblackness was lived by the citizens of Little Osage City through Jim Crow behaviors. In a community-based research effort conducted by members of the group Racism is Alive (pseudonym), racially restrictive covenants Deed Books were collected across the Little Osage City from the years 1920-1940. During this time, wording on the transfer of property stated things such as "These premises shall never be deeded, leased or mortgaged to a person of the negro race, …" (Western Heights, an added Subdivision of Little Osage City, State of the Osage, 1933) or one prohibition included the following:

> Subject to restrictions in vol. 180, p. 468: Ownership by anyone other than White
> Race Prohibited. None of the lots described in or shown on said plat shall be
> conveyed, leased or given to, and no building erected thereon shall be used,
> owned or occupied by any person not of the white race. This prohibition is not

intended to include the occupancy of a person not of the white race while employed in or about the premises by the owner of occupant of any land shown on said plat or any building or improvements thereon. (Riverside, a Subdivision of Little Osage City, State of the Osage, 1926)

A Jim Crow sentiment, anti-blackness, was rampant in the Little Osage City. One of the major problems of this type of racial discrimination is the impact of wealth accumulation for Black people in places like Little Osage City. Another example of cultural anti-black sentiment is the removal of thriving Black owned business from a vibrant downtown area in Little Osage City. After desegregation and urban renewal of the 1960s, these businesses were pushed to the outskirts of the city, filling those spaces with parking lots and government owned businesses like the post office. As the Black community lived north of downtown, these Black owned businesses provided their community with a sense of belonging. In contrast, now, many Black neighborhoods in Little Osage are now food and commercial deserts.

Today, although racial restrictive covenants may not be an issue, de facto segregation is evident based the correlation between higher cost housing and the racial and economic distribution pattern housing affordability (see Map 1 in Chapter 3). Neighborhoods north of the main street, west of the downtown area had always been comprised of Black residents, whereas the south of town was known to be inhabited by white residents. The maps show clear affordability in the north-west side of the downtown area, with least affordability areas south of downtown. Interestingly, downtown gentrification is attracting new housing development, pushing out Black residents to the outer periphery of the city, especially into the north side of town (Little

Osage City Strategic Plan, 2016-2019). The housing development continued to be guided by an anti-black sentiment pushing out Black residents, and I ask, building for who? From Map 1, as Black individuals are being pushed out of the southeast of town, new development is expected in that same part of town (Map 4). Finally, there is common knowledge from white outsiders looking to buy or rent that have been guided away from areas known to have Black residents. This segregated area, designed for Black families is where FÀEI was birthed. Purposefully, FÀEI meetings were held in the house of Miss Anne, located in the northwest side of downtown in the area that until recently was known as a Black neighborhood ridden with "crime and drugs."

Political Spaces of Antiblackness

Little Osage City's de facto residential segregation was part of a larger U.S. federal narrative to differentiate Black people as subhuman. One clear example was the Moynihan report that gave anti-black supporters ammunition to suggest that Black Americans were sub-human to the white group. Language such as "… the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which…seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole" (Moynihan Report, 1965, n.p.) The writing and narrative used in the report signaled a deficit-mindset towards Black Americans, specifically Black mothers. The negative narrative against Black families and Black mothers continues today by reporting the high number of Black teenage pregnancy social equity issue in this country in comparison to their white peers—this comparison fosters an inferior difference between Black and white citizens. In Little Osage City, Black teens have amongst the highest numbers of teenage pregnancies. I want to raise the flag around Black motherhood being vilified in the 60s. But also, in today's governmental reports,

Black (teenage) pregnancy is seen as an equity issue—rightfully so. However, I question

these reports. Are the reports to engage in activity to lower teenage pregnancy or are they

there to signal deficiency in a particular group? I would dare to theorize is the latter. If

Dr. Serenity and other FÀEI members complain of a slavery residue, these reports are to

highlight a population's weaknesses.

Both the Moynihan report and the teenage pregnancy reports can be treated as

governmental anti-black policies with a deficit narrative around Black mothers. When

there is an underlying (historical) stigma around Black mothers, especially Black teenage

mothers it creates an inferiorized (colonial-political) marker that signals mothers like

Miss Anne, Melanie, and Dr. Serenity who were all teenage mothers as "seriously

retard[ing] the progress of the group as a whole."

I want to raise another red flag and place a colonial-political marker on the

consequence of *Brown v. Board* (1954) unto Black teacher population in public schools.

A FÀEI member discussed the way desegregation banished most Black teachers. She

noted how "not one [Black] teacher was hired" who held master's degrees. The number

of Black teachers in public schools in the United States significantly decreased after

Brown v. Board (1954) and scholars suggest that it was part of anti-black hiring practices

(Oakley, Stowall, & Logan, 2009). Although the court ruling of *Brown* was aimed at

desegregation, it was evident that socially, the people across the U.S., including in Little

Osage City continued to have anti-black sentiments. Failure to hire qualified Black

teachers, signals to an anti-blackness sentiment in the hiring practices by local actors.

These anti-black hiring practices has led to a disproportionality of a lack of Black

teachers in schools, which, to this day, impacts the increasing number of non-white

public school students who do not see themselves reflected by the white, middle class, female teacher (Loewus, 2017).

"[R]esidue" of Colonial Geographies and Politics: A Reflective Action

To explore Dr. Serenity's meaning of residue, I engaged in a relational tension to place (United States of America, State of the Osage, and Little Osage City), space (the politics within constitutional framing, statewide politics, and county-city wide politics), and the subject-becoming (the Black families). Theoretically, place and space shape the individual, with the individual having an opportunity to construct place and space as well. Place and space are materialized by the governing narrative and ideations which dictate the locations, boundaries, names, and ownership of the land (Sharp, 2009). Place becomes the geographical location of the land. Space becomes the imagined ideation of location which is governed by the politics prescribed by a dominating power. Like this, place is the material land and space is the imagined signification. The residue Dr. Serenity is speaking of, is a settlers' colonial place and space that continue to reside not only as material land (e.g., De facto segregation[16]: see Map 1, 2, and 3) but also as the politics dictating its occupancy (e.g., the codes of markers like education, employment, wealth attribution).

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[16] Over a hundred years, since Jim Crow, the effects of segregation on Black communities decreased the market values of neighborhoods populated by Black citizens (Oliver & Shapiro, 2001). As market values decreased for neighborhoods populated with non-white citizens, segregation between these and white citizens increased (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013). The Equality of Opportunity Project (2014) looks at segregation as a factor correlated with income mobility across the United States and suggest "that upward income mobility is significantly lower in areas with larger African-American populations… One mechanism for such a community-level effect of race is segregation" (n.p.).
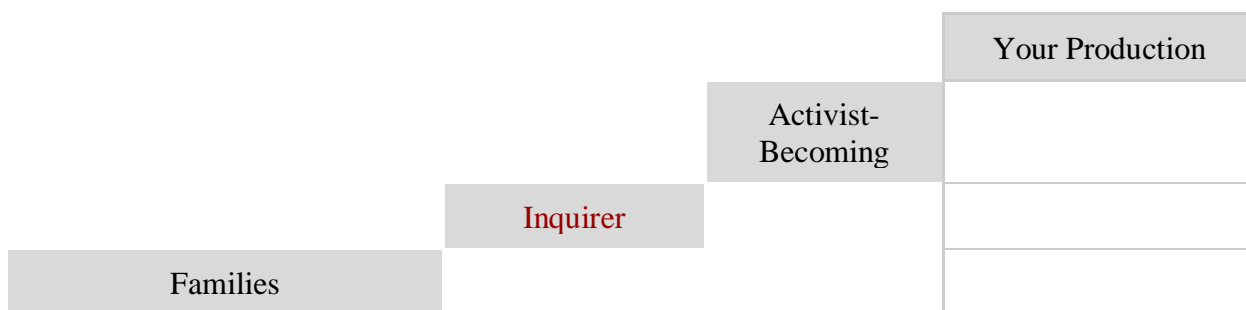
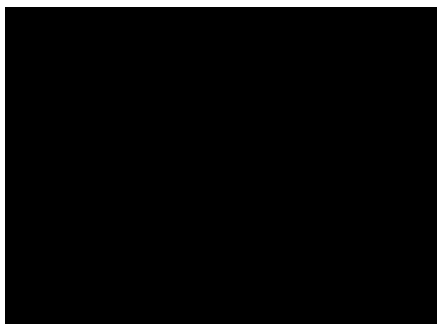**"How we're living now, the modern-day slavery"**

Readers will experience the performative dynamism between place, space, and subject. Below, readers will be able to answer the how do FÀEI individuals conceptualize their subjectivity as individuals, parents, and citizens (place-space-subject) of Little Osage City. Once again, as a reflective action--as a pause and a choque--I will uproot upward, allowing relational tension to occur, in this case between place, space, and subject. Yet, in reading downward you are excavating into the depths of my reflective action. This reflective action is my uprooting--an upward writing of the relational tension between the geographical place (from a conception of the U.S. being in stolen land to the geographical segregation created by the Federal Housing Administration's establishment of redlining), political space (e.g., constitutional diminishing of Black individuals, judicial conceptualization of slaves a non-citizens), and FÀEI families' struggle to reclaim their worth as individuals with abilities, intelligence, and potentiality. I would like for you to co-create knowledge with me: through the reader's own geographical location, political placement, and subjectivity you are making sense of a relational tension between subject-becoming, politics, and the space in which these families are situated. This is a <<<choque>>> that Anzaldúa (2007) intended us to participate in: one where our individual differences are acknowledged and celebrated, while at the same time acknowledging and celebrating others' individuality. In reading down, the reader will enter into relational tension between what the FÀEI mothers are experiencing in terms of surface level projections of self and enter a life of battling with sociopolitical and historical, racial aggression—or as they see it, the residue of colonization—towards their Black being. In reading downward, the reader is excavating into the beings of

families--in this case Black mothers--who individually are attempting to survive histories of geographical, political, and self-induced aggression towards their (Black) being.

In excavating into these mothers' humanity, you are entering a segment of a new consciousness that enabled them to form FÀEI. To reach into such new consciousness, a plugging in of Anzaldúa's Politics of Dignity was used to create two analytical questions: (1) Which family values and disposition did these Black mothers used to combat the "plantation" (endemic system) they faced? (2) What impact did families' values and dispositions have on battling the endemic system they felt and believed they were entrenched in?

In addition, I used the mothers' own (anti-colonial) decolonizing strategies and ideas as conceptual framework to understand how they navigated such colonial place and space as Little Osage. There were six key words and phrases that the families used to invoke their inner being: (a) Motivated (b) Inspired, (c) Zealous, (d) Be Brave, (e) Be Bold, and (f) Be Fierce. These keywords and phrases become themes in their lives as they followed their inner voices that desired a better life. These themes are part of a higher message received in their spiritual (and religious) quests that reminded them of their true worth as human beings. In turn, the relational tension they faced was one of battling with external forces, internal voices, and a spiritual guiding voice that reminded them of their true capacity as individuals with potentiality.

			Your Production
		Activist-Becoming	
	Inquirer		
Families			

I turn to the middle of the page to symbolize my entering into a place and space where I was invited to attend.

The shape of the column is intended to increase or decrease importance.

I ask that you keep this section in mind, however, it will not be shown below. Although your production is there, it becomes marginalized.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… Inspired to "Be bold."	David… L I S T E N.	Being bold was at the root of these mothers' decision making. Although it is not an innate ability of confidence or courage, it does seem to be part of their family lineage. However, these mothers' boldness comes from a desire for a better world for their children; being bold was a desire to provide their children a better life than what they had experienced.
For Miss Anne, it was escaping an abusive marriage and entering a life as a single mother with four "broken children." — For Melanie, it was confronting her own self-hatred and helping her community examine their own bias against Black people. — For Dr. Serenity, it was going to college and "getting that message from that pastor at the church… it was slow, when the transformation started."		

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject…	David… L I S	The source of inspiration to be bold was painful realizations of wrongs done by

Inspired to "Be bold."	**T** **E** **N.**	loved ones and a discriminatory system; inspiration to be bold stemmed from having children and having a dream of success; inspiration to be bold came at the realization that a predominantly white community needed to change the way they treated their (Black) children.

	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
Families		
… Becoming subject… Inspired to "Be bold." Leave a husband, a lifestyle of hustle, and the "amenities" it provided and move to protect self and her children. Miss Anne Leave the corporate world to be "a change agent in the community" Melanie Leave gang life, criminal activity; became a teen mother, heads to college. Dr. Serenity	**David…** **L** **I** **S** **T** **E** **N.**	These mothers have had different turning points throughout their lives. I'm choosing to focus on these events to highlight mothers' inspired, bold action to leave behind a life that had given them pleasure with pain. Some of their previous lives had a negative association with Blackness: hustle as criminal activity, teenage mother as "just" another Black irresponsible teen who would depend on a welfare

system. These
mothers shattered
these stereotypes.

Families
… Becoming subject…
Inspired to… "Be bold." Miss Anne, Melanie, Dr. Serenity

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject…	David…	The bravery demanded by the mothers is one that requires daily doses of tenacious humbleness.
Motivated to "Be Brave."	L I S T E	
		These women are intelligent and strong: it is through such
"Hold ya ass down when you re up (re up)	N.	intelligence and strength that

**Pick yo ass up when you be down (be down)
Catch you in some shit throw the peace up
(skkrrt)"**

permits them to persevere and succeed against all odds.

All three have a college education; two of them have master's degree (in fact one of them has two); one of them has a doctorate degree. This is in spite of their context and generational, racial trauma.

Yet, despite such drive and abilities, they are reminded daily to be humble by racist acts against them or their children. Melanie, for example, despite having two master's degrees was unable to find a job in Little Osage city. Or being reminded that Black is inferior when their white colleagues were told by Real Estate agents to avoid certain (Black) neighborhoods (e.g., Melanie's colleagues). Or feeling attacked by other Black women for their success--a different type of self-hatred, yet propagated by a racist system (e.g., Dr. Serenity friends).

Fighting racism at Little Osage City has become an enduring battle, dealing with racist attitudes, while overcoming everyday challenges (e.g., financial troubles).

The compounding battle, although taxing, yet makes them stronger. It's become a source of energy where they choose to do "ministry" to help all people, especially women, overcome their daily struggles.

Their pain and struggle inspires them to be bold.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… Motivated to "Be Brave." "It's Tamika with the weave up (weave up)"	David… L I S T E N.	Being brave to accept self and value one's worth: "it starts with me first… how am I contributing to the problem," and I got to "look within." The purpose, achieve "a better life." -Miss Anne

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… Motivated to "Be brave." Melanin by Secrett "… Ah ha we got colleges, yea Full lips no collagen Know we got the brains and Beauty …"	David… L I S T E N.	These lyrics, brought in by Melanie, are filled with (historically) symbolic attempts to have their difference accepted: "we got colleges," "full lips," and "we got brains and beauty." Being brave moves deeper than just an act to defy and change antiblack social constructs--the policy constructs have already been written, although failing, but they're there (e.g., Emancipation, *Brown v. Board*). Being brave is part of accepting the inner-beauty and strengths.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… Motivated to "be brave" and accept melanin	Da vid …	Music, becomes the therapy for the generational hatred

Melanin by Secrett (2017)

"… Ah ha!
I got Melanin (oh yea)
I got Melanin (you mad)
We got Melanin
Melanin, Melanin…
…
Attitude on HNIC (shake it shake it)
Blame it on the HBCU
Ah ha we got colleges, yea
Full lips no collagen
Know we got the brains and Beauty
They just give up brains so loosely, yea…
…
This ain't Becky with the good hair, huh
Or Sarah with the good head.

It's Tamika with the weave up (weave up)
Hold ya ass down when you re up (re up)
Pick yo ass up when you be down (be down)
Catch you in some shit throw the peace up
(skkrrt)

Yea we some bosses
You ain't strong enough count ya losses
If you coming better come correct hoe
Talkin T's crossed eyes dotted (dotted)

Yea we don't play that (play that)
We be starting trends and they take that (take
that)
Flyest first lady ever, you mad?
AAAYYYEEE girl you better slay that (slay
that)…"

L I S T E N.

against Black people. Melanie, listened to this song during one of our conversations. Her kids tell me, "mommy loves this song," as the song plays and replays in the background during our conversation; she also played the song during work meetings.

Music becomes part of her healing strategy that assists in easing through the (historical and) continual antiblackness in the U.S., Little Osage state, and Little Osage County; a strategy used by this group of Black mothers.

Melanie uses the "Melanin" song to "pump" her up and motivate her. Songs like these continue to be reminders that there exists an antiblackness sentiment and system in the U.S. Through song and music, Blackness is celebrated; being Black is beautiful and must be accepted as just another human being, who although different from the white norm, is attempting to live a "normal" (Miguel, 2015) life.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… Motivated to… "Be Brave"	David … Listen.	The type of bravery displayed throughout the lives of Miss Anne, Melanie, and Dr. Serenity
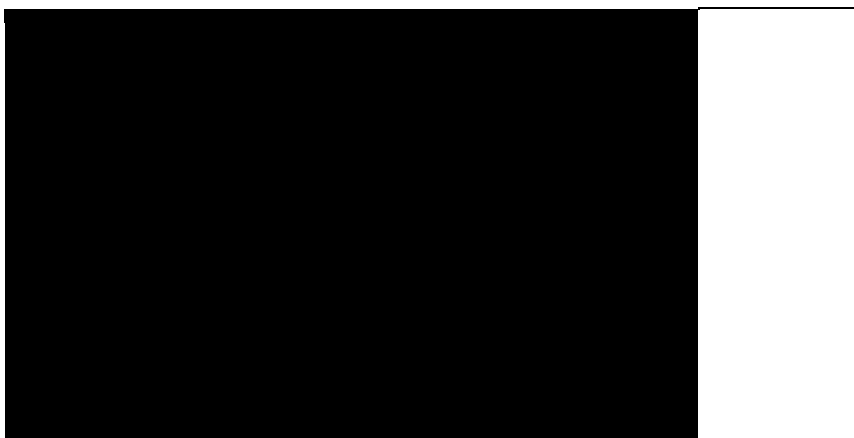
is different, but all have one thing in common, being brave to accept their Blackness, or as Melanie calls it melanin. The mothers engage in an acceptance of Blackness despite the continual messages and treatment being received by society and public officials.

Families
… Becoming subject
Motivated to… "Be Brave..." Miss Anne Melanie, Dr. Serenity
… Becoming subject… Becoming "Motivated, Inspired, and Zealous."

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject … "Through God's lenses:	David… Listen.	NOTE: From this point upward, I described the mothers attempt to overcome abusive hardships and uplift their lives, despite the daily reminders that they *should* feel inferior due to the *residues*—these

you come from greatness, riches, you come from power, you come from knowledge, and we got to reclaim that." Dr. Serenity

residues are discussed below.

It was my experience with these families that the systematic, racist residues and self-hate they experienced has not prevented them from excelling as individuals.

There was a spark in these mothers that helped them overcome and see power within them. Despite how much things were out control, these mothers grew to understand that they had a level of power to change their circumstance, although not alone, but there was a possibility to transform their daily struggle.

To this day, the mothers engage in what Miss Anne would call out: Be motivated, inspired, and zealous.

Families

Inquirer

Activist-Becoming

… Becoming subject…	Dear Black child, yes, you should feel and experience self-hate and self-loathing. Your ancestors have. Your mother has. This is why you should too (says the uncritical scholar following governmental reports and re-search):	Residues of previous experiences shape our everyday life.
"We [Dr. Serenity's brother and her] both went on our own spiritual journey to help us put God's lenses on. Now we see things for how they really are… that you come from greatness, riches, you come from power, you come from knowledge, and we got to reclaim that. We got to reclaim that." Dr. Serenity	"That our lives started here after the boat; that there was no riches or gold, knowledge, leaders and scholars that we came from. All of that was erased, and we were seen as coming from slaves; seen as weak, unintelligent, criminals, bad, threatening, violent, all of the deficits." Dr. Serenity	

Families	Inquirer
… becoming subject…	**Place and space of Little Osage City:** This educational attainment graph by race from the Little Osage City where Dr. Serenity grew up in is provided to depict the narrative that Black children and adults continue to have less education than their peers.
"we were actually living out the master narrative that was put in place for us by slave owners... that we don't come from anything, that we don't come from genius." Dr. Serenity	**Educational Attainment by Race**

	Less than high school diploma	High school graduate	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
Black	13.1%	32.9%	30.7%	23.2%
White	4.7%	13.4%	23.0%	58.9%

Source: C15002(A/B) SEX BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Graph 1. Educational Attainment by Race

… becoming subject…

"Living in the projects" Miss Anne

Place and space of Little Osage City:

Map 4 shows "the groundbreaking 'Equality of Opportunity' research is really important because it finds that not only does where you are born on the economic ladder affect income mobility, but where the ladder is may be equally important. In other words, place has a significant impact on income mobility. So, it really, really matters where you grow up. Unfortunately, according to this research, it turns out that this issue of stickiness is particularly acute in our community. The project found that the Little Osage City area ranked in the bottom third of communities in the nation and the bottom 17% of counties in the nation when it comes to income mobility for children from low-income households." Mr. Hill

Map 4. The Geography of Upward Mobility in America
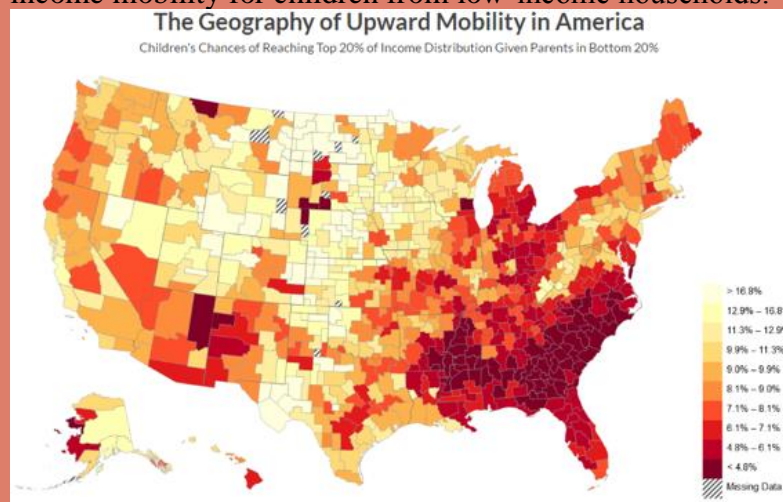
… becoming subject…

"I lived such a deprived life. I was hungry for so much more in life." Miss Anne

Place and space of Little Osage City:

With upward mobility being more difficult in states like Little Osage, growing up in poverty casts a shadow of deprivations that hinder proper developmental growth. Graph 2 shows children who grow up in poverty are at higher risks for psychological stressors, domestic violence, and a lack of educational readiness. Black children in Little Osage City are not only less likely to have upward mobility, their chances are significantly reduced by growing up in poverty. From the chart below, four out of ten Black children in Little Osage City grow up in poverty.

Child Poverty by Race
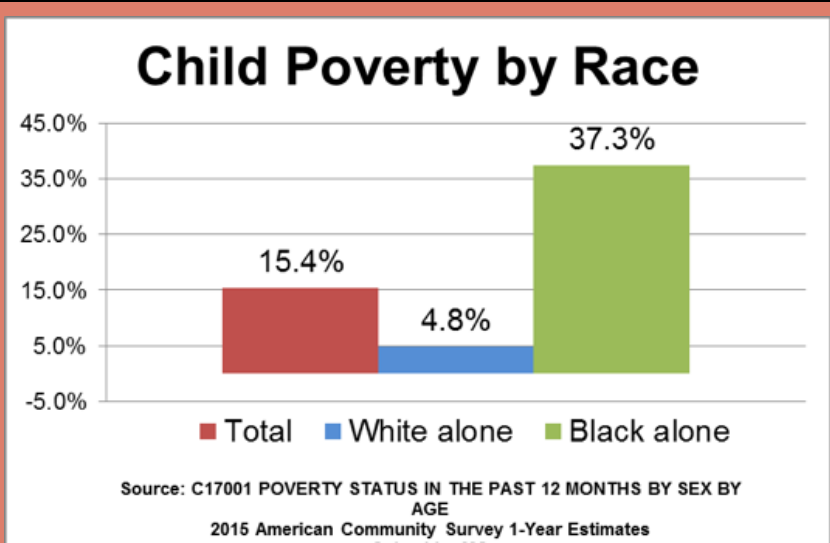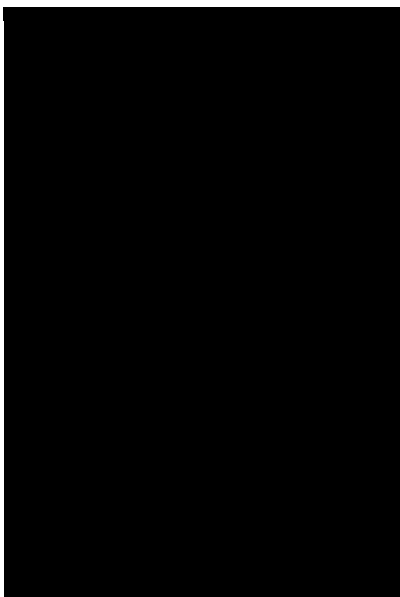
Graph 2. Child Poverty by Race

… becoming subject…

"I lived such a deprived life. I was hungry for so much more in life." Miss Anne

Place and space of Little Osage City:

Once again, traditional geographical and political markers signify that Black people are less than whites. Graph 3 below depicts people's earning potential is reduced significantly by race. White households earn approximately $20K more annually than Black people.

Median Household Income by Race
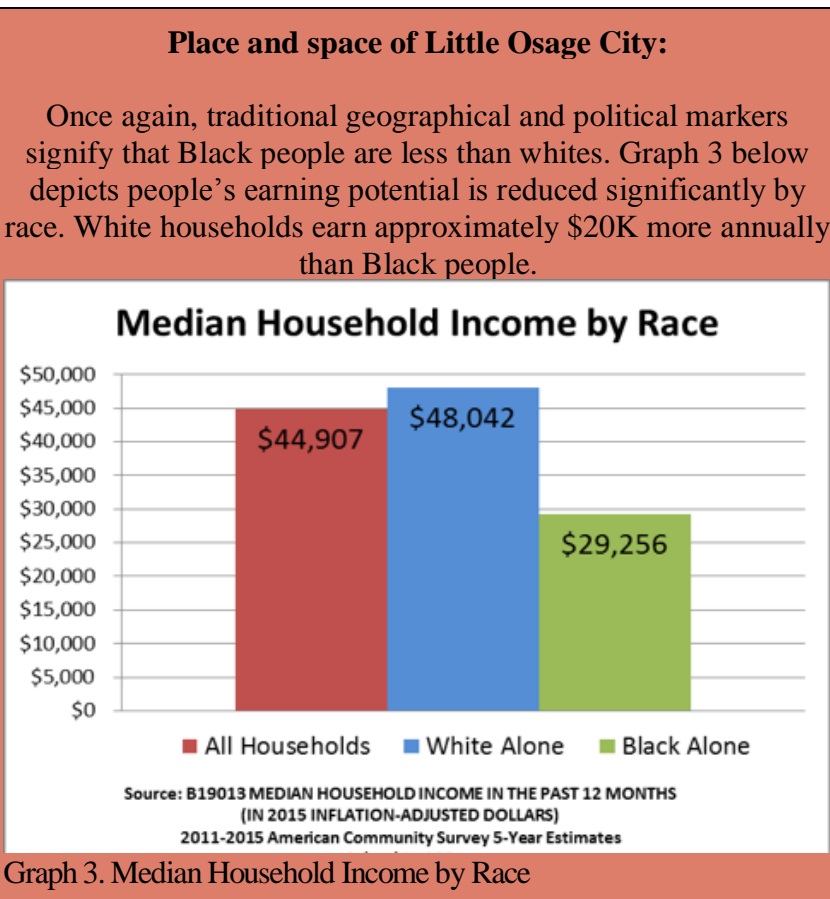
Graph 3. Median Household Income by Race

Place and space of Little Osage City:

… becoming subject…	Graph 4 below shows how 3 out of 10 Black folks are more likely to live in poverty than 2 out of 10 of their white neighbors in Little Osage City.
"I lived such a deprived life. I was hungry for so much more in life. I knew I had to fight and scratch to get out. And I kept making screwed up mistakes that would keep me captured in the cycle of poverty." Miss Anne	Graph 4. Poverty by Race
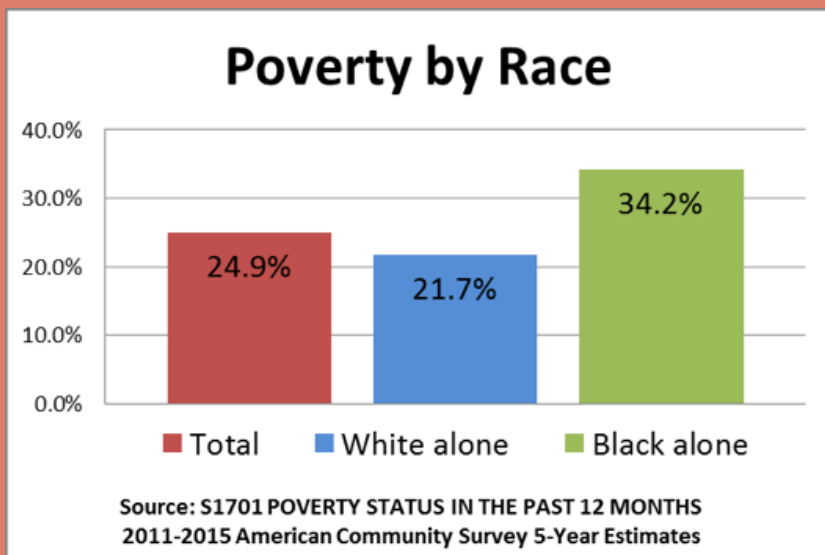
Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… becoming subject… "I lived such a deprived life. I was hungry for so much more in life." Miss Anne	David… …residue runs deep through governmental reports…	Dr. Serenity, Melanie, and Miss Anne all grew up in the projects, in the inner-city part Little Osage City. If they had continued to believe the narrative about Black people being uneducated and living in poverty, they would not have been in different situations.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… Dr. Serenity calls her youth experiences "A season of confusion: where we [her brother and her] were tearing up the streets, that was being real. Selling drugs even that was real, but we were actually living out the master	…	A season of confusion, life, for these families becomes a season that

	residue …	comes and goes, with different weather, many times out of their control. The control being taken by a colonial narrative about Black people.
narrative that was put in place for us by slave owners, White supremacists, the White dominant narrative. We were living that out instead of living out our true narrative, our true purpose… that we don't come from anything, that we don't come from genius. That our lives started here after the boat, that there was no riches or gold, knowledge, leaders and scholars that we came from. All of that was erased, and we were seen as coming from slaves, seen as weak, unintelligent, criminals, bad, threatening, violent, all of the deficits. Many of us digest that, and we believe it, and live it out. And we were living out that life for many years."		

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… "My brother and I did not understand our true worth. We didn't fully value ourselves, the way God values our lives. We were confused…" Dr. Serenity	… residue…	The residue of historical dehumanizing practices sculpted the mindset, the emotions, and behaviors of these mothers.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… "In my ancestral lineage... I come from a family of pastors and spiritual leaders on one end and I come from a family of criminals. I idolized both worlds,	This section below, is my production as an educator trained to see the world without an analytical eye. The section begins with "Dear" to demonstrate the paternalistic mentality educators may have towards non-white children who fall "victims" to an oppressive system. Dear Black child, yes, you should feel and experience self-hate and self-loathing. Let me demonstrate why: You are Black,	These RESIDUES have life-altering implications on how our brain and mind are sculpted: "The flow of experience

all through my life growing up." Dr. Serenity	You were a teen mom, You come from the ghetto (even though your great-grandfathers were entrepreneurs), You were bussed into the suburbs, You grew up in poverty, Your family composition was retarding your race, You are unwanted, You were property, You are/were a slave, You were/are divested of two fifth of the man. You were non-existent as woman.	gradually sculpts your brain, thus shaping your mind… But most of the shaping of your mind remains forever unconscious. This is called implicit memory, and it includes your expectations, models of relationships, emotional tendencies, and general outlook. Implicit memory establishes the interior landscape of your mind-- what it feels like to be you--based on the slowly accumulating RESIDUES of lived experience" (Hanson & Mendius, 2009, p. 67-68).
… Becoming subject… MELANIE: "Internalized self-hate, self-loathing… It's because of all the reasons society told me I was not	… residue… "Internalized self-hate, self-loathing…"	The internalization of self-hate and self-loathing happens over time and through the repetition of environmental

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
beautiful. And it's because of so many layers: media, history, the present situation of our people, my SES."		conditions that attack one's subjectivity.
Families	**Inquirer**	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… "It was a very painful time in my life. Not knowing why I wasn't good enough… constant message of rejection… " Dr. Serenity	… Residue ...	
… Becoming subject… "God didn't love me because he made me Black." Melanie	**Dear Black child, let me remind you why God made you worthless:** You are Black, You were a teen mom, You come from the ghetto (even though your great-grandfathers were entrepreneurs), You were bussed into the suburbs, You grew up in poverty, Your family composition was retarding your race, You are unwanted, You were property, You are/were a slave, You were/are divested of two fifth of the man. You were non-existent as woman.	Time and time again, Black Americans received messages from their surroundings that their skin does not hold value with the rest of the American (white) society. The issue is deeper than psychological-- it becomes a spiritual battle.
… Becoming subject…		

| Melanie: "Growing up, I believed that God didn't love me because he made me Black." | ... residue... "God didn't love me because he made me Black." | The voices that Black Americans hear, over and over again, from family, schools, media and others is that Blackness is "unlovable." It becomes so entrenched that it is an act of God that made Blackness worthless. |

Families	Inquirer
... becoming subject... "And I kept making screwed up mistakes that would keep me captured in the cycle of poverty. Having a baby at fifteen, 'come on! Living in the projects" Miss Anne	**Place and space:** The narrative, supported by Graph 5 (Rate of Mothers with Less than 12 Years of Education) below, used by professionals wanting to help people like Dr. Serenity, Melanie, and Miss Anne is one where 60% of Black teens will have a child between the age of 15 and 19. This was true for Dr. Serenity, Melanie, and Miss Anne who all three were teen mothers.

Rate of Mothers with Less Than 12 Years of Education

Graph 5. Rate of Mothers with Less Than 12 Years of Education

Graph 6. Teen Pregnancy Rate

Graph 6. Teen (Ages 15—19) Pregnancy Rate per 1000 Population 2010-2014). "The teen pregnancy rate and the educational attainment level of mothers contribute to the rate of black mothers with less than 12 years of education being 3 times that of white mothers. This is a critical issue because children born in these circumstances are much more likely to experience poor economic outcomes over their lifespan." Mr. Hill

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… Becoming subject… "A desire to want something more out of life."	**Dear black girl, your desire is meaningless.**	As an educator, many times I ignored the want of people I was serving, deeming their needs as meaningless.
…. Becoming subject… Miss Anne: "A desire to want something more out of life. I wanted it so bad. I lived such a deprived	**… residue…** **"A desire to want something more out of life."**	Time and time again, Black Americans fought for something more out of life. **Time and time again, they**

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
life. I was hungry for so much more in life. I knew I had to fight and scratch to get out. And I kept making screwed up mistakes that would keep me captured in the cycle of poverty. Having a baby at fifteen, 'come on! Living in the projects; not having a good relationship with my dad, who I idolized. There were so many things against me. There's a lot more that I'm not saying and I choose not to."		were reminded by legal and political infrastructure to stay in the place--a colonial bondage.

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
…. Becoming subject… **Black girl believes:** **"I must be doing something wrong"**	**Black child, you did do something wrong.** **Let me remind you:** You are Black, You were a teen mom, You come from the ghetto (even though your great-grandfathers were entrepreneurs), You were bussed into the suburbs, You grew up in poverty, Your family composition was retarding your race, You are unwanted, You were property, You are/were a slave, You were/are divested of two fifth of the man. You were non-existent as woman.	**Everything around you, dear Black girl, signals that you are not fit to have success in this American, 2017, culture.**
… becoming subject… Miss Anne: "And girls wanted to beat me up		**Being pretty and intelligent is bad for a Black girl;**

all of the time 'cause I got too much attention from boys. I couldn't control that my hair was long, that I was the pretty black girl. I wasn't going to make myself look ugly. I didn't even know I was pretty. If they knew how I really felt about myself, they might share some pity. But I was forever being alone and running from my life. Black girls hated me man. Dang, I must be doing something wrong, I just wanna have friends.

… Residue…

"I must be doing something wrong, I just wanna have friends."

The attention received was one that created havoc inside the young girl inside of Miss Anne, Dr. Serenity, and Melanie. So much havoc was transmitted that they felt they had done "something wrong."

Families	Inquirer	Activist-Becoming
… becoming subject… Black, teen parent, ghetto, bussed to suburbs, poverty, retards, unwanted, property, slave, divested of two fifth of the man, woman	Miss Anne, Dr. Serenity, and Melanie were teenage mothers. All three mothers are of Black heritage, with white ancestry in their lineage: a great-grandfather of these three mothers was a slave owner. Through this lived experience, as young mothers, each one of them begin a stigmatized, intersectional reality that continues to shape their becoming…	...residue...

non existent.

Photograph 1. Board members and co-founders of FÀEI (1)

Photograph 1. "Board members and co-founders of FÀEI," depicts the mothers' (anti-colonial) decolonizing inner work, which culminates with the creation of a movement. FÀEI is a movement to decolonize chattel Black and Brown bodies from the American "plantation:" an endemic system.

Survivance[17] in Colonial Residue

Geography and politics influence the way one as an individual conduct oneself (Sharp, 2009). In the case of the FÀEI families, an antiblack geography and politics were conduits to the formation of these mothers' being. This was an answer to the overall question for this dissertation project: how do Black families become and act as educational policy agents? Specifically, the question to be answered in this chapter was:

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[17] "Native **survivance** stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. **Survivance** means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, and in that sense, the estate of native survivancy." **Survivance** is more than mere survival—it is a way of life that nourishes Indigenous ways of knowing" (Survivance, http://survivance.org/acts-of-survivance/).

How do FÀEI individuals conceptualize their subjectivity as individuals, parents, and citizens (place-space-subject) of Little Osage City? Part of the answer lies in FÀEI mothers' reference to their experience in Little Osage City as living in a "plantation," a form of "modern day slavery." FÀEI members situated their everyday experience as part of a colonial residue of geography and politics. The residue that Dr. Serenity and the rest of the mothers were attempting to get rid of, is one of antiblack policy sentiment and a capitalist environment that negated the human value of Black individuals in Little Osage City. Such colonial residue that Dr. Serenity, Melanie, and Miss Anne experienced it as something represented in the following textual collage:

Dear Black child, you did do something wrong.
Let me remind you:
You are Black,
You were a teen mom,
You come from the ghetto
(even though your great-grandfathers were entrepreneurs),
You were bussed into the suburbs,
You grew up in poverty,
Your family composition,
being a matriarch was retarding your race,
You are unwanted,
You were property,
You are/were a slave,
You were/are divested
of two fifth of the man.
You are/were non-existent as woman.

This collage of words bring cohesion to environmental and political dynamics that FÀEI mothers experienced (and continue to experience) as they began to run-away from a material and immaterial colonial, modern day slavery. The reflective action offered in the previous section, shows a desire and effort by FÀEI mothers to rid of the colonial residue that was palpable in their Black being. The families engaged in two anticolonial survival strategies: confront the deleterious geographical and political realities, while

mustering the strength to overcome the vile narratives propagated against their Black humanity.

Confronting Geographical and Political Realities. The geographical and political graphs shown earlier demonstrate a local narrative that has been part of a larger national discourse: Black people come from impoverished areas, have low educational attainment, and their family structure has been inferior to the larger population. Politically, discourse propagated by the federal and local government, through either mandates or judicial ordering only served to justify discriminatory behaviors against Black people. The derogatory verbiage in the national and local discourse against Black people was so poignant that it was part of the reflection that FAIE mothers had of themselves.

One clear example was Dr. Serenity's statement: **"In my ancestral lineage... I come from a family of criminals."** Dr. Serenity's statement could be taken as hyperbole, but it was a common conception, including for Melanie and Miss Anne. In fact, believing one was subhuman was the objective of slave masters. In her 1999 book, *Killing the Black Body,* Dorothy Roberts reminds us:

> To be a slave, wrote Lunsford Lane, was '[t]o know… that I was never to consult my own will, but was, while I lives, to be entirely under the control of another.' Whites tried to prevent slaves from constructing their own system of moral and acting according to their own chosen values. To usurp slaves' own moral independence, all sources of values other than the slave master had to be eliminated. (p. 38)

Slavery, as an institution, stripped away any opportunities for Black individuals to create their own value systems, for themselves or their children. Politically, it was to the benefit of white slave owners that slaves neither had self-thought or self-expression, removing educational opportunities or opportunities for self-progress—allowing any type of self-development would undermine the economic and political system in which slavery functioned. For Dr. Serenity and other FÀEI mothers, living in a type of modern day slavery meant they were surrounded with discourse that discouraged any form of self-worth.

I'm inclined to bring in supporting brain research to understand the mentality of FÀEI mothers—a mentality of self-hate and degradation. Through an alternative analysis, brain research speaks to the vitality of lived experiences and the manner it shapes one's brain for their rest of their livelihoods. Brain science speaks to the following:

> Because of all the ways your brain changes its structure, your experience matters beyond its momentary, subject impact. It makes enduring changes in the physical tissues of your brain which affect your well-being, functioning, and relationships. (Hanson & Mendius, 2009, p. 72-73).

The enduring changes in the physical tissues of the brain is one aspect of the colonial residue Dr. Serenity and the rest of the mothers experienced and have attempted to rid of through their own strategies of decolonization. Part of decolonizing one's physical and psychological being is by reclaiming and owning a humanity stolen by slavery: their humanity through their Black skin.

In using the song Melanin, Melanie, at the age of 42 was trying to reclaim her dark skin. But as the song depicts and the rest of the FÀEI mothers attest, being of a

darker complexion is not what is wrong. The wrong done unto a darker complexion, especially one with an African heritage, is the degrading association Blackness acquired since the inception of the U.S. through policy reforms, judiciary, federal mandates, or constitutional (e.g., 3/5 Compromise, *The Missouri Compromise, Plessy v. Ferguson,* Eugenics in America, Moynihan Report, The War on Drugs). FÀEI mothers battled through societal and governmental mechanisms that seemed to have one sole aim: the downgrade and devaluation of a person with Black complexion. Dr. Serenity's statement of modern day slavery or feeling like she comes from criminals does not incite hyperbole, when over and over again it was for the slave owner's benefit to strip away any value and morality Black people possessed. The key to removing any opportunity for self-preservation and survival was the family. Roberts (1999) once again reminds us the manner in which the slavery economic and political institution ensured the Black family was disintegrated to avoid the development of Black individuals. She notes:

> The key transmitter of values to be destroyed was the family. As Senator James Harlan observed during the debates on the Thirteen Amendment, 'Another incident [of slavery] is the abolition practically of the parental relation… This guardianship of the parent over his own children must be abrogated to secure the perpetuity of slavery' (p. 38)."

When there is a sentiment of degradation towards a human being by the one mechanism whose sole purpose is to protect, and serve, the political government, then this system and its motives must be countered. When the government itself produces verbiage of denigration towards one's humanity, then the priority is to take agency of

reclaiming such humanity. If the one (paternal) government is devaluing one's worth, then one must rely on another power-that-be. The FÀEI mothers did just that: countered, reclaimed, and relied on a higher power (religion and spirituality) to rewrite the retarded story that was being told about their Black humanity. Dr. Serenity exalted:

"Through God's lenses [I am reminded]:

you come from greatness, riches, you come from power, you come from

knowledge, and we got to reclaim that."

Confronting one's political government requires seeing beyond the worth one's social and political environment lashes out. Part of the becoming policy agent, for FÀEI families was reclaiming the agentic piece of policy agent removed by their own governmental bodies: a sort of self-ownership, self-valuation, and self-belief.

A Desire to Be(coming) Human: A Deconstruction and Construction of Self.
Interrupting the residue created colonial mechanisms is part of the choque necessary for a Politics of Dignity. The politics demands a new consciousness. Although not in this project, but a new consciousness does not behoove only those being impacted by wrong doing. The new consciousness is needed by those inflicting the wrong. Nevertheless, the objective is to "[d]econstruct" the residue Dr. Serenity discussed and "construct" a new consciousness that gives priori to difference and elevates ones humanity (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 104). For FÀEI, a demand for a new consciousness required a constant relational tension between dominant culture and culture as difference, in order to adopt "new perspectives towards [their] darkskinned" selves (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 102). For FÀEI mothers, the reclaiming began with a desire:

"A ***DESIRE*** to want something more out of life." (Miss Anne)

The desire of FÀEI's mothers were one for self-worth, self-preservation, and self-survival. The needs of the families I was working with were one of self-belief, one to obtain an inner-voice and compass that would help them fight off such a spiteful ideology against them. Their desire contained two main characteristics: motivated to be brave and inspired to be bold.

Motivated to be brave began first by reconstructing a love and appreciation for FÀEI mothers' Black complexion. Given that the residue of antiblack sentiment had become ubiquitous and merged in every facet of social life, including religion (e.g., as Melanie believed that God didn't love her for making her Black), getting rid of such residue required more than just material help. For these mothers, uprooting the antiblackness residue required spiritual assistance from a religious affiliations. Their motivation was a desire for a better life. The bravery was manifested as they each excavated self-hatred or inner wounds from their past (e.g., criminal mindset, domestic abuse) that kept them stuck in a place of self-degradation and destruction.

The motivation of FÀEI mothers' be(ing) brave has become an unending (reflective) daily action due to societal reminders that antiblackness is omnipresent, including in FÀEI families own subconscious. Melanie recounts the story during work sessions of telling her daughter after being exposed to the sun, "What happened to my milk chocolate baby?" after seeing her daughter in a darker skin-tone complexion. Melanie shares this story in disgust for privileging a white skin tone over a darker one. She is even more disgusted for instilling to her child that a white tone of darkness holds more value.

As an activist-becoming, I called this type of bravery

"one that requires daily doses of tenacious humbleness."

A tenacious humbleness is due to a daily survival of a colonial residue. Dr. Serenity's residue of modern day slavery becomes Roberts (1999) assertion of an institution of slavery: the slave master's value system of privileging white skin over Black skin. A tenacious humbleness, a tackling of such Black oppression requires an ongoing motivated bravery: one that must be used daily as antiblackness continues to usurp most aspects of social life (i.e., the Trump era, police brutality against Black people, over disciplining of children in schools, #AllLivesMatter, #OscarsSoWhite). The humbleness is due to a reminder that a larger antiblack system, one that could take a life away (e.g., police brutality) demands a continual be(ing) motivated brave.

Such be(ing) motivated brave must be accompanied with an inspired be(ing) bold. For FÀEI families, this additional characteristic helped them break away from negative stereotypes white society and government official give to Black people (e.g., criminals, teenage mother that become "welfare queens"). Similarly, each one of the mother garnered a (cou)rage to step out of a previous life that was damaging their wellbeing (e.g., domestic violence, drug activity, criminal and gang activity, a stressful work life).

Lastly, these mothers were forced to personally address school's unfair disciplinary actions against each one of their children. The mothers believe the over disciplining would not had happened if their children were white. The FÀEI mothers only wanted a better life for their children—a general desire for a mother. Yet, these mothers were forced to address a compilation of problems, that once intersected, became difficult to unravel. For instance, an intersection of race, gender, and class led two young men into

the criminal system at a young age; or another of these mothers' young boy, while elementary was already being targeted and labeled as a "troubled" child—beginning in kindergarten. For this mothers, their own personal experience as Black women while in school, with one of them having seen discrimination happening unto other Black children while a teacher at an elementary school, bolstered their desire to be(ing) bold.

Survivance a Machinery for Hate

The reflective action in this chapter has shown a desire and effort by FÀEI mothers' to confront and survive the colonial residue that exists in their Black lives. The families used two anticolonial survival strategies to tackle dehumanizing geopolitical realities: (1) a motivation to be(ing) brave and (2) an inspiration to be(ing) bold.

The overall question of this dissertation project asks how do Black families become and act educational policy agents? The characteristic of be(ing) both motivated and inspired aligns with Anzaldua's ongoing <<<choque>>>, one where a clash must happen between the ideologies of two cultures: antiblackness versus Blackness. Being Black can take many different forms. For these mothers, it was a constant be(ing) bold and brave, while being motivated and inspired. Such characteristics go beyond any racial and ethnic descriptor in existence. Instead, such characteristics pertain to any human being wanting to go beyond societal and one's own expectations. Although, for these mothers, being Black contains certain cultural attributes that must be acknowledged, such attributes must be endorsed through an ideology that first values one self for its inherent worth, that of a human being. Part of becoming policy agent requires a transformative action from colonial residue to human: this choque between two ideologies must occur for the transformation to ensue.
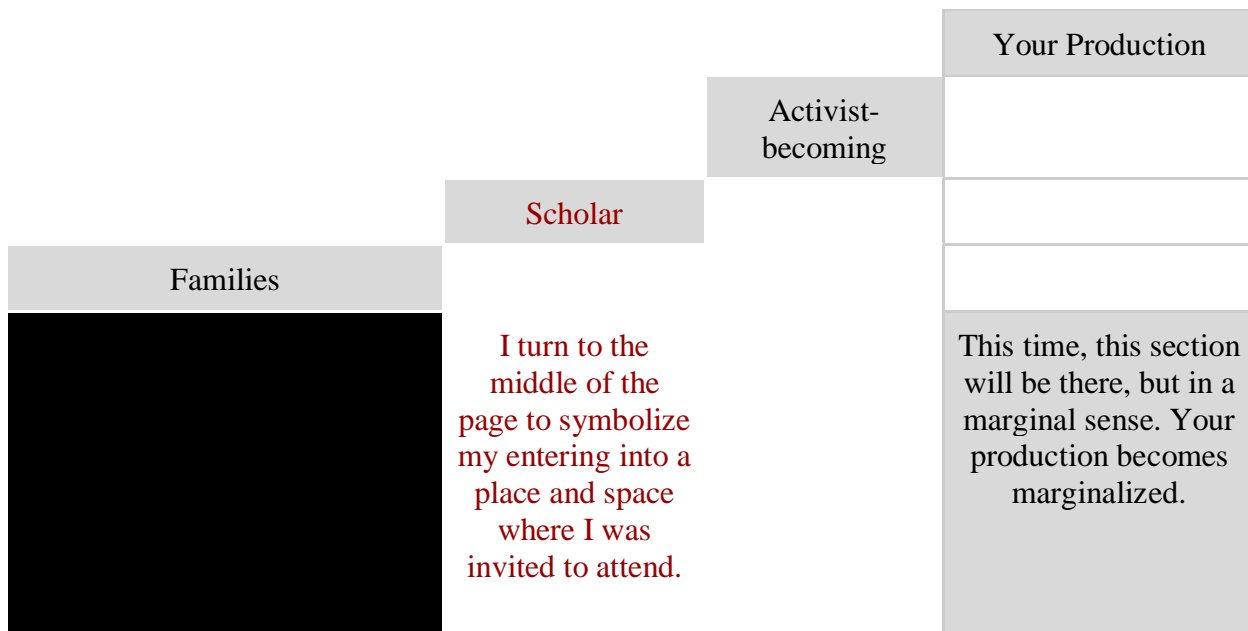
Chapter 6: B3ing a Policy Agent

In my upward reflective action on the families' becoming agents of policy formation, I noticed that one of their strategies for navigating a colonial place and space was through a compounding effort to be recognized as motivated, inspired, zealous, brave, bold, and fierce, by themselves and those around them. From this point forward I will utilize the following symbol <<<b3ing>>> to signal the desire and effort by the mothers to engage in change making of an identity bounded to a colonized identity: an identity with intersectional components of motherhood in such colonial place and space: i.e., woman, Black woman, individual, and Black individual. These components are all categories preconceived and preconditioned ideas that Blackness and Black women have/were given in our United States society. As I use the families' concept of self, I use <<<b3ing>>> to signal their *desire* to be seen as individuals who are motivated, inspired, zealous, brave, bold, and fierce. The number 3[18] brings into focus these six characteristics (motivated, inspired, zealous, brave, bold, and fierce) used by the families to navigate the oppression they continue to feel by geography, politics, and an inculcated "self-hatred." These six terms turn to the essence of their subjectivity in an attempt to "deconstruct, construct" colonial ideologies of identity and reclaim their subjectivity.

This chapter answers the inquiry question, how does performativity (place-space-subject) of FÀEI shape the proposed policy? In other words, how does the subjective performativity of FÀEI (<<<b3ing>>>) shape Root Our Own Teachers, a pilot program organized by Little Osage School District and FÀEI to recruit minoritized high school students to become teachers for the district. One last time, I will begin by an uprooting

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[18] Number 3 is for the three mothers; the number 3 is also for the six concepts which are divisible by 2 resulting in a quotient of 3.

reflective action on how FÀEI began to collaborate with the district. Your job, as the

reader, is to excavate in a downward fashion, and through your own subjective formation

produce the knowledge that you choose to obtain.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming	Your Production
	I turn to the middle of the page to symbolize my entering into a place and space where I was invited to attend.		This time, this section will be there, but in a marginal sense. Your production becomes marginalized.

Families

… b3ing subject…
Zealous to…

"Be fierce..."
Miss Anne, Dr. Serenity, Melanie

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming

Photograph 2   A teenager with promise

The murder of Michael Brown Jr. occurred on August 9, 2014 and the families began to mobilize. I was invited to Miss Anne house on September, 2014 and we continued to meet for three months on Sunday evenings. The discussion during a Sunday dinner-style was on the ways the community could prevent the killing of Black and Brown people, specifically, how could we prevent the school-to-prison pipeline.

I was invited to the discussion, since I began to mobilize parents with my co-teacher a year earlier.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
Dr. Serenity told me, "We're in a spiritual warfare. Always have been… Gotta make your decisions carefully, thoughtfully, serious as far as being spiritual and in battle…. avoiding the tactics that are wanting to bring us down. Bring my family down, bring us as a people down… Slavery is the best example. The plot of the enemy against us [Black people] as a people. I believe it's not just man, it's not just the white people, it's spiritual, they were listening to the adversary. That's how I believe. That's just how I operate. We got the residue around that. How we're living now, the modern day slavery right now. All of that is spiritual… I got to dismantle those beliefs to rise above all of that so I can open the door and flood it with our people, 'cause I know it's been on purpose for the door to be closed against us.	I began working alongside Dr. Serenity the Fall of 2014. However, I met her a year before as her child's preschool teacher. We worked together to improve her child's education in our Montessori classroom. From the beginning of our teacher-parent interaction, it was clear the motive and objective of Dr. Serenity and her husband who	My co-teacher and I began rounding up parents to mobilize them and discuss how to create a better education for their children. We recruited and invited parents to meet us at the public library. Dr. Serenity attended and displayed a
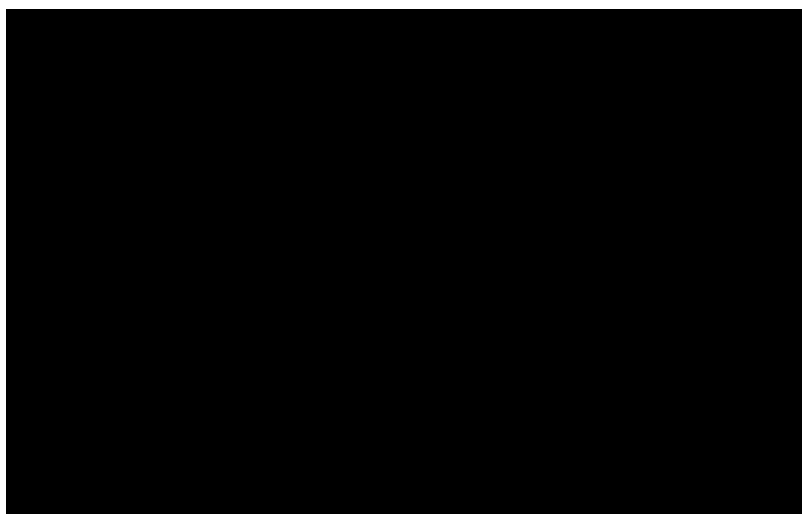
joined in parent meetings and dropping and pick up her child: the best education for Cici, one of their youngest daughters.

distrust against public schools and their treatment of her children, herself, and wanted to create a school that was more inclusive.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing subject…	**David …**	**I'm listening…**
Zealous to "Be fierce."		
For Miss Anne,, enough was enough when a principal from Little Osage School District ran into her in a store's parking lot, notice her hair, and asked if she was MISS ANNE. Knowing of MISS ANNE's reputation, this principal told her how much Black children in her school were falling behind, how the school used the term "super- **For Melanie, enough was enough when two of her children were receiving mistreatment from their schools. For her high school student, Melanie noticed that her daughter, close to high school graduation, was not receiving career-readiness, college-readiness assistance. She saw this as negligence from the school, especially because her daughter was Black. But Melanie was also experiencing how** **For Dr. Serenity, during this same time, her first grade boy, Jordan, was being severely punished by his elementary school, a magnet school. She retells the story of being called to pick up Jordan who had been out of control. She found her first grader sitting by**	**L I S T E N.**	

subgroup[19]" to refer to these children in the lowest rankings of state academic standards.

teachers were "operating through bias against African Americans" when her first grade child, excited to go into school the teacher did not greet her daughter or her when attending the school's open house. She had experienced this "bias against African American" in Little Osage City years ago when she enrolled her baby boy in kindergarten. Days into the school week the teachers of Little Osage School District were "trying to label him with ADD and medicate him."

himself in the principal's office. The principal and staff said Jordan had "destroyed" the office after being pulled from class.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing subject…	David…	The healing that needs to take place becomes the objective and pursuit of these mothers.
Zealous to "Be fierce."	L I S T E N	
Miss Anne, in speaking to a group of women from Little Osage City, she declares the following:		
"… there's healing that needs to take place in our community. Little Osage City is not unique. It's all across the country. It's		Their goal is to intersect the

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[19] A term used by the State Department of Education and the Little Osage School District to refer to those students underperforming in state tests.

crazy. We need to pray for, who should I vote for. It's wild. It's wild, wild west up in here. The enemy is having a field day. And it's only because we're playing small."

enemy's wrongdoing by using the agentic gifts that God has prepared for them.

When Miss Anne refers to "praying for who to vote" she's referring to the presidential elections of 2016.

During that election year, there was much explicit hatred towards racial/ethnic and religious groups.

The enemy, Miss Anne is referring to is the hatred towards people who are different. Playing small, Miss Anne is suggesting not using the gifts provided by God to be change agents. She's advocating to rise up and be change agents for the community.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent… Zealous to "Be fierce." Miss Anne, in speaking to a group of women from Little Osage City, she demands the following: "... It is time for us to stop playing small. It's time for us to take this city and take it by force if we have to … It's time to allow the spirit of God to rise above in us, everyone individually…"	David … L I S T E N	Stop playing small is a demand to use all of the gifts bestowed upon each individual by God and become an agent of change. The desire to take the city by force stems from a personal vendetta against a city (and country) that continues to vilify, criminalize, and kill Black people.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." Miss Anne, in speaking to a group of women from Little Osage City, she implores unto them: "...I pray that God will give you the courage to be the woman that God has called you to be in this season. In this hour. I'm taking Moynihan Street. What you taking?"	David… L I S T E N	In general, Miss Anne operates under a belief that there's an inner potential for greatness in each individual. In accepting such gift and utilizing it, Miss Anne suggest that much needs to be done with such gift to

undo the work of the enemy.

As she takes hold of Moynihan Street, she wants to focus on getting rid of the hatred accumulated and propagated in Little Osage City, especially around Moynihan Street towards Black people.

Moynihan street is known to be historically around a Black residential area, which overtime became crime-ridden and "drug-infested" according to Miss Anne.

It is surrounding Moynihan street where the urban renewal program that occurred throughout the nation during the 1950s, which "destroyed" a "vibrant business community" owned by Black business owners" (Newspaper, 2015).

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... **Zealous to "Be fierce."** In December 2014, Dr. Serenity and Miss Anne revealed to the Little Osage City the birth of FÀEI . "This fall [2014], Miss Anne and her daughter Dr. Serenity began the Moynihan Street Round Table… The group also will work to provide training to teachers so that they can better educate those students that fall into a category known as the super_subgroup. **"There needs to be a cultural paradigm shift in the mindset of the classroom teacher," Miss Anne said.**	**David … L I S T E N**	**Tired of the mistreatment of their own Black children in the public schools, Miss Anne, Dr. Serenity, and Melanie, along with myself and other leaders created Families' Àse through Ethnic Identity (FÀEI).** **In working with the school district, our intention was to ensure that Black and Brown children, and all students were being treated respectfully and were receiving the education they deserved.** **Having knowledge that children performing below state standards were called "supersub group" and**

that most of these children were Black and/or came from a background of poverty infuriated our group.

To us, "super subgroup" only signaled educators' deficit perceptions of students. We knew the research on implicit bias in the classroom and had lived it through our children. A name such a "supersub group" would only intensify the inferior mindset that educators already had towards Black children and/or children coming from poor environment.

The "**cultural paradigm shift in the mindset of the classroom teacher**"

		became one of FÀEI 's organizational goals.

Families	S c h o l a r	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI , "a grassroots group of parents, grandparents, retired educators and caring individuals" began to operate with the following vision: "Work together to excel together[20]. A community, family and school system collaborating to empower all children to excel."	D a v i d … L I S T E N	It is this "Working together" that became the guiding vision for Miss Anne, DR. SERENITY, and Melanie as they gathered their "village" to confront the school district on the disparities happening in the schools.

Families	S c h o l a r	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI 's vision:	D a v i	Our goal was, and it still is, to go beyond the school and focus on the educational institution. As a group, we saw that the

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[20] Changed slightly to protect anonymity.

> *"Working together to excel together."*
>
> *"A planned and organized process through which people and communities learn how they can help themselves…*
> *A* process through which people and communities *acquire the attitudes, skills, and abilities for active participation in creating meaningful futures and dealing with community issues."*

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district continued to operate through deficit ideology towards students of color. FÀEI wanted to address that issue and transform it.

As my scholar-self sat and listened, my Activist-becoming-self slowly inserted my knowledge as a community Activist-becoming.

Miss Anne and I used concepts from *"Building Communities from the Grassroots"* a course we both took to assist us in developing FÀEI 's vision of **Working together to excel together.**

In our course we learned that community development, for FÀEI required the involvement of people and communities in securing the change we wanted to see in our policies.

This is where my learning from my doctoral program paid off. I made sure to suggest that policies needed to be developed to sustain the change that we desired. Miss Anne and I knew that we, as families, needed to go directly to the district and demand that they work with us.

The course that Miss Anne and I took taught us to mobilize and support grassroots actors to demand for institutional change. Most importantly, it taught us that policy change is a messy process that must
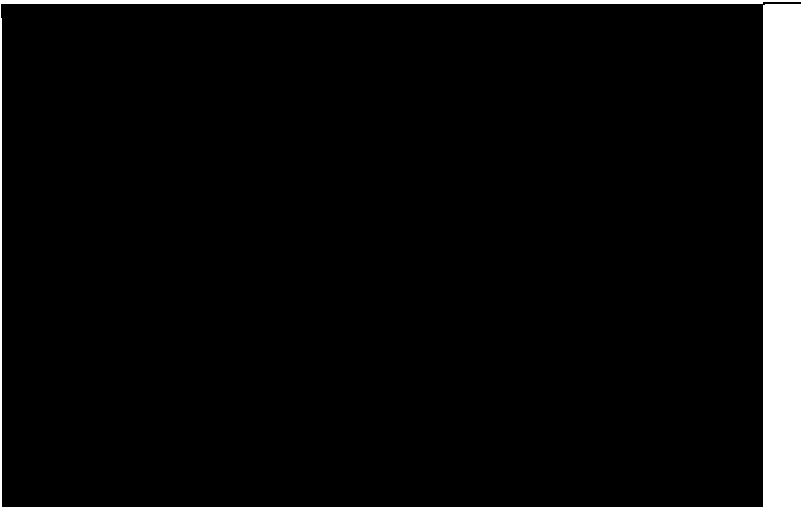
happen by working together. Our role in this process was that of entrepreneurs policy agents (Ball et al., 2011). We work with the messy.

We, as families, began demanding to be integrated in decision making to improve the education of the super subgroup.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI 's vision: "Working together to excel together."	David… LISTEN	The **"working together to excel together"** became the wish, a gentle demand of the mothers since the inception of FÀEI . From September 2014 to September 2015 the families, "a grassroots group of parents, grandparents, retired educators and caring individuals" met weekly to deliberate on the ways to help children receive a better education. My involvement was of listening.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent...	David… L	The **"working together to excel together"** became the

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's vision:
"Working together to excel together."

 In a local news article, Miss Anne and Dr. Serenity describe their rationale for creating FÀEI :

 "... At the Oct. 13 Little Osage's School Board meeting, Dr. Serenity introduced the new group to the board. She expressed an interest in **working with the board** and spoke of her concerns for students in the subgroup. The group was met with a warm welcome.

At the board meeting nearly a month later, Miss Anne reiterated the group's goal to **connect parents, teachers and schools together to help students succeed.** She said that the group supports the district and that she and Dr. Serenity want to actively help make a difference for students.

Dr. Serenity, who has children in the Columbia district, and Miss Anne see **communication disconnects** between parents and schools and said they want to be the needle that threads it all together."

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wish, a gentle demand of the mothers since the inception of FÀEI .

The **demand to be included** in addressing the super subgroup issue was due to families' personal experience feeling excluded by their own schools.

As Ball et al., (2011) suggested for policy entrepreneurs to be "forceful agents of change" (p. 628), FÀEI families **demanded to be included** in the decision making process. The demand came from a disgust that in 2014, Black and Latinx children were still (1) underperforming in school, (2) Black and Brown children were still overly penalized in the classroom for small disciplinary infractions-based on their own children's experiences, and (3) language was used to permeate an inferiority over Black and Brown human beings.

The gentle demand, a kind request was made by the mothers to the school board to include them and their ideas in creating solutions to address the super subgroup concern.

For a year, FÀEI attended board meetings insisting to be included.

Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... **Zealous to "Be fierce."** **FÀEI 's vision:** **"Working together to excel together."** **Four goals of FÀEI :** **Strategic Goals** **FÀEI has established four strategic goals that will help the organization fulfil its mission and purpose and achieve its vision.** *Goal 1:* **Deliver comprehensive parent education to increase engagement in their children's development.** *Goal 2:* **Develop partnerships with local public schools and higher education institutions.** *Goal 3:* **Increase the involvement of underrepresented groups and mentors of color for youth.** *Goal 4:* **Foster relationships and partnerships to expound the resources and strength of the community.**	**David…** L I S T E N	The "**working together to excel together**" became the gentle demand that FÀEI be included in addressing the super subgroup needs. The miscommunication between the district and the families was more than just teacher to parent miscommunication. The miscommunication that needed, and continues to need addressing is one of a "**cultural paradigm shift of the classroom teacher**." But more than just the classroom teacher, FÀEI believes that the cultural paradigm shift is required for the entire community. FÀEI believes, in its core, that the entire community is in need of a paradigm shift where it views Black, Brown, immigrants, refugees, and people in poverty with a lens of potentiality. That is why FÀEI developed four all-encompassing goals: family, schools, non-for-profits, and other community resources. The paradigm shift requires an overhaul of deficit-driven ideologies and is not only up to education to address the issue. The issue of the super subgroup is a community-wide concern. The miscommunication is one beyond the classroom and the school, is one that requires a district-wide overhaul of its
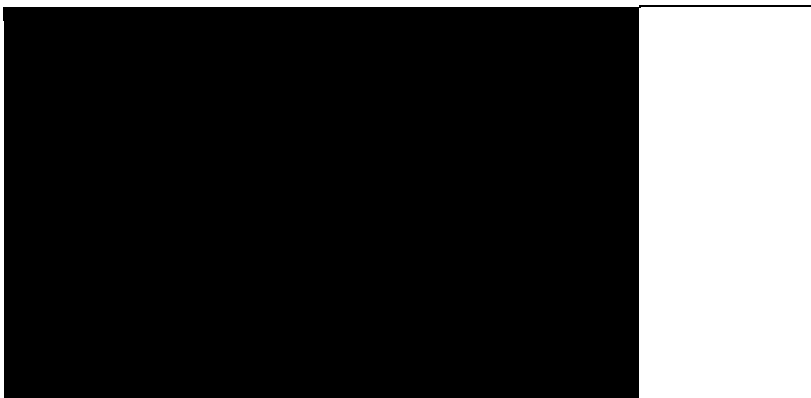
curricular, teacher-training/hiring, and programmatic/policy practices.

The miscommunication is centered on not accepting and valuing the difference of one another: of the other racial/ethnic group.

Families | **S c h o l a r** | **Activist-becoming**
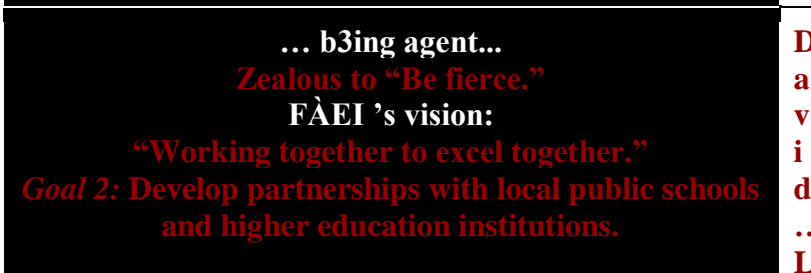
… b3ing agent...
Zealous to "Be fierce."
FÀEI 's vision:
"Working together to excel together."
Goal 2: Develop partnerships with local public schools and higher education institutions.

D a v i d .. L I S T E N

The group attended monthly school district board meetings to inform the district FÀEI was here to help them with this super subgroup issue, specifically with the miscommunication concern between schools and parents. The goal was for our presence to signal a desire to collaborate with the district to engage in a shift of deficit-based paradigms--first, we did it through public comment and then through our mere physical presence.

Our desire was to be involved more than just a PTA family would be. Our desire was, as our goal mentions: **Develop partnerships with local public schools and higher education institutions.**

Table 3

2015-2016 School Year as of 3/1/2016

Enrollment	OSS	Risk Ratio	Percent of OSS
All	405		
Super	368	9.0	90.9%
Black	227	5.1	56.0%
Hispanic	11	.4	2.7%
Free and reduced Lunch	331	5.8	81.7%
IEP	7	4.3	30.1%
ELL	7	.3	30.1%
Table 3 2015-2016 School Year as of 3/1/2016			

Table 3 data is provided by school district to show how out of school suspension (OSS) is rampant amongst minoritized groups, especially the super-subgroup.

Our goal was, and it still is, to go beyond the school and focus on the educational institution. That is part of my contribution as an Activist-becoming-scholar to FÀEI .

Families	**S c h o l a r**	**Activist-becoming-becoming**
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI 's organizational vision: "Working together to excel together."	**D a v i d … L I S T E N**	A "working together" philosophy rapidly spread as we were selected as one of 10 organizations doing great work in the community. We were given the recognition for those non-for-profits doing necessary work in the community. We were selected for our desire to help the school district increase the super subgroup's academic gains. Such recognition launched us to have city-wide recognition and notoriety.

Families	S c h o l a r	Activist-becoming-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI 's vision: "Working together to excel together."	D a v i d … L I S T E N	FÀEI 's goal was, and it still is, to go beyond the school building and focus on the entire educational institution--the district. That has been part of my contribution as a Activist-becoming-becoming-scholar to FÀEI . In fact, Miss Anne and I both learned and were guided by courses such as "Building Communities from the Grassroots" which taught us: "Walk Outs are people who bravely choose to leave behind situations, jobs, relationships, and ideas that restrict and confine them, anything that inhibits them. They walk on to the ideas, people, and practices that enable them to explore and discover new gifts, new possibilities… When people and communities walk out, they discover they're more gifted and wiser than they believed or had been told, that working together--even in the harshest circumstances--can be joyful, that they can invent solutions to problems that others have declared unsolvable" (Wheatley & Frieze, 2011, pp. 4-5). As a growing scholar-Activist-becoming-becoming, I chose to take a bigger role with FÀEI and decided to speak up. I decided to Walk Out Walk On.

Families	S c h o l a r	Activist-becoming-becoming
… b3ing agent... **Zealous to "Be fierce."** **FÀEI 's vision:** **"Working together to excel together."** Hello board members, I'm here representing Families Ase through Ethnic Identity. My name is David Aguayo. I'm a doctoral student at the University of Missouri, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I'm also the vice-president for FÀEI . I'm here to welcome you all to the new academic year and congratulate the district on the improvements made to the academic gains of our super subgroup, or as we would like to call them children of promise. As you may recall, and as you can see from the flyers we handed out, the children of promise are FÀEI 's specific target population. And we believe that the school district cannot do it alone. That is why our goal is to engage in conversation and collaboration across different sectors of our community to ensure that these children and their families are helped. On the same lines, FÀEI knows through lived experience and research the importance of increasing cultural competence among teaching staff and the need to be sensitive to students' home cultures. Our organization understands, that on this point, the school district has created efforts to address this cultural competence through equity training. We are curious to know where the district is on this training and how can the community learn of its impact on teaching staff. FÀEI is interested in helping the district promote cultural competence, not only in the schools, but also in our community. Let us know how we can help. Follow	D a v i d … L I S T E N	**Throughout the 2014-2015 year, I listened and contributed very little, based on my experience to design organizational vision, mission, and goals.** **Slowly, I took more of an active, visible role in the organization.** **As FÀEI continued to demand to be part of more decision making, they taught me to b3 an agent of change: to become motivated, inspired, zealous, in order to be brave, bold, and fierce in demanding collaboration.** **Through FÀEI 's guidance, I demanded that FÀEI be more than just involved or engaged at the school level. We were demanding a spot in the table of decision making to impact the overall community.** **We explicitly said: "** FÀEI is interested in helping the district promote cultural competence, not only in the schools, but also in our community. Let us know how we can help."

us on Facebook and Twitter. Let's thread together to excel together.

Families	S c h o l a r	Activist-becoming-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI 's organizational vision: "Working together to excel together." A message from a mother to FÀEI via email: Sent: Friday, October 23, 2015 11:09 AM Subject: a seat at the roundtable? Dear Ms. Dr. Serenity, I had the privilege of listening to you speak yesterday about your journey through the public schools and your work as a teacher, a parent, a graduate student and community Activist-becoming-becoming. As a parent, I too have witnessed what I later realized were micro-aggressions toward black children in my kids' classrooms in the Little Osage Public Schools. It was so subtle that I wasn't sure of what I was seeing until later. I have since resolved to do what I can with my own children's teachers (I mentioned the conference to my child's teacher last night via email; we plan to meet and talk). ... With Gratitude, Parent with a PhD	D a v i d … L I S T E N	The "working together" was slowly occurring. The role of FÀEI is to bring the "town and the gown" together and create change for all students, especially of color. FÀEI 's purpose of "working together." The goal for FÀEI has been to empower parents of different socioeconomic privileges to stand up and speak up against the micro-aggressions toward black children and other children with less privileges. In this case, a middle or upper class parent gained the (cou)rage to speak against the racism

children experienced in the classroom.

Speaking up against racism is the first step to working together to excel together

… b3ing agent...

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision:
"Working together to excel together."

On October 25, 2017 FÀEI sent a thank you email to all attendees. In this email, the superintendent and members of his board were included for having attended our Sunday meeting.

David … LISTEN

The "working together" was slowly occurring.

Our speaking up throughout the city, we finally got the ear of the superintendent and his board.

The superintendent, assistant superintendent and board members join FÀEI in our community meeting.

Families

Scholar

Activist-becoming

The "working together" was slowly occurring.

The proposal was to create a recruitment effort of racial/ethnic minority teachers and begin during high school. The high school students would start with an internship that would turn into a paid 4-year scholarship in a teacher's education program. All with the students' promise to return and teach in Little Osage Public School district.

Once again, Dr. Serenity and FÀEI invited ourselves into a position to work together on a program that would benefit the entire district by increase racial/ethnic teachers in Little Osage Public School district.

David… LISTEN

… b3ing agent...

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision:
"Working together to excel together."

An email sent to the superintendent with our intention to directly work with them on a project, we'd later call Root Our Own.

Sent: Saturday, October 31, 2015 10:10 AM
To: Superintendent
Subject: Proposal

Hi Superintendent! Thank you again for you and the boards' presence last Sunday! Truly a dynamic discussion! I wanted to touch base with you about the College's proposal (to train youth in our community on becoming teachers) and your thoughts about a timeline for us to collaborate on this effort. We think this is an important program that can eventually be duplicated throughout our State of the Osage. I look forward to being a part of this groundbreaking opportunity!

Schol

Families

Activist-becoming

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… b3ing agent... **Zealous to "Be fierce."** **FÀEI 's organizational vision:** **"Working together to excel together."** **On Nov 29, 2015, at 10:46 AM, Dr. Superintendent wrote in an email:** **"We need to spend a half day working on this. Let's both choose a date and get our assistant superintendent, Dr. EI, and David in a room with us. Who else needs to be there? Maybe in January before the semester starts again for you?"**	**D a v i d … L I S T E N**	This **"Working together"** came from a demand by FÀEI , a desire to work together. From the onset, the superintendent seemed willing to engage with us in this work and recognized the need to have more teachers of color in the classroom.

Families	**S c h o l a r**	**Activist-becoming**
		I attended that first meeting in January with both awe and hesitancy. The FAEI families and I were in awe that we were being called to the district office, not to report an issue of mistreatment against one of our students, rather, it was as if we were part of a team with the school district. The hesitation came from me. Here I was, 2nd year PhD student, working with families to demand that the school district listen to us, and I'm in one of the school district's business suites, sitting around with the Superintendent, school teachers from the district, and members of FAEI—

and I was invited to create a program. What do I have to contribute?

Regardless of my hesitation, I sat next to the Superintendent. I knew him. I was his child's preschool teacher a few years back. During parent teacher conference, he was a parent and not the superintendent: we shared intimate stories about his child's personal and academic struggles and successes. The Superintendent trusted me.

With that gained trust, I sat next to him in our first meeting. We joked around as the meeting began. After quickly learning who each one was and the goal to recruit more teachers from diverse backgrounds, the meeting soon turned into a delegation of tasks: who needs to be contacted, how do we revive a summer internship program that ended in the 90s.

Shortly after our work began, the Superitendent sent an email with an article titled: Teacher perceptions and race (Startz, 2016).

The article summarized the following: "In summary, black teacher perceptions about the behavior of black boys is very different than the perceptions of white teachers. This doesn't happen for other racial groups. None of this necessarily suggests malice or prejudice or favoritism on anyone's part. It does suggest one more way that race still matters in our schools."

There was a seriousness and diligence to the Superintendent to create a more diverse teaching workforce in his school district.

FAEI and I saw a sense of urgency in the Superintendent and a willingness to collaborate with us as a community organization and other institutions.

Families

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Activist-becoming
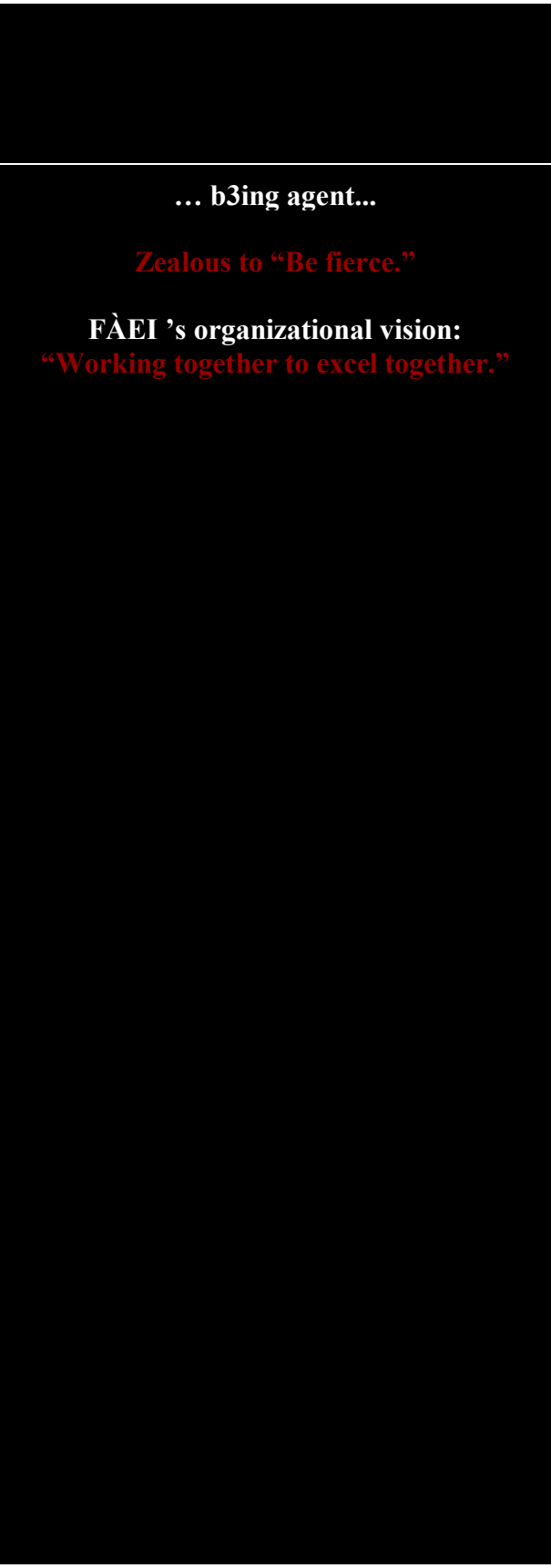
… b3ing agent...

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision:
"Working together to excel together."

olar David .. LISTEN

A "Working together" is a demand, a desire to work together for the good of our children, especially our super subgroup.

This team oriented process began to occur from the onset of the program development. Four months into the process, there was a committee-like work process occurring, where with the superintendent, two Little Osage teachers, 3-4 FÀEI members, and a former Root Our Own director, we all took on different responsibilities to launch the program.

Four months of planning and we as a group began talking about starting a summer intern program for the following year. This was March of 2016 and we were planning for the summer of 2017. With the trust that I had built with the Superintendent and the urgency in which FAEI group saw him work, during one of our meetings I addressed him directly and asked,
"can we start a pilot program this summer? Why wait until next year when we can start this summer?
There was a small pause and I started again,
"Aren't you the Superintendent? Don't you have the power to start a pilot program?"

Soon after that meeting, the superintendent sent the following email:

"Hello Team!
This morning, Melanie, David, Dr. Serenity, and I communicated about the Minority Intern Program. Little Osage Public Schools has agreed with the
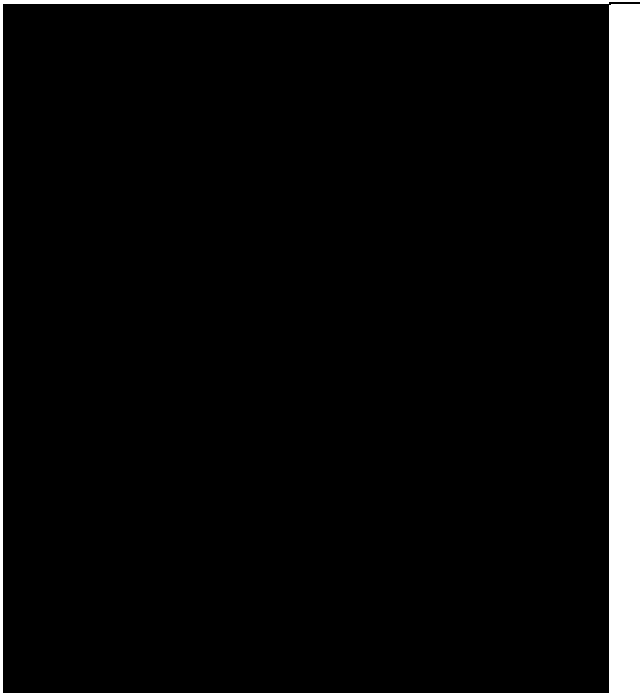
recommendation by our FÀEI partners to reinstate the program this summer. And [an educator] has agreed to lead the program for the summer. These are my takeaways from this morning's discussion (I've added a few to dos as well - leave it to a superintendent to go do his own thing!!).

Working backwards...”
There were 5 steps that included FÀEI as program coordinator. From recruitment, interviewing, selection of high school students, to hosting the welcome dinner for the students, their parents, and the district staff.
We began as a collaborative entity, FÀEI and the school district, just as we had desired--demanded.
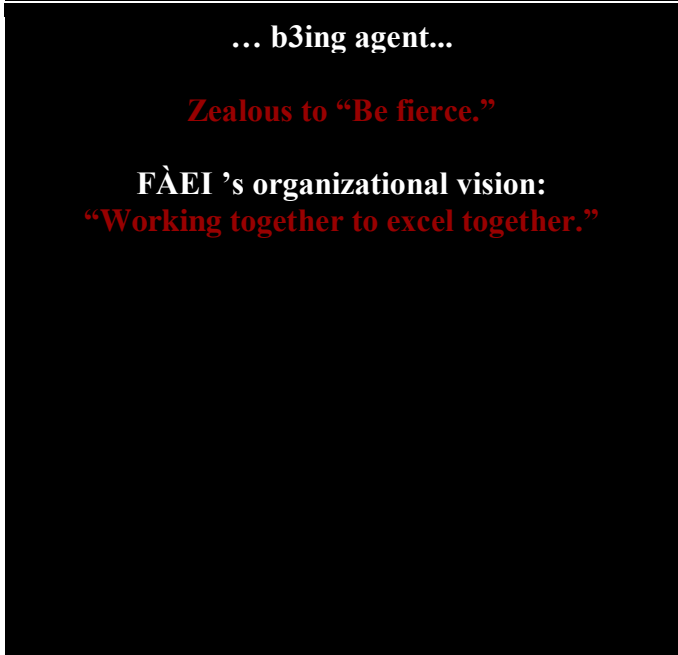
Families	Scholar	Activist-becoming
… b3ing agent... Zealous to "Be fierce." FÀEI 's organizational vision: "Working together to excel together."	David.. LISTEN	A "Working together" came from a demand to be partners and at first, that seemed to be the case. It appears that there's a team process going on. During the meetings, the superintendent was always democratic in nature. In one of the meetings, he even joked that Robert rules of order were not being followed, and he didn't seem to mind. In another instance, when EI asked him whether there was room for a particular student as part of Root Our Own, he noted that there was, but then retracted himself to say, "I don't want to speak for the group" or

at another time when he said, "I want to support the recommendation of hiring team, but it's a team process." All of these suggestions were hinting towards an individual being democratic.

| | **S c h o l a r** | |
| Families | | Activist-becoming |

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision: "Working together to excel together."

In the meetings with the school district, there were always representatives from the community-at-large, which was FAEI members; there were two or three teachers always represented including the president from the teacher union, and representatives from three local universities.

| | **S c h o l a r** | |
| Families | | Activist-becoming |

… b3ing agent...

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision: "Working together to excel together."

D a v i d …

From the perspective of FÀEI, a "Working together" does not mean we don't acknowledge and

When asking Miss Anne about an instance during one of our Root our Own meetings where she addressed a district staff person across the table, and both of her hands were on the table while she was leaning in, she noted:

"I know I have a lot of power. I know what kind of instrument I am in this community… when I show up the powers shows up, and it intimidates almost everybody in the room... so what I was doing was honoring the new coordinator, Sue. Letting her know that I honor her and respect her decisions… So what I was doing was letting her know right off the bat, I ain't got no beef with you. I'm here, you know, what's happening is what I wanted to happen. What FÀEI wanted to happen. Y'all [the school district] are using all your resources. We're cool. We just wanna make sure y'all do it and do it right. And if you're really a momma bear [Sue], which I believe her, she's a single momma, four kids, her husband did her wrong…. So I'm just looking for opportunities to give her my blessing. I ain't got no beef with you. That's what I was thinking."

LISTEN

give credit where credit is due. We also want to be recognized however as a partner for their programming-- as suggested from the very beginning.

We know we have power and abilities, just recognize that too.

Scholar

Families

Activist-becoming

David…LISTEN

… b3ing agent...

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision:
"Working together to excel together."

In June of 2017 in the FÀEI 's board meeting, we discussed needing to be formally recognized as a Root Our Own partner with the school district:

How can we get the superintendent to formally recognize FÀEI as a partner for Root Our Own Teachers, because we're taking ownership out of our four goals for somebody else's program that we have been allowed to be a part of? How can that relationship be formalized and what does that look like?

Waiting for the district to give credit will not happen. It appears that a goal of "Working together" is a desire of groups who have nothing to lose and much to gain like FÀEI .

During the summer of 2017, FÀEI discussed to request a formal partner

…
- Dr. Serenity: We birthed that program together. I always thought that
- Doctor: It's not a public school project, it was conceived in your mother's house and when people ask me about I explain that
- Melanie: When we're given the opportunity.
…
You know what? We did [the superintendent] a favor because they were already in hot water. They had to show some redemption somewhere and we were their savior. If you really want to know the truth.
Think about it. The numbers were not in their favor [high number of discipline referrals were students of color, low numbers of teachers were teachers of color, high numbers of low achieving students of color]. We brought the truth to them. It was their bad, and we knew what to do with it. We knew how to address it and we knew how to communicate in their language. We were a worthy adversary. It was better to align with us, not in an adversarial relationship, but as a partner…

I don't know if that's a meeting where he can be himself or not. Or he feels that he has to be, but we can't have this type of business, meeting, I don't know if we need to get [the superintendent] back at the table, at the roundtable, so we can just get real with him. I don't know because he has to be on in that setting and everybody is own. I wonder if that's the conversation that we gotta get [the superintendent] back at the table, at the roundtable…

with the school district and provide a proposal of what that partnership looks like.

We demand for the superintendent to act without politics in his talk. We need him to "be real" with us, where he can be himself.

In fact, another group acting a non-for-profit and working as a "partner" with Little Osage school district mentioned the same issue, that the superintendent was not being real with them, that he was playing "politics" only saying the "right message" to appease the crowd.

Politics talk. Money talks. Whiteness talks. White supremacy talks. Yet, FÀEI and other groups, such as Racism is Alive, and Birth to Career is ready to work. We're ready to thread together to excel together. Where is the superintendent?

… b3ing agent...

Zealous to "Be fierce."

FÀEI 's organizational vision:
"Working together to excel together."

In the signing ceremony for the first three Root Our Own graduating students a flyer was handed out recognizing the different participants who received a scholarship. In the flyer, it recognized the public school district and two colleges for their effort to sponsor scholarships for the students: as partner of this process, FÀEI was not included.

One of the board members reflects on the lack of recognition:

"I'll tell you part of what's going on, I think he's [the superintendent] a little bit intimidated by his peers over there. He doesn't really want to promote the idea of nurturing kids of color to be teachers. So, I noticed that he left out teachers of color at the press conference. I think for some reason he feels intimidated..."

However, months later, in the Little Osage District Report, the school district printed the following:
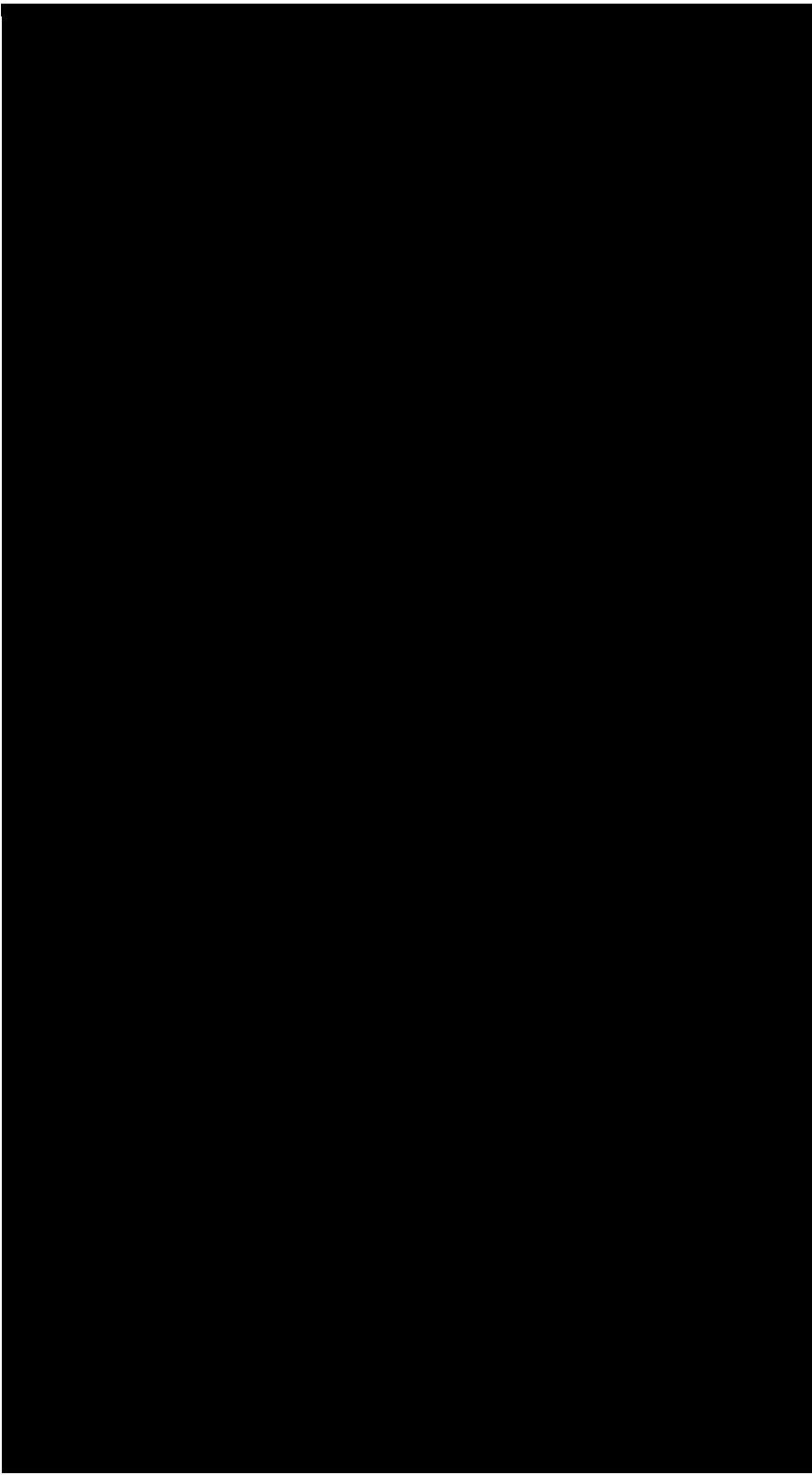
"With the help of central office administrator, the FÀEI group and university partners, the district created the Root Our Own Intern program. During its inaugural year, MN and members of the FÀEI interviewed and selected 10 students from a pool of 42 applicants who served as paid interns in various classrooms throughout the summer."

D a v i d … L I S T E N

With the vision of "Working together," the families of FÀEI continue to be adamant that the school district recognizes them as valued contributors to district-wide programing. During the signing ceremony of students full-ride scholarships, the FÀEI group was not included in the agenda or even on the flyer that discussed the signing ceremony.

This lack of recognition signaled to us, the FÀEI organization, that as a community organization we were an afterthought or it could be that, as one of our FÀEI board members suggested, they are "a little intimidated" by us.

The fear to be associated with an organization that promotes "nurturing kids of colors to be teachers" would send the wrong message to donors.

In fact, in one of the community forums

that was supposed to be open to the entire community, a "World Cafe" was located in a hotel where only people with cars could access. In attending such cafe, I immediately recognized who was in the room: business owners, lawyers, city planners. The conversation being had was about growth of the school in terms of new buildings and new development-- housing.

It appeared to be that the superintendent was catering to different needs and one of those needs was developers, while at the same time appeasing the demands of groups advocating for students of color.

Nevertheless, the FÀEI group stayed relentless in their effort to promote more teachers of color in the school district.

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Zealous to "Be fierce."
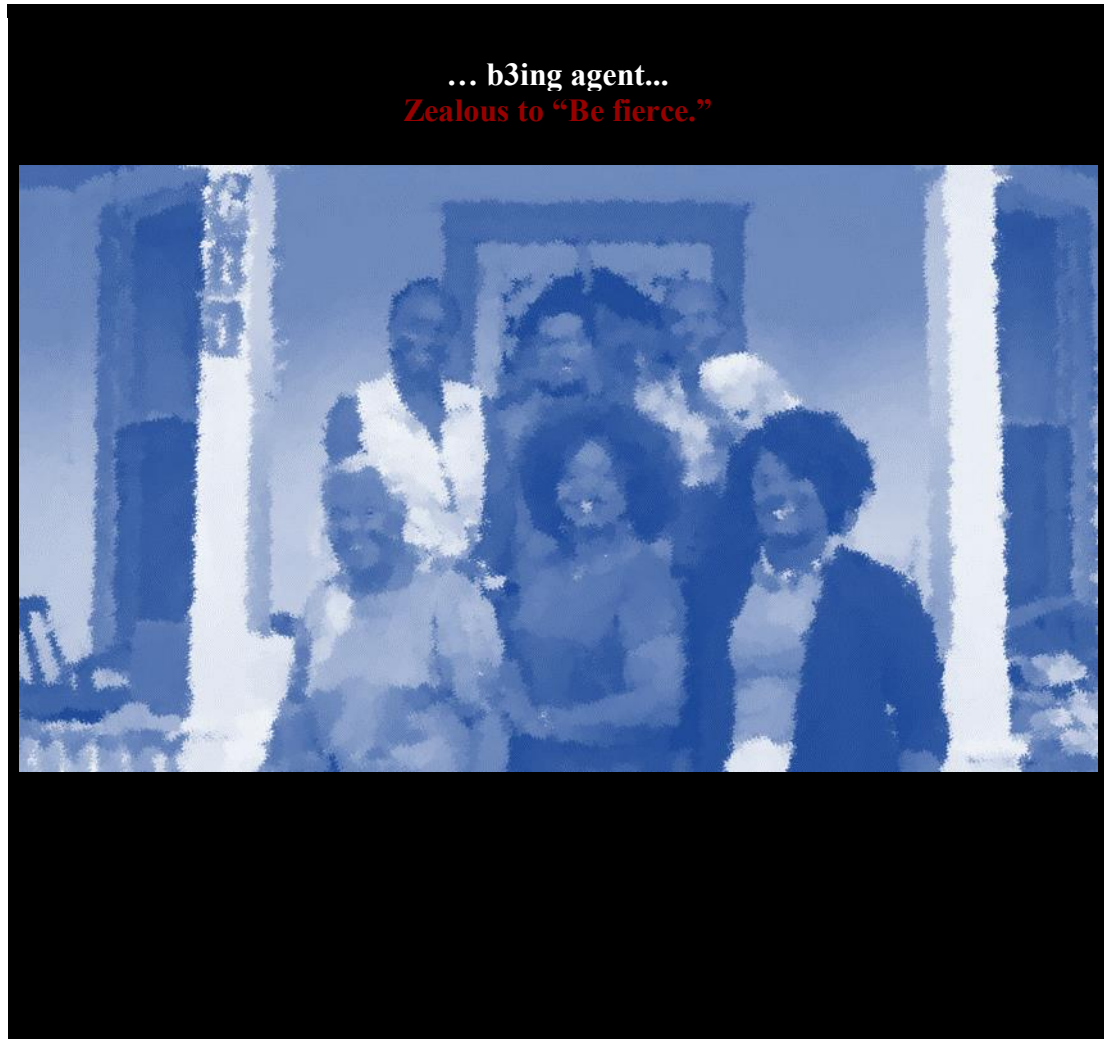
Photograph 3 Board members and co-founders of FÀEI (2).

"Working together to excel together"

Becoming and acting as policy agents for Black families in a context ridden by colonial residue requires more than just "parental involvement;" it is a continual demand to be seen as equal and recognized as contributors of valuable input. Specifically, the performativity produced by FÀEI in order to shape certain district-wide programming/policy is one of "Working together to excel together." Miss Anne mentioned in one of her talks for the community in Little Osage city:

"It is time for us to stop playing small. It's time for us to take this city and take it by force if we have to … It's time to allow the spirit of God to rise above in us, everyone individually…"

The becoming and acting of policy agent demands for individual responsibility over oneself and next over their community. It becomes a continuous management of the self and others.

"Healing" for self and city. In the mothers' <<<b3ing>>>, they continue to experience external and internal voices that diminish their worth as human beings because of the color of their skin. In their motivation to be brave and inspiration to be bold, they also utilized a zealous fierce to engage in disruptive and transformative actions to change school-wide and city-wide programming that impact the wellbeing of Black individuals and their children. I have called FÀEI families' action disruptive and transformative, yet they have called it "healing." It is a healing of the self-deprecation inculcated in them and the segregated and crime-ridden geopolitics they inherited.

Whenever Miss Anne has a chance to speak to anyone, she ensures she "speaks into them." A term with religious and spiritual connotation, speaking into a person or group of individuals meant challenging them to do better than what they are doing. Speaking into a person or group was letting them know that they have what it takes to change. Miss Anne invoked: "It's time to stop playing small." This phrase was speaking into an individual and referring to a response-ability (Patel, 2016) to act for the betterment of themselves and then those around them.

Miss Anne was calling her Little Osage community out to stop "playing small." She indicated how not only the inner selves needs healing, but also the Little Osage

community. She exalted: "... there's healing that needs to take place in our community. Little Osage City is not unique. It's all across the country. It's crazy." Miss Anne gave the example that she is doing her job by taking Moynihan Street: a street associated with criminal activity and drug traffic. The neighborhood surrounding Moynihan street was once known for an area populated by predominantly by Black citizens. Thanks to Miss Anne and her activism work, she created a neighborhood association that over time worked to rid of such criminal activity. Ironically, today, Moynihan Street is more and more gentrified.

A note on transformation. Although I call the healing process of the FÀEI mothers a disruption and transformation, such process requires an inner-transformation of deprecating self-image. The inner-work is an everyday journey where FÀEI mothers muster the (cou)rage to overcome their adversity and fight it directly. This is where the relational tension is necessary. A cultural tension must occur inside one's individuality and with one's environment. The tension becomes constant, especially when the geopolitical environment denies wrong doing and continues to degrade one's individuality. In this case, FÀEI mothers are constantly reminded that their Blackness is inferior (e.g., continue school-to-prison pipeline, police brutality, chronic poverty for Black individuals) and that their geopolitical history does not impact their current reality (e.g., the notion of living in a post-racial society).

To overcome daily denigrating discourse and policies, hope for survivance is necessary. For these families, hope is tied to a spirituality that creates a geopolitical context where their Blackness is valued and their work is necessary. Reliance and hope in divine governance permits them an authority to begin acting with the human capacity

they were meant to utilize. Miss Anne's invocation, "**It's time to allow the spirit of God to rise above in us,**" is more of a caution and warning to those listening: I'm a Black woman; I'm Black and proud; I am brave, I am bold, and I am fierce; I am here to take what is mine and make of this world, with you, a better place. Be ready to work or get out of my way. This message is exactly what a slavery institution wanted to prevent: fully independent and strong Black individuals with the ability to own their rights to be a citizen and take part of a more humane politiquing. The latter is still pending, however: it needs a deconstructing and constructing of a "**cultural paradigm**." The former, acquiring the rights for full citizenship is possible but requires much more work: it takes "**working together to excel together**."

"Working Together." FÀEI members came together realizing that healing needed to occur individually and city-wide. Specifically, Dr. Serenity, Melanie, and Miss Anne became exhausted that Black children continued to be marginalized and over disciplined in their schools. It was this marginalization, in their opinion, that was creating the deficit-based narrative against Black people. They began to demand for a "**cultural paradigm shift.**"

The shift the mothers began to demand was on terms like "super subgroup." Terms used as "super subgroup" for a group of children that were predominantly Black, for FÀEI families, was outright dehumanizing. The term super subgroup was only reifying a conception of Black people as inferior. The mothers demanded their children to be seen as more than just "super subgroup," a level signifying extreme inferiority was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Not only had these mothers experienced negative interactions in their own schooling, but also, in their children's schooling. They began to

see how the school district was demeaning other Black children as inferior—this was part of not only school district policy but also state wide writing. The responsibility of self-improvement led these mothers to demand from their school district a responsibility to also improve the treatment of Black children in their schools. FÀEI mothers' <<<b3ing>>> came together demanding for children be seen and treated with high levels of potential.

Becoming and Acting as a Policy Agent

When geopolitics are deeming you and your existence as inferior, how would one be able to stand up and speak up? These mothers were demanding two things from the school district: for their own subjectivity to be recognized and for the school district to recognize the potentiality of their children. Knowing full well that the predominantly white district would not fully engage in this type of paradigm shift, they also demanded for the FÀEI families to be included in levels of decision making. According to Ball and colleagues (2011) this demanding exercises came from "forceful agents of change" (p. 628). The force that Ball is referring to is an exhaustion from FÀEI families for being dehumanized. The FÀEI families' force turned into a <<<b3ing>>>

Diagram 2, Being with Blackness (1)

Motivation to be(ing) brave ←→ **Inspiration to be(ing) bold**

Zealous to be(ing) fierce

Speaking to colonial power through a Politics of Dignity. There are multiple ways that FÀEI began speaking to the school district, a type of colonial power. As a group, we were adamant that we wanted to "Work together." We forced ourselves into policy crafting roles with gentle reminders that we were present and able to cooperate

with the school district. It was important to engage in conversation with the district administrators in order to create system-wide changes. As an organization, FÀEI knew we needed to disrupt closed processes of decision making (Axelrod, 2010): we wanted to collaborate not be told what was best for us, as families and community members. We wanted to integrate our knowledge in the decision making. For that reason, we gently demanded to be integrated.

Part of being integrated into a closed, archaic system of operation was to ensure that the voices of underrepresented individuals were not just heard, but included. By archaic, I'm referring to operating processes for program and policy making that are linear and hierarchical. These types of operations happen in businesses, politics, and education. Democracy is regarded as the golden standard for many of these processes where the voices of constituents are "heard" through surveys or by holding what is called a "World Café." The research is evident. These processes can be used in an exclusive and undemocratic manner (Axelrod, 2010). As a FÀEI group, we were aware of these rigid systems of operation and for that reason, not only our voices needed to be included, we wanted our entire presence in rooms of decision making. We wanted to oversee district administrators to ensure diversity and equity was being managed not only in lip service, but in actual work.

First, our demand to be included worked. I'm aware that our demand entered the space of relationships, where in demanding to be included the answer in response back could have been a rejection. Instead of a rejection, to our surprise, the Superintendent included FÀEI in multiple projects with the district. One of them was the Root Our Own Teachers program. FÀEI began working directly with the superintendent and other

educators to discuss how to increase teacher diversity in the school district. A committee was formed composed of current school district teachers, a retired educator, and several members of FÀEI as community members.

During these meetings, another surprising action by the school district (as represented by the Superintendent) was that the meetings were inclusive, while disruptive. A week in advance, the Superintendent, to this day, asks for agenda items. The meetings followed a Robert Rules of Orders. Yet, the Superintendent was comfortable with breaking with order.

In one of the meetings, he even joked that Robert rules of order were not being followed, and he didn't seem to mind.

For FÀEI it was not about breaking rules. It was more of an alternative manner to be inclusive. However, FÀEI knew that following "business as usual" would not benefit all of us. For instance, the "super-subgroup" categorization. Such name was given to create a deliberate order between students performing according to state test standards and those that needed remediation. Yet, for FÀEI, such name was only condemning minoritized students into perpetual perceived inferiority and stereotype threat—having student start believing they were inferior because of how people would categorize them. That is why FÀEI asked for alternative name for the categorization.

In such way, the second way FÀEI spoke to the district's colonial power was by disrupting its planning process. Although we understood Robert Rules of Order, there were times that we needed to intersect and break such order. As a FÀEI group, we demanded that the planning process was more representative. To obtain representation, there were times during the planning meetings that we interrupted the agenda process. I

use Miss Anne as an example. Below, in one of our meetings, Miss Anne addressed a district staff person across the table, out of order. Both of her hands were on the table and asked the district staff person a question in relation to the Root Our Own program. After the meeting, I asked her what made her act in that way, and out of order. She replied:

"I know I have a lot of power. I know what kind of instrument I am in this community… when I show up the powers shows up, and it intimidates almost everybody in the room... so what I was doing was honoring the new coordinator, Sue. Letting her know that I honor her and respect her decisions… So what I was doing was letting her know right off the bat, I ain't got no beef with you. I'm here, you know, what's happening is what I wanted to happen. What FÀEI wanted to happen. Y'all [the school district] are using all your resources. We're cool. We just wanna make sure y'all do it and do it right… That's what I was thinking.

This is where the b3ing of the mothers came into effect and played a role in working directly with the school district. The families utilized their b3ing to disrupt colonial processes, processes that are supposedly aimed for democratization and inclusion. The statement by Miss Anne is a clear example of how the mothers utilized their b3ing to disrupt colonial spaces:

I know what kind of instrument I am in this community… when I show up the powers shows up, and it intimidates almost everybody in the room...

There are two things to understand here. First, members of FÀEI must operate with their whole b3ing when entering spaces of power. A person from underrepresented populations

can enter positions of power without awareness of the dominating and oppressive "business as usual" type of process. For a woman of color, a Black woman to enter a white space, surrounded by male administrators and be able to say "**when I show up the powers shows up**" is not only a empowering statement. Such a statement acknowledges a readiness to disrupt oppressive power dynamics and transform the space simply by b3ing.

The second point I must make about the disruption process of "business as usual" is the openness by the Superintendent to allow such disruption. The Superintendent could have established a bounded agenda process during the meetings where little disruptions could occur. However, the Superintendent was in the room, running the meeting, and allowing disruption to occur: he was willing to break certain processes to ensure inclusion.

In another of our meetings, one of our FÀEI members asked the Superintendent if there was space in the summer program for a middle school student. The Superintendent responded that there was space and then he followed by stating:

"I don't want to speak for the group."

There was another time that as a committee we began creating teams recruit and hire the new summer interns. The Superintendent respondent:

"I want to support the recommendation of a hiring team, but it's a team process."

The superintendent responses were hinting towards an inclusive process to decision making. During the meeting, we followed an agenda and the Superintendent would deliberately ask, "what do you think?" or "what would be best?" The superintendent took

our ideas and suggestions seriously given that each meeting he reported back to us on the many things he had accomplished.

Another aspect of FÀEI's ability to speak with colonial power lies in the Superintendent silently acknowledging the type of power he held in the development of Root Our Own program. Although there was a committee and each one of our meetings became working meetings with a to-do list, most of the items on that to do list was for the Superintendent. There were times that items were relegated to either the teachers or FÀEI members. But, for the most part, the Superintendent had to do most of the work in the beginning of the process, in order to acquire approval from different school district sectors. For instance, the Superintendent had to ensure that the district could sponsor a summer teaching internship for high school students, as well as that the school district could pay these high school students. The Superintendent listened to us, the teachers and the community: he was working with us and for us.

Another example of speaking to colonial power, while b3ing FÀEI is the way I pressured the Superintendent to create a pilot program for Root Our Own teachers. Four months into the planning process, we continued planning for the following school year. For instance, we spoke about having to convince different audiences that the Minority Teaching Program was necessary and that it would work. Another aspect we discussed was having to collect research to show that such programs worked. In my years of creating projects, I was aware of the adage: meetings are where ideas and creativity dies. Four months into planning and it appeared like we were getting stuck on planning meetings. FÀEI families were conscientious of this trend in education overall (their experience was that projects would stall).

As a group, FÀEI and I operated with an intendent urgency for our children. When we encountered bureaucratic mechanisms, we went directly with the person in charge: a year and a half in the making, and going straight to the top of the decision making worked for us. Sitting in the committee meetings for Root Our Own, I began to see that actions would not be taken until the following summer, and as someone who felt comfortable with the Superintendent and as a doctoral student who believed in pilot programs, I addressed him directly. In one of our March meetings, with everyone around planning for the following year and I asked the Superintendent:

"can we start a pilot program this summer?

Why wait until next year when we can start this summer?"
There was a small pause and I started again,
"Aren't you the Superintendent? Don't you have the power to start a pilot program?"

The superintendent's response was extraordinary. He thought the idea for a pilot program would make sense: it serve for logistical purposes and to show initial results. The superintendent agreed to find out how much he could navigate. That same day, after the committee meeting the Superintendent sent the following email:

This morning, Melanie, David, Dr. Serenity, and I communicated about the Minority Intern Program. Little Osage Public Schools has agreed with the recommendation by our FÀEI partners to reinstate the program this summer. And [an educator] has agreed to lead the program for the summer. These are my takeaways from this morning's discussion (I've added a few to dos as well - leave it to a superintendent to go do his own thing!!).

There are multiple factors at play here that allowed for the pilot program to ensue. First, there is an urgency to diversify the classroom. Second, the committee and the Superintendent welcomed and included FÀEI. Third, the committee and the Superintendent were comfortable with disrupting protocols and processes. Finally, members of FÀEI, like Miss Anne and myself operated through b3ing.

Speaking to colonial power, in this case represented by the school district and the Superintendent, required a willingness by FÀEI members to enter a relationship with such oppressive power. The relationship could have been tenuous, but towards the beginning of creating Root Our Own program, the relationship was collaborative. The goal of FÀEI was to foster relationships with others in order to hold each other accountable.

Everyone in FÀEI used their b3ing to initiate and sustain relationships. I acknowledge that my previous teacher-parent relationship with the Superintendent enabled me to sit next to him during each one of our meetings and speak to him with such ease. For FÀEI, collaborative practices are created by initiating simple human interactions before demanding and holding one another accountable. Take for example FÀEI's concept of breaking bread before each one of our Sunday community meetings. The transaction with one another is not for profit of any kind. It is one where we come together to share a meal and learn about one another. That is what allowed me to have such ease with the Superintendent. There was a vulnerability that we shared with each other, and that was the wellbeing of his child and my own frustration with teaching his child (which he understood of given his own frustrations as a parent).

Summary of Chapter 6

     The concept of policy agents for Black families, under a context of colonial residue required for the mothers and I to demand a recognition of our humanity. At the same time, however, it required of transformation of cultural paradigms, not only for their own selves, but also for their city. The transformation was done by the families who became "forceful agents of change" (Ball et al., 2011, p. 628). The families demanded more of their personal situation, but also ordered for equitable change from the school district and the city itself. It was the mothers' <<<b3ing>>> that gave them strength and strategy to work collaboratively with the school district to formulate a much-needed recruitment program. In the process of becoming and acting as policy agent, the mothers and I engaged in strategies that fostered a spirit of policy entrepreneur.

Chapter 7: Ending with Actions

As I entered this performative case project, I was cognizant of the power (and lack thereof) that I held through my different intersectional identities. I entered the lives of Black families, especially Black mothers as a cisgender male, Mexican, immigrant, educator, and re-searcher. The previous reflective action focused on my initial year with the families, three years ago, when I entered the lives of these families with a desire to "help." From the beginning, my being as Educator, Re-searcher entered in the middle of the Black families' lives. At first, I was unaware of the racialized lived experiences of Black families while living in Little Osage City. Working directly with the FÀEI families, I learned about the families' experiences with anti-black discrimination and socialization, which raised in me a consciousness to see the deleterious effects of systematic discrimination on Black people, children and families. It was through a heightened awareness that I began to deconstruct, construct my identity/role of educator into an activist-inquirer—a new formed consciousness, a new subjectivity. Under this new assumed subjectivity, I conducted this dissertation project.

My dissertation's overarching research question focused on a shift of power in the policy development process and asks: How do Black families (and I) become and act policy agents in our school district? In conceptualizing my research project, I considered and built from researchers' criticality of deficit-based perspectives towards racial/ethnic minoritized families who suggest the following:

> [D]ecolonizing approaches to parental inclusion in schools by necessity must
> point out and end all forms of epistemic, psychological, and physical violence as
> are experienced through silencing, linguicisms, segregation, tracking, and the

dehumanizing effects of the stunted academic potentials of youth of color.

(Baquedano-López et al., 2013, p. 169)

This dissertation explored how Black families (and I) in one Midwestern, mid-sized town became and acted (in a postcolonial subjective being) as policy agents for educational policies. In using a theoretical framework that recognized the continued economic oppression and racist system produced by a neoliberal, white supremacy, I focused on a Thinking with Theory (TwT) approach to explore the human reality of Black people in the U.S. Through TwT, I relied on choque (Anzaldúa, 1987) and relational tension (Patel, 2016) to raise awareness to a new type of politics: a Politics of Dignity.

TwT permitted me to create my own analytical system, a reflective action in order to uproot a racist production of knowledge. Through TwT I was able to

produce knowledge differently; in this way, [I could] focus on the constitutive and generative aspects of texts. By refusing a closed system for fixed meaning (transferable patterns and themes generated from coding data with reductive language), [I was able to] engage the threshold as site of transformation. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 7)

In the form of a reflective action, the uprooting prioritized the Black families' knowledge system and formation, and I was able to give credence to their strategies to survive and be in relationship with a racist and capitalist environment. In the uprooting process, I was able to have a better understanding on how the families became and acted as policy agents in their local school district. In using their own experiences and words, the survival and thriving strategies FÀEI families used can be appreciated through the following denotation: <<<b3ing>>> or

Diagram 3. Being with Blackness (2)

Motivation to be(ing) brave ←→ **Inspiration to be(ing) bold**

Zealous to be(ing) fierce
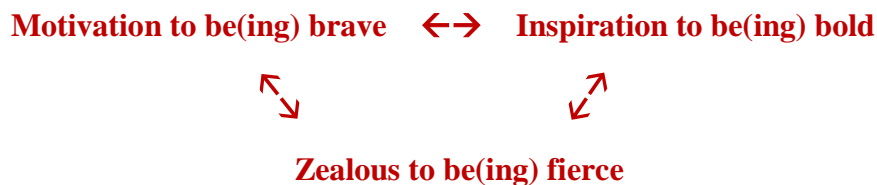
This dissertation and the methodologies used was an attempt to disrupt a settler colonial system produced by educational policies, inherent in family involvement politics and policy. Under this directive, I took the charge for my dissertation to rethink how would I, as a researcher in educational leadership and policy analysis, would humanize research, educational leadership, and policymaking. My search to humanize research took me to following the recommendation by Brown, Carducci, and Kuby (2014) to challenge, disrupt, and transform (1) the role of the researcher, (2) the methodology the researcher used, and (3) the product the researcher is supposed to produce. Through the guidance of these scholars, specifically under Patel's guidance (2016), I began to "decolonize" my educational research and thus attempted a shift of power: "In emphasizing answerability, Patel is emphasizing relationships, interactions, echoes, and connections--she is emphasizing complexity, enfoldings, multiplicities, and contingencies."

To conclude I will provide recommendations in working with families, to become an activist-inquirer, and to disrupt local geopolitics.

Families as Policy Agents

Relying on work from Ball and colleagues (2011) I approached the concept of policy development by engaging in a more messy and complicated process. Such messy policy process enabled groups like FÀEI to enter as policy agents, or policy entrepreneurs demanding for change-making to occur. Specifically, the idea behind "forceful agents of

change" gives permission to families like FÀEI to engage in disruptive behaviors that will be able to act as a "personally invested in and identified with policy ideas and their enactment" (p. 628). In considering Black families, particularly, Black mothers as entrepreneurs, rather than annoyance or angry (as the common stereotype identifies them), gives them a place to advocate for their children and work directly with the school district.

Implications to work with families and schools. To work with families, educators and scholar must reconceptualize power. In chapter 3, I explain the importance that liberatory practice requires new language and with it new conceptualizations of power (Dussel, 2011; Giroux et al, 2013; Sandoval, 2000). I focus directly on Sandoval's (2000) concept of power as a horizontal dynamism that has everlasting possibilities, turning into a "performative" dynamism (p. 76). Community work and work with families requires that as educators we engage in a relational tension that is "continually regenerating, and intervened in differentiality" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 76). Power necessitates a relational tension that creates ongoing transformation.

Activist-Becoming

Racism and capitalism have penetrated the social fabric leading to racially discriminatory educational policies and practices (Dumas, 2013). Thus, educators and researchers cannot treat educational research, policy, and practice as apolitical or ahistorical (Alemán et al., 2014). One route to providing nonwhite children with a non-racist education is in using my power as a researcher, community activist, and stance as a Mexican immigrant educator to transform the reproduction of colonial power by humanizing research and policymaking. It is in the transformation of colonial power

where I attempt, through this anti-colonial ethnography (an oxymoron of sorts, hence my creation of my own methodology), to challenge and shift power dynamics. The shift of power must begin by that individual who holds the power. In this case, since I, the researcher, hold power over the study and thus, the participants, I challenged, disrupted, and transformed my role in order to share power with my participants.

To work on a postcolonial project, I have relied on scholars paving the way on decolonizing ideologies and research (Sandoval, 2000). For this dissertation project, I've relied on Patel (2016) and Anzaldúa (1987) to help me move beyond a settler colonial project of ownership to one that helps answer instead questions for the people with whom I conducted this dissertation. In many regards, I feel I failed in creating a project that would be anticolonial. In the traditional sense of research, I collected data, analyzed it, and now I'm bound to report it to an audience separate from the people I collected the data. This approach continues to be part of settlers' colonialism aim to conquer and control, to subjugate and mold according to one's desires, to produce and to own. Ultimately, the project that I submit to the Graduate Office will have my name as sole author: a project that has utilized the experiences, knowledge, and wisdom of others for academic production.

To counter this sole author dilemma, part of my contribution to the families has been my ongoing commitment as a scholar-activist to ensure their voices are not only heard, but integrated into programmatic and policy based efforts. The commitment has been established before this dissertation process through my firm belief in the families' strengths. The families' investment in me can only be paid back through service for them.

Implications for Theory

This dissertation engaged in a decolonizing process by using postcolonialism, as used in Daza and Tuck's (2014) (post)(anti)colonial. Daza and Tuck (2014) advised for a recoupling of postcolonial and anticolonial as (post)(anti)colonial to imagine new possibilities to disrupt coloniality. This dissertation uses postcolonial with Daza and Tuck's (2014) recoupling ideology. To reimagine coloniality and materialize a new postcolonial imaginary, I shifted to power as horizontal to highlight the necessary decolonizing process for nonwhite families to engage in liberatory work in their children's schooling. I have explained the shift of power above. Using postcolonialism enabled me to examine Black family involvement and educational policies through a settler colonial thinking. The postcolonial process, through Anzaldúa's choque and Patel's anticolonial pause required for an overhaul of colonized geopolitics and subject. I used postcolonialism to disrupt and transform the dehumanizing conceptualization of Black families and racially violent educational policies. One act of postcolonialism during this dissertation was the necessary disruption and transformation of Western analysis. Instead of the traditional forms of analysis, I designed a reflective action by using Anzaldúa's choque and Patel's pause to engage in new possibilities for knowledge production.

Implications for Research

Moving beyond language will be an impossible feat due to the requirements for this dissertation. I am troubled by the notion that language is the only form of communication used by us, academics. In reflecting on this throughout my dissertation process and in working with the Black families over the course of three years, I have

understood the power of emotions and spirituality as a form of disruptive communication.

These two forms of communication, if used in academia, become an antithesis to

language, and thus to disrupting coloniality in inquiry. Capturing emotions and

spirituality on paper and language may be difficult to accomplish. However, what I will

do is describe the processes the families and I used to engage our racial/ethnic identity

with the idea of becoming and acting agents of policy development and transformation.

Thus, through my reflective methodological strategy, I will be able to describe for my

academic peers and for the sake of this dissertation project the activist work the families

and I have done to collaborate with the school system.

Implication for Policy

There are three areas that I want to advance in the field of policy development.

First, families must be reconceptualized as policy actors or policy entrepreneurs (Ball,

Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). Integrating families into decision-making roles can

help innovate based the needs of their children and those around them.

Next is the concept that geography and politics are necessary to be inserted in the

implementation of policy. The conceptualization of the being, place, space, and subject is

an attempt to ensure that geography, and politics are integrated in the developmental

process of policies. The integration of place, space, and subject becomes part of a

postcolonial (as in (post)(anti)colonial by Daza & Tuck, 2014) strategy necessary for

decolonization to occur (Dussel, 2011; Sharp, 2009). Anticoloniality wrestles with settler

colonial ideologies of neoliberal, socioeconomic oppression and white supremacy and the

operationalization of such ideologies, subjects, and places-spaces. The local geography as

a settler colonial place-space (Patel, 2016; Sharp, 2009) needs to be understood in policy development.

Towards a Politics of Dignity

Humanness, comes with its own intrinsic value. Humanity cannot be created, it already is. However, due to certain socialization, the human worth of certain individuals is decided based on the politics of place and space (e.g., Black people during slavery). Because human worth is produced, the reproduction of human value refers to how people of color in this dissertation, Black families and myself as a Mexican immigrant, re-conceptualize stereotypical representations (e.g., criminals, unintelligent) to a wholesome aspect of the self. In turn, I attempt to learn how do these re-conceptualization of self-produce collaborative efforts by families with their school system and attempt to craft policies.

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Vita

David Aguayo is a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department. David's research interests encompass community-school-university collaboration, with an emphasis on local educational policy-making and leadership.

Concurrent with his doctoral work, David is co-founder and Assistant Director in a grassroots movement, Worley Street Roundtable (www.worleystreetroundtable.org) aimed to create educational collaboration across families, schools, communities, and universities for the betterment of underserved children in Columbia, Missouri.

Known as an educational leader and community educator, David has dedicated his time in Columbia to serving in different non-profit organizations. His aspirations are to serve low-income, racial and ethnic minority parents and their children and prepare them to navigate a community system that oftentimes marginalizes them. His dream is to teach families to advocate for themselves politically and civically through educational and spiritual based tools and protect their children from generational, disenfranchising systems.

David's vision is to continue working in collaboration with schools and the community through grassroots initiatives. He believes children must be educated through the spirit of the community to gain a foundation of who they are and where they are going as community members and citizens.