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TAKING A KNEE TO “WHITENESS” IN URBAN TEACHER EDUCATION: AN ABOLITIONIST STANCE

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at the
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December 2020

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We hereby approve this dissertation

For

Anne Auburn Sheaffer

Candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Education degree

for the Department of

Doctoral Studies

And

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY'S College of Graduate Studies by

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_______________December 2, 2020______________

Student's Date of Defense

DEDICATION

For Mandela, always. Keeper of the faith.

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TAKING A KNEE TO “WHITENESS” IN TEACHER EDUCATION: AN ABOLITIONIST STANCE

ANNE AUBURN SHEAFFER

ABSTRACT

In a qualitative narrative study of 11 urban teacher education faculty who teach courses that prepare teacher candidates for field immersions in metro-urban schools, I problematized “whiteness” by asking participants what it meant to them in the contexts of their work in contact zones were teacher candidates and K-12 students meet. The research was shaped as an abolitionist justice project (Tuck & Yang, 2018, p. 8) and considered how “whiteness” might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education. Participants described whiteness as both fixed phenotype and historical and social construct which causes harm and which requires intervention. In scenarios where the harm of whiteness was mitigated for non-white K-12 students and teacher candidates, participants described themselves in supportive rather than authoritative educational roles. The study reflects upon what might constitute one or more forms of abolitionist praxis which might have the utility to dismantle systemic white supremacy as well as to cease and desist in the oppression of children.

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PROLOGUE

In the Shadow of the Catapult: An Abolitionist Parable*

One day, a villager noticed an unconscious child floating face-down in the river. He leapt into the water, dragged the child out and pulled her to shore. Several other villagers rushed to the shore and helped carry the child to town where more people joined in to help dry her off and revive her. She survived and, thanking the villagers, was able to go off on her own two feet, albeit a bit unsteadily. She said her parents had drowned, but she had a surviving grandmother to whom to return.

Next day, the villager saw two children, one unconscious, one struggling for air, floating down the river. He leapt in, dragged them out. Villagers again came to his aid, rescued and revived the children. Next day, more children floated by, some thrashing, some drowning, some dead. Over time, the villagers perfected a complex system to catch and save drowning children who kept floating down the river past their settlement. They built buildings, elected boards and leaders, hired lifeguards and EMTs, trained social workers.

The children came down the river in the hundreds and thousands. Many could not be saved. Some were now violently anti-social or addicted to opioids and had to be locked away, some suffered permanent physical and emotional damage. Some were resilient beyond reckoning and made use of their bootstrap and grit survival stories to build successful careers which inspired and confused everyone.

But for the child-retrieving villagers, it was exhausting work that took a great toll on their own well-being and health. They tried not to resent the work. It was tempting to only reach out to the ones most likely to do well and let the others drown. Who would notice? Children of the aging villagers trained in good faith for positions that would enable them to make a modest living pulling river children out of the water. Eventually, it dawned on the villagers to send scouts to find out why all these children were floating down the river.

They discovered at the top of the river a huge catapult. The villagers there had been catapulting children into the river for years. The rescuing villagers put their heads together and devised a plan: "Let's blow up that catapult!" So they blew it up and all was quiet on the river for a spell. After a few months, children appeared again, drowning and floating down the river by the tens, hundreds and thousands. Clearly a new catapult had been built upstream.

The villagers sent a delegation to the catapult builders to ask them at least to change the trajectory of the catapult so the children didn't fly quite so high or land so hard. Perhaps they could prevent a few deaths and injuries. Perhaps they could put an aide in the water downstream to help the children who would most certainly be injured in the fall? Occasionally, activists protested the catapult or attempted to disrupt its operations, but they were easily threatened and dispersed. With anguish, they took jobs in the river-child recovery industry to feed their own families, but they could do little to stop the catapult.

A few hundred years later, the catapults are highly mechanized, well-funded, almost indestructible and kept in heavily guarded fortresses. The rescuing villagers are unionized and rely on the catapulters to keep them employed. Almost everybody is sick to death of the river-children and their needs and their post-drowning identity politics. There's something about them that makes them catapult-able. After all these years, why are so many still in the river gasping for air?

*Story originally articulated in 1969 by George Hrbeck , "white" Civil Rights warrior and retired Lutheran minister. He and a friend conceived of it to illustrate foreign policy that was creating refugees. Used with permission gained in an interview at his home, November 2019.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> *[C]itizenship starts with seeing the systems that we have shaped and which in turn shape us... [B]eing stuck in a system that is not working invariably leads to feeling frustrated and trapped—until we see the larger patterns and our own part in creating these patterns. Once we do, new alternatives become evident.*
>
> –Peter Senge (2006, p. 343)

An Abolitionist Inquiry

During a period of heightened national unrest over the killings of unarmed black people by white police in the U.S., Colin Kaepernick, former quarterback of the San Francisco 49-ers, initiated a solo protest against police brutality in August 2016, during his NFL pre-season. First, he simply refused to stand during the playing of the U.S. National Anthem, and, then, after conferring with a friend from the armed forces, decided instead to kneel respectfully on one knee. Hundreds of athletes and fans followed his lead, from the NFL down to local children's leagues. There was a great deal of public consternation around the act of taking a knee and some high school coaches explicitly forbade it on pain of being let go from the team (Fortin, 2017). Then students took cases challenging those coaches to court and won (Andreson, 2018). President Donald Trump, taking office in January 2017, called for the firing of every protesting NFL player

(“Trump says,” 2017). In response, 200 NFL athletes took a knee (“NFL player protests,” 2017). The NFL, as a multi-billion dollar entertainment industry, had a public relations problem. While the protests continued, they stood to lose the support of advertisers whose majority consumer base viewed Kaepernick’s stance as disruptive and unpatriotic (Durisin, 2017; Rovell, 2017). Kaepernick, unemployed by the NFL for three years even though he still demonstrated the skills of an elite quarterback (Reed, 2019) had undertaken what Tuck and Yang (2018) would call a “justice project” (p. 6).

I am a licensed administrator and certified teacher with multiple teaching awards and consistently excellent student, colleague and departmental reviews over the years at both university and high school levels. As such, I approach this research as a protestor, one who seeks to undertake a justice project. Kaepernick took a knee. Kozol in 2007 undertook a hunger strike (“A hunger strike,” 2017). I undertook an abolitionist dissertation study. Although the word “abolitionist project” can indicate a number of endeavors, as a bare beginning, I defined this endeavor after Tuck and Yang (2018): as projects which call and move us versus those that “flatten” us. They continue to say that abolitionist work “tend[s] to refuse” projects and change theories that rely upon “the benevolence of the state” or mainstream society (p. 11). Tuck and Yang list several other endeavors that an abolitionist might refuse: projects that require a great deal of labor around consciousness raising; projects which require appeals to those with the power to abuse power; projects which require gatherings of “white settlers” with “presumed agency”; and projects which presume “compromise” is a way to achieve solidarity.

The Role of "Whiteness" in Systemic Violence in Education

Kozol, in his book *Shame of the Nation* (2005), writes that the educational situation we have allowed to be the reality for metropolitan, inner ring school kids, decade after decade, is wholly unacceptable. Kozol's hunger strike reflected his principled response to what Wilson (2009) calls institutional and structural violence of No Child Left Behind and how its logic was causing neighborhood schools to be closed down. When asked by a Newsweek staff interviewer ("A hunger strike," 2007), "Do you feel you are speaking out on behalf of poor black kids?" Kozol responded, "It sounds arrogant when you put it that way. I'm speaking out of my own heart after watching the shifting trends in public education. I am doing what I need to do to keep faith with an awful lot of black and Hispanic people who have trusted me. And I'm also speaking on behalf of thousands of teachers--good teachers--who tell me they are being asked to do things they abhor."

Kozol in this instance was referring to the hardship imposed on families by the summary closing of neighborhood schools marked as "failures" according to draconian, state standardized tests as part of NCLB. Hernandez and Galletta (2016) make a robust analysis of how the use of multiple elementary school closures in poor neighborhoods in Sacramento, California, is an operationalization of egregious and systemic violence. I maintained the stance, in this study, that the context of systemic political and institutional racism (Wilson, 2009) and violences of exclusion (Hernandez & Galletta, 2016) and the "shame of the nation" (Kozol, 2005) had been enabled historically in policy and practice by the root political operationalization of white supremacy (Emdin, 2016; Gillborn, 2012, Sleeter, 2001). I held the premise that white supremacist constructions inform absolutely every aspect of our social ordering and interacting in the United States, all the way down to what can constitute crucially important moments in relationship between teachers and students in urban schools (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paris & Alim, 2016). I maintained the position, along with many others (Apple, 2006; Gillborn, 2013; Picower, 2009) that the operationalization of Teacher Education programs in metropolitan inner ring schools, is rife with uninterrogated "colonialities" including a functioning, systemic ignorance of what "whiteness" actually is from a historical and relational perspective (Allen, 1997; DiAngelo, 2018; Graves, 2001).

When one views "whiteness" as a 400-year-old historical phenomenon around the globe, but more particularly through law traditions of the English colony that was the emerging U.S. nation, one can trace how the creation of the category of "race" as it was conceived of in the 17th century, then increasingly encoded in law in the 18th century and its ramifications in social structuring and educational policy and how this impacts our one to one relationships with other people today. It is possible to study property law and public policy from the colonial era to the present day and connect the dots: politically and materially codified so-called whiteness and non-whiteness operationalized in law over the past four centuries have powerful explanatory utility to provide a meaningful context for our present-day untenable social and educational situation. We find ourselves in a deeply dysfunctional society in early 2020 with stark racialized, income inequality (Telford, 2019); re-segregated schools (Kozol, 2005; Massey & Denton, 1998); a burgeoning prison and surveillance state (Alexander, 2011); literal concentration camps (Holmes, 2019) at the southern border and a social order punctuated with near-daily mass shootings

(Silverstein, 2019); a raging opioid crisis (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019); rising suicide rate (Weir, 2019); the resurgence of white nationalism (Serwer, 2019); and a militarized police force that arguably can kill citizens with impunity (Cullors, 2020; Hedges, 2019). The urban school, largely invisible to "white settler" adjacent policy makers except as an ongoing problem requiring round after round of intervention, is where the outcome of violent policy can be explicitly experienced and observed. The term "white settler" here names invading colonists and their offspring from an epistemological approach that views U.S. history, politics and education from the perspective of North American Indigenous peoples. These peoples, like Africans brought in slavery and racialized by laws and policies of whiteness and property, are in a unique position to view phenomena from the perspective of the direct violence it has done to their own families and communities. Emdin (2016) refers to black urban poor as "neo-Indigenous," by referencing the U.N. definition of Indigenous which includes a "position distinct from those who govern them" (p. 8). Both abolitionist and decolonizing projects owe their theoretical foothold in the academy, in part, to the philosophical gains made in Critical Race and Indigenous Studies curriculum and academic centers. Within the field of education, these critical frameworks may be located within Social Foundations Education. "If there ever was a time for [critical applications of] social foundations to be relevant, now is that time," says DeMarrais (2018, p. 86). My focus is one particular form of white supremacy that goes largely uninterrogated in Teacher Education; that is, how TEF, TC and students speak or do not speak about white supremacist racial markers with which all of us have been identified. What might an "abolitionist" sensibility and practice look like for a critical urban educator who was committed to countering that marking and categorizing?

Need for Abolitionist Stances in Education Research

I concurred with Denzin and Lincoln (2013) that research that is not concerned with justice and pathways toward rigorous, abolitionist research projects and teacher pedagogies is not an option (p. 23). In my view, educational research and practice that does not strenuously confront the inhumane and oppressive environments forced upon U.S. school children contributes to what Robert Lifton, author of *The Nazi Doctors* (2017) calls a system of "malignant normalcy" or what Dylan Rodriguez (2012) refers to as the logics of "violent common sense" (p. 809). As with medical studies conducted in a sub-system of concentration camps legitimized by 1930s German nationalist, eugenicist policy, I hold that studies undertaken by researchers in the present U.S. Apartheid schools (Denton & Massey, 1993; Kozol, 2005) perpetuate protocols of an uninterrogated ideology of white supremacy (Emdin, 2016; Picower, 2009) with which we should refuse to participate (Grande, 2018) or, where possible, participate in a way that refuses, transgresses and interrupts.

According Hrabowski and Sanders (2015), 84% of the U.S. K-12 teaching force is white-racialized, and 40% of all U.S. schools do not have even one non-white-racialized teacher on staff. Many students, teachers and school administrators complete entire school careers without any engagement with non-white teachers or colleagues (Picower, 2009, p. 197). A startling 80-93% of current teacher education students are white and female (Cochran-Smith, 2004, as cited in Picower, 2009, p. 197) and they are instructed by a Teacher Education professorate that is itself 88% White (Ladson-Billings, 2001, as cited in Picower, 2009, p. 197). An Ohio Department of Education task force (2019) states that in 2016 to 2017 school year, teachers of color make up only 5% of Ohio's teaching staff (p. 4).

These percentages illustrate the potential burden, obstacles and harm that unconscious "whiteness" or coloniality can create *for non-white-designated students*. When a majority of black and brown students in poor, urban schools are served (or managed) by overwhelmingly white, female, middle-class teachers, a de facto cultural/historical rift in addition to socio-economic differences will inform the worldviews of the people in that classroom. Dominguez (2017) calls these "ontological distance[s]," or distinct dis-junctures in life experiences, approaches, expectations and worldviews. DiAngelo (2019) explains, "If I cannot tell you what it means to be white, I cannot understand what it means not to be white" (p. 2). A disjuncture like this, on its face, could significantly interfere with the quality of student/teacher trust and relational depth at the level of day to day interaction.

Sensoy and DiAngelo (2016) urge Teacher Candidates to "Recognize that relations of unequal social power are constantly being enacted at both the micro (individual) and macro (structural) levels" and that we must "understand our own positions within these relations of unequal power" (pp. xx-xxi). Delpit (1998) delineates how power and a "culture of power" in classrooms reflect the broader power structure (p. 282). With this study, I sought to scratch the surface of how the "broader power structure" is informed by white supremacy even in the ways we speak and don't speak about our racialized positionalities.

I took as a premise that, in urban field experiences, the historical "white" self and the historical "black," non-white or "othered" self arrive together in the "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991; Torre, 2009) of shared educational spaces. I postulated that these identities influence the quality of and potential for authentic relationship in the way that Rankine (2014) writes in her long form poem *Citizen* :

> …sometimes your historical selves, her white self and your black self, or your white self and her black self, arrive with the full force of your American positioning. You are standing face-to-face in seconds that wipe the affable smiles right from your mouths. What did you say? Instantaneously your attachment seems fragile, tenuous, subject to any transgression of your historical self. And though your joined personal histories are supposed to save you from misunderstandings, they usually cause you to understand too well what is meant. (p. 14)

Navigating toward Futurities

The study also took for a premise an imagining of a more humane future for human beings. In 2003, Angela Davis released a book whose title posed the simple question: "Are Prisons Obsolete?" She showed how, from the perspective of the future, that of course solitary confinement is torture, rape is never acceptable, locking up drug addicts is barbaric, and that separating families with concrete walls and barbed wire damages everyone. I extended this analysis to suggest that, from the future, surely, we would look at the wardens, the guards, the judges, the prosecutors, the ICE agents and the police and marvel that they were able to stomach the work. From the perspective of a more humane future, should we survive into one, we would also recall in horror what was allowed in our present day education system. In spite of all we understood about human well-being and best educational practices for developing children -- and we understood a great deal – we still produced and countenanced schools where it was considered acceptable to handcuff, taze, assault, humiliate and contain children in isolation rooms (Richards et al., 2019) on one hand and endlessly test and measure on another, pretending to make schools better (Koretz, 2017). As Koretz puts it: “[N]either good intentions nor the value of well-used tests justifies continuing to ignore the absurdities and failures of the current system and the real harms it is causing” (p. 8).

I maintained, for the purpose of that study, that it was our duty to broach the topic of our racializations – specifically our U.S. whitenesses and blacknesses – purposefully and with less timidity. – purposefully and with less timidity. In Teacher Ed foundations classes, while some of us already described “race” as an embedded systemic and structural construct not reducible to simple individual identities and interactions (Leonardo & Boas, 2013, p. 322, as cited in Howard & Navarro, 2016), at what depth were we asking ourselves to “Work to understand and teach [about racialization] not as a personal crusade but as a sociohistorical construct through which we are all (unequally) produced” (p. 261). To pursue the topic of our racializations, we would need to teach historical facts and live out what those facts meant for us if we wanted to pursue the possibility for developing authentic relationships unencumbered by ingrained practices and perceptions wrought by centuries of white supremacy. As Ledesma and Caleron (2015) note, “[The] work means more than just pointing to race. It requires an engagement and articulation with the material, structural and ideological mechanisms of White supremacy” (p. 206). In inquiring into historically and currently inscribed conceptualizations of "race," I constructed a lens that drew from and aspired to extend, modestly, the rich and complex meaning of abolitionism as it could apply in urban Teacher Education.

Framing the Term "Abolition"

Love (2019) provides a broad frame for abolitionist teaching as follows:

> Abolition teaching is the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice inside and outside of schools. To begin the work of abolitionist teaching… you must matter enough to yourself, to your students, and to your students' community to fight. (p. 2)

Love speaks of the necessity for "we who are dark" from W. E. B. DuBois' *Crisis* (1926): "We who are dark can see America in a way that white Americans cannot"). Love notes that "mattering, surviving, resisting, thriving, healing, imagining, freedom, love and joy: [are] all elements of abolitionist work and teaching" (p. 2). Abolitionism embodies visions of co-creating a United States where one person's dream does not require a constructing of another person's nightmare. From a "movement" standpoint, Love signals an invitation from Black Lives Matter to white-racialized people to become a more integral part of the "unapologetically black" Movement for Black Lives, provided they are "co-conspirators" rather than mere "allies." Since 2015, white-racialized activists have been directed in no uncertain terms to "white" activist strategic spaces where they are expected to hold themselves accountable, and at a respectful distance, to Black Lives Matter leadership in order to leave that leadership free from the constant labor of educating white-racialized activists with their predictable denials and fragilities. Love's invitation to "all in, all the time" abolitionist co-conspirators (2019) presented an opening for an engaged, multi-raced endeavor in dismantling white supremacist-conceived institutions and practices. It held out for me at least the possibility that a white-racialized abolitionist could work in the movement on some level free of the marker of "white" *person* if they found the assignment of "work with other white people" too draining and triggering. Commonalities between Black Lives Matters activists could potentially be identified through analysis and praxis rather than through racialization.

Multiple cursory "google scholar" searches of the words "abolitionist" and "abolitionist education" over the last year consistently brought up *only* Bettina Love's 2019 book and historical articles about Abolition in the 19th century. This suggested to me the need for more theorizing or practice falling under the key word "abolition" in education at the present moment. Anecdotally-speaking, I had been seeing the word appear more often among K-12 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) affiliated educators on social media in 2019. An emergent discourse around "abolitionism," therefore, seemed to me like open, unexplored conceptual territory with a great deal of potential for educators interested in authentic relationalities.

Angela Davis (2003) calls for the difficult work of countering what we tend to think of as is normal:

> [C]entral to the development of …abolitionist theories and practices: we have to learn how to think, act and struggle against that which is ideologically constituted as 'normal.' It takes a lot of work to persuade people to think beyond the bars,

> and to be able to imagine a world without prisons and to struggle for the abolition of imprisonment as the dominant mode of punishment. (p. 100)

Although I consider the behaviorist practices in many public schools (not just urban) to mirror those of the correctional institution, I did not mean, in this study, to conflate the prison with the school.

The research leaned on the words of Davis – to "think, act and struggle" -- to signify the "struggle against that which is ideologically constituted as 'normal'" (Davis, 2003, p. 100). The "normal," in the case of this research was the existence of racialized positionalities constructed from a 400-year legacy of white supremacy. Extending Love's emphasis on abolitionism, this study's exploration pursued ways to consider what it would take for urban Teacher Educators to purposefully uncouple ourselves from racialized self-markers.

Although on its face, this uncoupling of racialized markers from selves could appear to contradict Critical Race Theory's emphasis on the intractability of "race" as a premise, it was precisely this intractability that I was targeting in settler colonial "white" Teacher Education using a Critical Race Theory analysis. Like Love (2019), Davis creates a roomy foundation for multiple kinds of work: " [R]ather than try to imagine one single alternative to the existing system…we might envision an array of alternatives that will require radical transformations of many aspects of our society" (p. 107). An abolitionist educator occupies or moves toward possible transformations toward relationalities not yet known or anticipated. However, unlike the calls for post-white-supremacist, post-colonial ontologies, abolitionism seeks something altogether different. As Davis notes, "Alternatives that fail to address racism, male dominance, homophobia, class bias, and other structures of domination will not, in the final analysis, lead to decarceration and will not advance the goal of abolition" (p. 108). Love (2019) insists abolitionist teaching requires us to "demand the impossible" and "employ a radical imagination focused on intersectional justice" (p. 12) and "recognize America and its schools as spaces of…White supremacy…which functions to terrorize students of color" (p. 13).

As with antislavery activists of the 19th century, U.S. citizens of every racialization, political and religious orientation can position themselves to mitigate or eradicate, in whatever ways they are able, ongoing egregious harm. Love says, "You do not have to be Black to be an abolitionist" (p. 97). She cites the many ways people engaged in the work of abolition ranging from the militancy of John Brown, to the publishing of pamphlets and suing the government. Abolitionists and allies also supported the Underground Railroad which involved teachers, preachers, lawyers, doctors, writers and farmers and other tradesman willing to provide services and safe havens. Underground railroad "stops" are recognizable in some of today's "pipeline" programs which station educators and mentors exist at varying intervention points where they might intervene in the so-called school to prison pipeline.

These are not longings of people with their heads in the clouds, as it were. As Tuck and Yang (2018) say, abolitionist scholars are the most practical people they know, noting "Neither abolition nor decolonization are philosophies. They are practical routes" (p. 10). A justice project that imagines black life – black thriving, joy and freedom – demands abolition (p. 11). Canada-based Black feminist scholar Delice Mugabo says of research partnerships: "I cannot work side by side with people who are not able to imagine what joy would look like for me in a new world." Abolitionism, then, is a way of orienting one's work by "naming a goal and navigating the divide between current state violence and the eradication of state violence" (Tuck & Yang, 2018, p. 10).

My abolitionist aim was a modest one: to inquire of colleagues how they were dealing with and speaking about "race" with their overwhelmingly "white" student teacher candidates who would be entering overwhelmingly black and brown classrooms. How do they talk to their teacher candidates about racialized relationality? What room is there for a discussion of our racialized self-markers within the malignant normality of institutionalized "raced" assumptions and practices? The study did not presume white-racialized TEF engaging only white-racialized TC, but left room for a discussion of any racialized positionalities or interactions including those complicated by class and other considerations of culture. Non-white-racialized TEF and TC, a miniscule minority in the profession as a whole, provide powerful understandings of the ramifications of black and white racialization in TC and K-12 contact zones.

Problem

From a decolonizing and abolitionist perspective (Davis, 2003; Love, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2018), Urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) likely do not sufficiently problematize with teacher candidates (TC) the relationship of the concept of "whiteness" to present day dominant power systems based in the violence of an invented settler colonial "color" hierarchy. In uncritically using the words "white," "black" or "people of color," TEF, even when they do understand the history of the terms, nonetheless re-inscribe white supremacist terminology on themselves, their teacher candidates and the students with whom they work. This, in turn, enables one particular uninterrogated "coloniality" to assert itself in early classroom field relationships. Using the racialized markers of "white," "black," and "person of color," while acknowledging potential self-identifiers, also reifies personhood and identity using the language of the white supremacist political categorizations for people. Let me emphasize here that I am by no means forwarding a naïve, "white innocent" discounting of the emotional, spiritual, or cultural power of owning and claiming a racialized identity like "black intellectual" for example. It is the invisible "whiteness" or uncritical claims of "white identity" that need to be on the receiving end of an unwavering challenge. As Stuart Hall (2007) states "[R]ace is a discursive construct, a sliding signifier" (32), and "any attempt to contest racism or to diminish its human and social effects depends on understanding how exactly the system of meaning works, and why the classificatory order it represents has so powerful a hold on the human imagination" (p. 33).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore what urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) narrated about their experiences addressing racialized positionalities, relationalities and use of racialized verbal or non-verbal "markers," such as the word "white," "black," "person of color," to describe themselves, teacher candidates in their university classrooms and in foundations practicums that include urban field experiences. The overarching purpose was to consider practical ways "whiteness" might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education.

Research Questions

The overarching research question was as follows:

1. In a study of the narratives of U.S. teacher education faculty (TEF) who instruct teacher candidates (TCs) in urban field experiences, how is the phenomenon of whiteness represented, constructed, or deconstructed? This question lends itself to two subquestions:
    a. In what ways do U.S. TEF who instruct TCs in urban field experiences narrate how they have conceived of and named the racialized markers of themselves, their TCs and students with whom they interact in educational learning or contact zones?
    b. In what ways do TEFs narrate their conceptualizing, naming, and acting upon racialized identities and positionalities of themselves, their TCs, and the students with whom they and their TCs interact?

Thinking Narratively about Phenomenon

The study used the qualitative research approach of narrative inquiry. Thinking "narratively," according to Clandinin (2010), because it attends simultaneously to temporality, sociality and place, enables the researcher to capture the "shifting, changing, personal and social nature of the phenomenon under study" including co-constructions of "relational knowing," "truth as communal," and "not-knowing" (p. 9). The phenomenon centers around a "particular wonder" or a "sense of a search," and is amenable to an ongoing revision and reformulation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124). It enables the narrative inquirer and her participants to hold conversations in the context of ongoing life and changes. "In this process [they] continue to live their stories, even as they tell stories of their experiences over time" (p. 10).

Significance

This study has the potential to create conceptual pathways in discourse that enable us to navigate the relational hurdle of historical racialization (Rankine, 2014) based in a belief in "whiteness" (Baldwin, 1986; Morrison, 1990). The study unsettles what Powell (1997) calls the "evaded curriculum (AAUW, 1992) of race, power, authority" which enables uncritical, white-racialized TCs, in particular, to remain tacitly protected by the settler colonial academy and "free for 'raceless' work" (as cited in Fine & Weis, 1997, p. 8). Yielding dialogically achieved themes of interest, the study serves as a starting point for developing an abolitionist hermeneutic for urban TEF and TC around deconstruction and decentering of white supremacist racialization markers. It could also assist in projects of transformation, equity and social justice where authentic power-sharing and power-relinquishing activities between racialized teachers and students are a focus of praxis.

Key Terms

Contact Zones: These refer to contemporary urban learning sites where each person in the room has a different relationship to whiteness and access to institutional and social power. A contact zone is "...a messy social space where very differently situated people… work together across their own varying relations to power and privilege" (Torre, 2009). Pratt (1991) refers to contact zones, as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly assymetrical relations of power, such as colonialism...or their aftermaths" (p. 34).

Ontological Distance: This is a term used by Dominguez (2017) to describe "the dehumanizing distancing between subjects that emerges from uninterrogated coloniality"

(p. 226). It can point to marked differences in perceptions, motivations, aspirations, knowledges and abilities that belong to interacting subjects. These are further complicated by what or whom is presumed to be the expert or authority in an exchange.

Micro-colonialities: These are normalized and unexamined expressions of “white” or “white-settler” superiority or authority that characterize thought, research, discourse and practice in North American systems of education

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

> *In the context of the United States and other nation states living out legacies of genocide, land theft, enslavement and various forms of colonialism, the…purpose of state-sanctioned schooling has been to forward the largely assimilationist and often violent White imperial project, with students and families being asked to lose or deny their languages, literacies, cultures and histories in order to achieve in schools.* (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 1)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I positioned myself as a long-time educator who has been able to locate her affinities inside emerging projects of decolonization and educational abolitionism (Love, 2019b; Tuck & Yang, 2018). I described my proposed endeavor as "taking a knee," like Colin Kaepernick, in urban teacher education or as one who is undertaking a "justice project." Tuck and Yang (2018) define justice projects as including these commitments that "tend to refuse" projects and change theories that rely upon "the benevolence of the state" or mainstream society (p. 11). They list several other refusals: projects that require a great deal of labor around consciousness raising; projects which require appeals to those with the power to abuse power; projects which require gatherings of "white settlers" with "presumed agency"; and projects which presume "compromise" is a way to achieve solidarity.

In order to provide a rationale for the study, I first use literatures that problematize the colonial act of research itself. I do so in part as a way to ground my reasoning for "Taking a knee." In other words, given the nature of research, I hold that it is inappropriate, as an academy-adjacent, white-racialized researcher to "study" anyone other than my own colleagues and peers in Teacher Education. After an overview regarding research as colonial violence, I will discuss how Teacher Education has always served as part of a white supremacist project in the history of white supremacist education of the darker other. Social Foundations in Education, which introduced potential disciplinary space to dislodge itself from the hold of this ideology has informed Teacher Education in recent decades but is itself undergoing a process of discrediting and marginalization. It is through this discourse that the potential for critical counter-narrative exists that might enable an abolitionist position to be articulated. Even as the influence of SFE departments appear to recede (Tozer, 2018, p. 97), its analysis offers rich potential and won't easily be eliminated. I will discuss the limitations of "social justice" practice as it is presently conceived of in Teacher Education as well as the gear-grinding uselessness of ODE's 2019 task-force's recommendation that more teachers of color need to be actively recruited – another white-supremacy-based "diversity" initiative based in uncritical, unspoken settler-centric assimilationism models. I will describe the instrumentality of Critical Race theory as a foundational tool for analysis, and, finally, I will touch upon researchers' relationality to hegemonic institutions in light of answerability (Patel, 2014) to communities.

Research as Colonial Violence

According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism," and one of colonialisms most sordid legacies (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, pp. 4-5). It derives from the impulse to research, observe and report on the "other," typically the dark-skinned "natives" of lands newly alighted upon or "discovered" by seafaring Europeans from the 15th to 20th century. Qualitative research also has been "implicated in a racist project" (Erickson, 2013, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, p. 5). In her article "Refusing the university," Grande (2018) theorizes the academy as "*an arm of the settler state* [Grande's emphasis] -- a site where the logics of elimination, capital accumulation, and dispossession are reconstituted -- which is distinct from other frameworks that critique the academy as fundamentally neoliberal, Eurocentric, and/or patriarchal" (p. 58). Dylan Rodriguez (2012) poses that the racialized problems in academe are not fundamentally an issue of "exclusion of some" from hegemonic centers of learning, but that the university itself as a "shifting material network" cannot be "disentangled from the long historical apparatuses of genocidal and protogenocidal social organization" (p. 812).

A number of contemporary scholars assert that we must desist from allowing "colonized" educational research and administrative practice to continue unabated. Michael Apple (2006) describes educational institutions in terms of embedded, unequal distributions of power. He states, "[E]very institution, policy, and practice – and especially those that now dominate education and the larger society – establishes relations of power in which some voices are heard and some are not" (p. 30). Gillborn (2005) flatly calls the operation of contemporary education policy as an ongoing act of white supremacy – profoundly racist and a modern-day manifestation of its murderous colonial legacy (p. 32) . He argues, more forcefully than Apple (2006), that hierarchical social standing of categories of people, instituted by colonial policy, set up a toxic, deeply embedded play of power relations, the outcome of which is entrenched, systemic race, class and gender inequity. He charges that though these policies might be formulated unconsciously, they are, nonetheless, not at all accidental. They are, in fact, "*tacitly* intentional" (p. 30).

The logic of settler colonialism, Patel (2014) further contends, requires competitive land grabbing which in turn requires the erasure, dislocation and disappearance of its inhabitants (p. 361). Hernandez and Galletta (2016) theorize the loss of physical schools, what Patel would call the literal loss of land, as a manifestation of structural violence and systemic dispossession. In their framing of the problem of seven neighborhood elementary school closures in South Sacramento, California, they establish how people can experience violence without the presence of a direct actor (Galtung, 1969, as cited in Hernandez & Galletta, 2016, p. 24) and the utility of observing the manifestations of inequity by examining dramatic differences in large scale social structures, particularly from the vantage point of the most negatively impacted (Farmer, 2004, as cited in Hernandez & Galletta, 2016, p. 24). They highlight how violation of public protections creates an opening for this abuse (Commons, 1931, as cited in Hernandez & Galletta, 2016, p. 24) and finally how capital shifting from public to private interests (Fine & Ruglis, 2009; Harvey, 2004, as cited in Hernandez & Galletta, p. 24) contributes to dispossession or theft of land or school buildings. This structural violence, then, creates the stark divisions, "…[the] racialized geography of youth development and dispossession that appears to be so natural" (p. 20). In concurring with this analysis, I simply add that the social, legal and political system that enable this dispossession of school children is, in substance, operationalized white supremacy.

Teacher Education Implicated in Systemic Violence

Teacher Education in historical context is a "red-headed stepchild" of liberal arts. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) document its serious failings and attribute them largely to the field being only 70 or 80 years old. They cite the mid-20th century harsh critique of "educationists" and their "scientism" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005, p. 102) versus arguments for the more content-rich liberal arts. This tension is still evident in the academy. However, from a decolonizing, abolitionist frame, if liberal arts is handmaiden of Western civilization, Teacher Education is liberal arts' pest of a younger sibling, one that relies slavishly and self-importantly on quantitative and statistical measures borne of the still-unproblematized scientific racism implied in modeling variables. William Julius Wilson (2009) argues that structural or institutional racism exists anywhere that "ideologies about group differences are embedded in organizational arrangements" (p. 5), underscoring the exclusion of people on the basis of race or ethnicity through laws, policies, and institutional practices:

> These range from explicit…Jim Crow segregation laws and voting restrictions to more subtle institutional processes, such as school tracking that purports to be academic but often reproduces traditional segregation, racial profiling that purports to be about public safety but focuses solely on minorities, and redlining by banks that purports to be about sound fiscal policy but results in exclusion of blacks from home ownership. (p. 5)

Again, Teacher Education, if not directly a part of the machinery of structural or institutional racism, is adjacent, contributing to dispossession and releasing new teachers into whatever field of educational casualties white supremacy is presently producing.

Preparing Teachers for "Diversity"

Hollins and Guzman (2006) provide a thoughtful, overview of Teacher Education field practices that reflect sensitive practices and responsible framings. These practices constitute "islands of decency" (Hytten, 2018) and surely mitigate some harms. They represent conscientious refusals and humane positionings of an abolitionist stance, but they can't meaningfully counteract the entire juggernaut of the systemic violence of white supremacy. Indeed, they are belied by uses of language one can attribute to settler-colonial anthropologists when they characterize Teacher Education research that observes Teacher Candidates' relationality to the "other" they will encounter in the field or contact zone: "[C]ommunity experiences provide different types of contact with diverse populations, their common objective [is] to increase candidates awareness, understanding and acceptance of those different from themselves" (Hollins & Guzman, 2006, p. 493) Although this simply is a type of research the authors are summarizing as part of the body of Teacher Education research, the language of "diversity" and "difference" underscores the difficulty of a de facto positioning in Teacher Education. I argue that the positioning wholesale countermands the kind of trust required for authentic relationality within a crushing and unequal system. In this sense, students are not underserved; they are over-served white micro-colonialities.

Social Justice in Teacher Education

Cochran-Smith's (2009) argument for a rigorous social justice practice in Teacher Education, though admirable, again underscores hegemonic positioning that is well-intended. The language of the article is white-colonizer-centric from an Indigenous standpoint. Likewise Ohio standards for Teaching Profession present culturally responsive and caring standards that are vague easily ignored.In 2019, the state of Ohio is endeavoring to "diversify" its teaching force through pro-active recruitment and support of teacher candidates of color (Ohio Department of Education, 2019). However, from an abolitionist standpoint, this effort is more gear grinding that underscores the problem of whiteness in black schools and offers yet another doomed palliative. Non-white racialized candidates have to endeavor inside a minefield of harmful academy and state mandates which require their acquiescence in exchange for certifications and clearances. Owen Thompson (2019) includes in a footnote the anguish of a black educator who said after *Brown v. Board* that, because of desegregation and the busing of black children to white schools, she could no longer get to her [black] kids to tell them what they needed to know.

Social Foundations as Potential Space for Counternarratives

Social Foundations brought the interdisciplinary analysis of public education into Teacher Education programs in the 1970s and flourished through the 1990s (Armstrong, 2010). Distinctly different in its knowledge, skills, and dispositions aims, Social Foundations found itself increasingly on the periphery or altogether excised from standards of teacher professionalization. Spaces for critical analysis, historical study of the catapulting process as named in the opening of chapter one, and interrogation of whiteness were largely stamped out as the emphasis in high-stakes standardized measures through student and teacher evaluations associated with No Child Left Behind, coupled with disciplinary exclusion in zero tolerance policies, re-shaped Teacher Education content and clinical practice. More recently, however, the explosion of grassroots resistance movements such as Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo movement, and the Woman's March, and teacher union strikes for more humanizing policies and practices have created the potentiality for the kinds of analyses SFE, Black, Queer and Women's Studies have folded into the discourse.

In Tozer's Chicago, even though the SFE as a discipline appears to be shrinking and dispersing, their institute is putting principals and assistant principals of color into the field. And although this might not appear to be "social foundations work," he defends it as "an approach to equity praxis, deeply grounded in the social foundations understandings… It clearly applies cultural and institutional critique to the preparation of professionals who must learn to be change agents in hegemonic schools" (Tozer, 2018, p. 97). Tozer's department is deeply embedded in Chicago Public Schools, the third largest school district in the nation. This suggests potential for larger than usual islands of decency within the ongoing wreckage of dispossessed and segregated sub-cities, but islands, no matter how green, do not displace concrete continents of dispossession.

Coloniality or "Whiteness" Entrenchment with Student Teacher Candidates

In Urban Teacher Education, Bree Picower (2009) contends that racism, or racialized thinking is such a normalized and unexamined facet of North American thought that White pre-service teachers in her courses could not help but come to flawed conclusions and practices. They return, after immersion in urban classrooms, with more *entrenched* colonized beliefs. She shows how meritocracy tropes, white paternalism, white "innocence," performative color-blindness and other formulations become magnified rather than reduced as a result of field experiences. She refers to it as "Whiteness operationalized" (p. 199). Mayorga and Picower (2018) make the case that Teacher Education practitioners should align themselves with Black Lives Matter strategy and praxis. Founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, & Opal Tometi in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for Trayvon Martin's February 26, 2012 death at Zimmerman's hands in Florida. Black Lives Matter strategy and praxis is now regularly updated and delineated in The Movement for Black Lives website and still informed with the work of its founders. Mayorga and Picower (2018) state that anti-blackness should be addressed at every stage of teacher education "from recruitment, admissions, coursework, placements, and professional development" (p. 222). Absent this rigor, they continue, attempts at curricular reform will be insufficient (p. 224). As an abolitionist, although I am in agreement with these writers in terms of activist commitment, I am not convinced that Teacher Education or the academy can provide sustainable pathways toward these ends.

I concur also with Dominguez (2017) who insists, "Our teacher education pedagogies must be capable of producing the types of *decolonizing* educators whose humanizing ideologies recognize the value in [abolitionist practice]… it requires a *decolonial* mindset that [is] developed, cultivated, lived, and deeply felt" (p. 226). Drawing from anti-colonial, seminal ideas of Paolo Friere (1970) and Frantz Fanon (1964), Dominguez continues:

> For too long, [educators have] failed to disrupt coloniality, or at least failed to play the transformative role in liberation that it might have, because it has taken place on the terms of the colonizer, and not the terms of the colonized. Rather than move us toward liberation, extant discourses of "diversity," "equity," and "social justice" in teacher education have failed to rupture the affective ways in which coloniality exacerbates ontological distance between teachers and students. Social justice as it is widely construed has remained colonial; it is justice only in that it seeks to make inequitable subjectivity (a colonized way of being, seeing the world, and defining success and value) available to all. That is not liberatory, revitalizing, nurturing or sustaining, and it never has been. We need something more than this. (p. 232)

Cochran-Smith (2009) offers an analysis on why Teacher Education is a "weak intervention" to coloniality and why "social justice" is losing meaning and salience. She counters the assumption of many that somehow Teacher Education can or should be "neutral," noting, "Teaching and teacher education are inescapably political and ideological activities in that they inherently involve ideas, ideals, power, and access" (p. 447). Cochran-Smith argues for a renewal of "social justice" efforts and defines what that could mean in Teacher Education. However, the problem of coloniality within teacher education is in need of a fundamental critique of whiteness through a more durable lens, and critical race theory has provided considerable utility in this area.

Critical Race Theory as Analytical Frame

Crenshaw et al. (1995) identified Critical Race Theory (CRT) as "a movement of left scholars, most of them scholars of color…whose work challenges the ways in which race and racial power are constructed and represented" in the U.S. (p. xii). The authors say the main project of CRT is to understand how a "regime of white supremacy" has subordinated people of color, how this subjugation was created and maintained in part through contradictions in law around what constitutes citizenship and the nature of claims for equal protection. The authors characterize CRT in its earliest iterations as "engaged, even adversarial scholarship," whose aims include human liberation and changing the "vexed bond between law and [White] racial power." It embraced Edward Said's "antithetical knowledge" and developments of "counter accounts of social reality by subversive and subaltern elements of the reigning order" (p. xii).

CRT foregrounds an analysis that begins with the declaration that racism is and always has been a deeply embedded political and social configuration in U.S. society. Delgado and Stefancic (2000) say that, "[R]acism is normal, not aberrant, in American society…It looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture" (p. xvi). Consequently, "racism" is not, as many believe, perpetrated so much by individual bigots but by entire institutional structures of which all of us are either part or in the shadow.

CRT embraces Derreck Bell's concept of "Interest Convergence," which demonstrates how so-called "black progress" is an illusion marked by historical moments where it was in the white interest to enact change or policy in behalf of African Americans. It looks like "justice" or "progress" but is just window dressing that can easily be torn down. CRT offers "counter-stories" and insider stories from those often treated by policy as disposable objects.

Crenshaw (2011) highlights the necessity of providing a counter-narrative to "color-blindness" and the post-racial settlement in the Obama era. Similarly, in Teacher

Education, it is important to note distinctions between CRT or decolonizing pedagogies that are prescriptive or programmatic and, as such, do *not* disrupt white supremacy. Gillborn (2006, p. 12) cautions against terminologies of anti-racism which don't include the root CRT analyses. "Anti-racism established its credentials by exposing the deeply conservative nature of approaches that struck liberatory postures but accepted the status quo and frequently encoded deficit perspectives of black children, their parents and communities." He charges that anti-racism has fallen into a trap in that it has failed to "properly interrogate our conceptual history and theoretical frameworks" (p. 13). CRT critiques liberalism's claims of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness and meritocracy as camouflages or "white intellectual alibis" (Dominguez, 2017).

"Lat Crit," informed by CRT, is not in competition with or incommensurate with CRT in the sense that both are concerned with how dominant discourse subordinates, erases and distorts the Latinx other (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 312). LatCrit tenets include the centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination. In addition to racialization, LatCrit holds that dominant culture discriminates based on gender, language and immigration status. Also central is the challenge to dominant ideology, particularly claims of meritocracy, color-blindness and equal opportunity. LatCrit includes a commitment to social justice. It privileges experiential knowledge. And it employs an interdisciplinary perspective in its inquiry (p. 314).

Confronting Scientific Racism Head on

Since ideas from the era of scientific racism and eugenics are still making appearances in academic and mainstream discourses (Holmes, 2018) it bears emphasizing that “whiteness,” has long been described by scholars as a legal and social construction – a fictional category essentially -- and not a biological reality. Understandings of the human genome should end, once and for all, the notion that there is scientific grounds for a genetic or biological hierarchy of “race” (Graves, 2008; Mujarhartee, 2016; Smith, 2019). We cannot afford to avoid this conversation amongst ourselves and with our students. Any university education faculty who have not rigorously reflected upon and problematized their own theoretical proximities to the scientific racism they learned from their own high school textbooks and college professors -- those “who have been validated through settler colonial structures of schooling that contribute to creating a science that reflects misunderstandings about race, class and gender” (Jordan-Young, as cited in Patel, 2014, p. 372) -- I would suggest, do not belong anywhere near Teacher Education or school children.

Racialized Ontological Distance in the “Contact Zone”

When university Teacher Education faculty and their teacher candidates work together in urban school field experiences, multiple racialized relationships and processes are occurring simultaneously in what I refer to as a “contact zone” (Pratt, 1991). If the contemporary urban classroom is the outcome of institutional white, settler-colonial logic these few centuries later, each person in the room has a different relationship to whiteness and access to institutional and social power. A contact zone is “...a messy social space where very differently situated people… work together across their own varying relations to power and privilege” (Torre, 2009). There will be a marked “ontological distance” Dominguez (2017), particularly between white-racialized teacher candidates and poor, non-white racialized students.

In the infamous Carlisle school of the late 19th century, we can observe "ontological distance" in classrooms: white teachers who believed they were rescuing savages with their strict discipline on one side. On the other side were innocent children, hunted and torn from their families and held hostage until they could show they had adapted to the demands of foreign abusers (reflections based on photographs shown in D. Adams lecture, Fall 2016, Cleveland State University). These profound differences in perception and motivation can be found on two sides of a black/brown and white cultural divide in many urban classrooms headed by white teachers, although the practices are entrenched and made largely invisible now by several centuries of precedent in white schooling of the "other."

A "contact zone," was described and theorized first by Pratt (1991) as space where two distinct ways of understanding and experiencing the world come into contact and communication. Pratt conceived of the "contact zone" to describe the space and time where an Aztec of Incan descent – possibly an bilingual administrator employed by a Spanish colonial outpost—sent a detailed, multi-paged illustrated communication to the Spanish sovereign (1613) in order to communicate the murderous, oppressive situation Spain's colonizers had imposed on the Aztecs. Poma claimed noble Incan descent and likely held some role in the Spanish colonial administration that made use of his mastery of Spanish and Quechua. The Spanish king *ignored* the communique. He had no reason whatsoever to extend audience or human understanding to the Aztecan writer who was, on the one hand, not recognizably his political equal and on another, not recognizably in possession of any right to be allowed even to live. Genocide followed.

When the detailed document sent by the Aztecan writer was eventually analyzed in the early 20th century, it was found to show his depth of mastery at the "counter-storying" enterprise of rendering the violence of Spanish colonizers visible from the Aztecan point of view while having a keen understanding of Spanish cultural aspirations, values and sensibilities.

Pratt's description of the counter-storying power of the Aztecan writer's perspective is one tool of Critical Race Theorists: the counter story renders the subaltern's humanity as visible in the context of the subjugating group's abuse. Pratt refers to contact zones, as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism...or their aftermaths" (p. 34).

Abolitionist Approach to White Supremacist Categories

Our Teacher Education faculty's unproblematized verbalization of categories of "white" and "person of color" in our contact zone student/teacher relationships, extend yet another uninterrogated coloniality constituting a harm in that it re-inscribes the a de facto linguistic and perceptual dominance implied by "whiteness." The language of raced, human categories derive in part from Blumenbach's taxonomy of 1792, with categories such as Aetheopian, Caucasian, Mongolian, American and Malay (Gould, 1981, p. 402), and later physical anthropology categorizations "Negroid," "Caucasoid," and "Mongoloid" (Takezawa, 2012, p. 62).

Winant (1997) highlights abolitionist approach's potential for transformative cultural change when combined with other racial projects that he characterizes as involving a more trans-racial, class-based sensibility. He characterizes the "new abolitionist racial project" as including a repudiation of white identity and white privilege and an endeavor that "invites us to contemplate the emptiness, indeed vacuity, of the white category" (p. 47). To underscore this characterization, he quotes Roediger (1994):

> It is not merely whiteness that is oppressive and false; it is that whiteness is *nothing but* oppressive and false…It is the empty and terrifying attempt to build an identity based on what one isn't and on whom one can [purposively not see or] hold back. (p. 13)

Abolition in Education

Love (2019) suggests that it is white supremacist roots of the hundreds of years of "dark suffering" that needs to be the focus of abolition in education. "We like to think that education is untouched by White supremacy, White rage and anti-Blackness, that educators are somehow immune to perpetuating dark suffering. But education from the outset was built on White supremacy, anti-Blackness and sexism" (p. 22). Abolitionist teaching, she contends, "is choosing to engage in the struggle for educational justice knowing that you have the ability and human right to refuse oppression and to refuse to oppress others, mainly your students" (p. 11).

Paris and Alim define abolitionist and decolonizing practices as those in which educators honor and sustain the "lifeways" of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling. These lifeways are not "pathological," nor should we measure these lifeways against white middle class norms (pp. 1-2).

I theorize that in a setting where individuals come together to problematize and understand their historical racializations, a new kind of vulnerability and co-exploration would have to emerge because these are conversations few people have likely ever had together in the United States. These kinds of interchanges cannot dismantle or abolish carceral oppression of impoverished, racialized children, but they can create moments of life-giving, human relationality.

Patel (2014) elaborates: "There is an answerability in the roles we have with each other. How we interact … echoes across contexts. Our social locations and histories have an impact on not just what we say but how we say it, and what meanings are made of our utterances. Considering educational research's role in the perpetuation of settler-slave-Indigenous relationships, those of us employed as educational researchers are answerable to these deep trajectories" (p. 371).

Hansman et al. (1999) say all of us are socialized into a racist order "that includes a denial of institutional or cultural factors contributing to the maintenance of racial prejudice and racism" (p. 20), and they note, "Everyone, from administrators to faculty members has the potential of being actively involved in changing institutional culture" (p. 20). Critical Race Theorists have largely rejected, in theory, the efficacy of or desirability of incremental liberal reforms to machineries of dispossession. Nonetheless, the critical race, decolonizing, "abolitionist" outsider/insider presence in the academy offer potential linkages as part of the broader enterprise of critical Teacher Education. Some aspects of (SFE) continue to profoundly influence discourse, politics, popular and academic culture. As a discipline, SFE can be complicit in projects that Tuck and Yang (2018) refuse. However, the existence of SFE has provided some territories in which we can theorize new interpretations of past, present and future and where the possibility for new relationalities across white supremacist categorizations of race and power can take root.

CHAPTER III

METHOLODOLOGY

Qualitative research generally holds that knowledge about the world is socially constructed. It concerns itself with questions about people's lives and experiences and the ways they understand their worlds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 3). Qualitative research involves interpretation processes that are conscious of and able to explain their ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions and the thought traditions which undergird these assumptions. Critical research in the qualitative tradition analyzes power and how it might be operating in any given social context. A basic assumption of critical research is that "all thought is mediated by power relations that are historically and socially constructed" (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 64). Although I conducted a study that derives its rationale from Critical Race Theory and an analysis of the historical consequences of racialization in U.S. educational "contact zones," I approached my participants "a-politically." I define this as a conversational modality used in spaces of professional access that poses as collegiality and civility but that cannot be power-neutral. Nonetheless, I am in fact a fellow long-time educator and colleague in an education environment informed by the neo-liberal ideologies that surround funding and practice. As such, I too possessed an ever-evolving narrative around how I have used and understood racially marked naming categories, how my understandings and usages have changed and my own very particularized interpretations around what is happening relationally in varying racialized contact zone interchanges.

I submitted, as a premise for the study, that white supremacist cultural constructions, or micro-colonialities, are based in uninterrupted systems of hegemonic power dating to the earliest legal and social constructions of the English colony that eventually became the United States of America. These inform every aspect of our social ordering, interacting and uses of language in the U.S., and can inform uninterrogated aspects of relationship between racialized teachers and students in urban schools (Paris & Alim, 2016; Rodriguez, 2012). I suggested, along with many others (Apple, 2006; Gillborn, 2013; Picower, 2009) that the operationalization of Teacher Education field experiences in metropolitan inner ring schools, is rife with uninterrogated "micro-colonialities," one of which is practitioners' ignorance of what "whiteness" or "other-than-whiteness" actually is from a historical and relational perspective while using the terminology of racialized categorizations. I suggested that our unproblematized uses of racialized marking ("white" "black" "person of color") were one of many "micro-colonialities" that it might be useful to address in foundations courses. In urban field experiences, the historical "white" self and the historical "black," non-white or "othered" self arrive together in what I refer to as the "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991; Torre, 2009) of shared educational spaces. I suggested that these identities influence our ways of being in relationship with one another across historically racialized, ontological divides and that this has ramifications in Teacher Education field experiences. In her long form poem *Citizen* (2014), Rankine says,

> …sometimes your historical selves, her white self and your black self, or your white self and her black self, arrive with the full force of your American positioning. You are standing face-to-face in seconds that wipe the affable smiles right from your mouths. What did you say? Instantaneously your attachment seems fragile, tenuous, subject to any transgression of your historical self. And though your joined personal histories are supposed to save you from misunderstandings, they usually cause you to understand too well what is meant. (p. 14)

Although problematizing, in particular, our quotidian uses of raced language is by no means a "magic bullet" for addressing all the complexity implied in historically and politically embedded ontological distances, it provides a touchpoint for worthwhile exploration. Who might we become to one another if we refused to use the racialized self-markers, created by the logics and operationalizations of white supremacy? What if we refused to use words such as "black," "white," "brown," "people of color" to mark ourselves in thought, conversation and relationship with one another?

It must be emphasized here that this proposition is by no means a race-neutral, color-denying proposition that can characterize white denial and white "innocence." On the contrary, as DiAngelo (2019) states:

> If I cannot tell you what it means to be white, I cannot understand what it means not to be white. I will be unable to bear witness to, much less affirm, an alternate racial[ized] experience. I will lack the critical thinking and skills to navigate racial[ized] tensions in constructive ways. This creates a culture in which white people assume that niceness is

> the answer to racial inequality and people of color are required to maintain white comfort in order to survive. (par. 3)

My intent, therefore, was to explore how Teacher Education faculty (TEF) narrated their ongoing experiences with their choices of language related to racialized positionality, racialized relationality and ontological distance at macro and micro levels. My intent was to make a modest contribution to the knowledge base within the abolitionist project of deconstructing and decentering historical whiteness as law, policy, perception and exercise of power.

I utilized methodologies that decolonize and humanize the research process which, according to Paris and Winn (2014), is a process of "becoming" while dealing with tensions between commitments to equity and simultaneously engaging in research with youth and communities. "How educational research serves learning provides a place to more fully embody decolonial stances, as it has the potential to materially alter how educational research is conducted and for what purposes" (p. xiii).

Problem

From a decolonizing and abolitionist perspective (Davis, 2003; Love, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2017), urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) likely do not sufficiently problematize with teacher candidates the relationship of the concept of "whiteness" to present day dominant power systems based in the violence of an invented settler colonial "color" hierarchy. In uncritically using the words "white," "black" or "people of color," TEF, even when they do understand the history of the terms, nonetheless re-inscribe white supremacist terminology on themselves, their students and the students with whom they work. This, in turn, enables one particular uninterrogated "coloniality" to assert itself in early classroom field relationships. Referring to ourselves as “white,” “black,” “person of color” in other words, reifies personhood and identity using the language of the white supremacist political categorizations for people dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore what urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) narrate about their experiences addressing racialized positionalities, relationalities and use of racialized verbal or non-verbal “markers,” such as the word “white,” “black,” “person of color,” to describe themselves, teacher candidates in their university classrooms and in foundations practicums that include urban field experiences. The overarching purpose was to consider practical ways “whiteness” might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education.

Contact Zones

In this study, the sites of preparation of teacher candidates in colleges of education classroom spaces and urban field experiences were conceptualized as contact zones, described and theorized first by Pratt (1991) as space where two distinct ways of understanding and experiencing the world come into contact and communication. Pratt’s description of counter-storying power in the contact zone is one tool of Critical Race Theorists: it renders the subaltern’s humanity as visible in the context of the subjugating group’s abuse. Contact zones, then, are “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism...or their aftermaths” (p. 34).

Historical whiteness in this study was conceptualized from a theoretical, or etic, perspective as a falsehood and a social construction with grave material consequences (DiAngelo, 2017; Harris, 1993). It was further conceptualized as a construct that can be described by black racialized authors in terms of its impact. No one is better on the idea of "race," and particularly whiteness, says Ta-nehisi Coates (2014), and its import than [James] Baldwin.

Baldwin (1986) states, "No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations and a vast amount of coercion ..." In his essay "On being white…and other lies", Baldwin describes the belief in whiteness as a form of cowardice in its "necessity of justifying a totally false identity and of justifying what must be called a genocidal history" (p. 179):

> ... in [a] debasement and definition of black people, ["white" people] have debased and defined themselves. And have brought humanity to the edge of oblivion: because they think they are white. Because they think they are white, they dare not confront the ravage and lie of their history. Because they think they are white, they cannot allow themselves to be tormented by the suspicion that all men are brothers .... Because they think they are white, they believe, as even no child believes, in the dream of safety…By persuading themselves that a Black child's life means nothing compared with a white child's life. (p. 180)

At the same time, the study held out the possibility of complex renderings within the TEF narratives. The study inquired into expressions of whiteness and racial "differences" as evident within racialized relationships of power at work in the urban field experience and how the TEF made meaning of the talk, gestures, silences, and actions taken within these contact zones.

Research Questions

The overarching research question was as follows:

1. In a study of the narratives of U.S. teacher education faculty (TEF) who instruct teacher candidates (TCs) in urban field experiences, how is the phenomenon of whiteness represented, constructed, or deconstructed? This question lent itself to two subquestions:

a. In what ways do U.S. TEF who instruct TCs in urban field experiences narrate how they have conceived of and named the racialized markers of themselves, their TCs and students with whom they interact in educational learning or contact zones?

b. In what ways do TEFs narrate their conceptualizing, naming, and acting upon racialized identities and positionalities of themselves, their TCs, and the students with whom they and their TCs interact?

Researcher Positionality

I inhabit a position of academic precarity as well as an identity of racialized subalternity in that I refuse "whiteness" as a label for myself. When pressed (as one always is) with "What are you?" I identify as a white-racialized defector from whiteness who has directly experienced the ongoing murderous and traumatic effects of what I name as operationalized white supremacy. We-- my son, his father, my husband, my siblings and I have all been directly maimed emotionally and physically by what I identify as systemically violent workings of a white supremacy that is empirically identifiable in the laws, policies and cultural understandings that have shaped our problematic civilization. Navigating the "academy" has felt to me like a tightrope walk, in some instances, balancing the honest humility of apprenticeship with principled stances of refusal in "a climate where critique [can be perceived as] insubordination" (Aronson & Anderson, 2013, p. 244).

I present as "bi-racial" or "white" and speak in multiple registers: these include formal academic, informal Midwestern and "ghetto" registers which I sometimes use consciously to disrupt what I perceive to be "courtesies" getting in the way of honesties and intimacies. As an aging, "white," English teacher who purposefully employs transgressive language in formal academic spaces, I behave in ways that I recognize can cause me to be underestimated and easily discreditable. On the one hand this enables me to observe first-hand how every day Midwesterners respond to various positions I take. On the other hand, this self-presentation puts me in what feels like "wobbly" standing vis a vis the formal academy, particularly the attempt to undertake serious scholarship while down on one knee. As Mayorga and Picower (2017) state, educators "who strive to be in active solidarity with [the Movement for Black Lives] … in this neoliberal multiculturalist era are at risk…without like-minded colleagues…working in…hostile environments" (p. 225). From this awkward position, nevertheless, I attempted to wield Hansman's (1999) "double-edged sword": that "daunting" challenge she presents to critical scholars to occupy stances where they work strenuously to change institutional culture (p. 8). "On one side is the socialization process that perpetuates the hegemonic racial and social norms that lie within educational institutions. On the other side, however, is the socialization potential to modify racism within these same institutions.

This leaves educators with the daunting task of what to do or where to start the process of dismantling institutional racism" (p. 18).

Research Design

Narrative Inquiry

I used the qualitative methodology called narrative inquiry. Clandinin (2010) calls narrative inquiry an "emerging field" with realist, postmodern and constructionist strands (p. 2) that is "first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (p. 3). Narrative research is utilized in service of "capturing the detailed stories of life experiences" of an individual or small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013, pp. 73-74). This qualitative research approach enables the researcher to glean data from participants' lived and recounted experiences, and the process can be collaborative and co-constitutive (p. 71). It can reveal participant and researcher identity and values and the interchanges themselves can produce emergent co-constructed ideas (Cresswell, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Therefore, experience itself was a phenomenon under study. This framing enabled the narrative inquirer to enter a collaborative space where thoughtful conversation could occur. Whereas opinions, by their very nature, exist to be challenged, one's account of one's experience, in conversation, is not a site for argumentation or contestation. A focus on experience enabled the participants to provide anecdotes, narratives of quandaries, changes, evolutions and speculations in a way that reflected her values and the values established in relationship with the inquirer. Clandinin (2010 describes these kinds of conversations as an "[o]ngoing negotiation with participants [that] allows narrative inquirers to create research texts that both critically and deeply represent narrative inquirers' and participants' experiences while also maintaining each person's integrity and their relationship to the future" (p. 13).

Thinking Narratively

Clandinin (2010) defines a process of "thinking narratively" (p. 2) which means simultaneously attending to temporality (past, present, future of phenomenon, as narrated by the participant), sociality (contact zones or the milieu in which experiences and stories are unfolding), and place, which is the specific, concrete site where interactions are taking place or are narrated to be taking place (pp. 3-4). One can justify inquiries, according to Clandinin, in three ways: first, personal justification, or the researcher's positionality, reflexivity and motivations; second, practical justification, which can sometimes involve "puzzles" around praxis where there might be an opportunity for a shift or change; and finally, social justification, where the research can inform social action and policy (p. 8).

Research Context

This study was conducted across the U.S. beginning with TEF associates and two pilot studies in a Northeast Ohio metropolitan area. The pilot studies were conducted in a county with a population over 1.2 million and is one of only two metropolitan areas in the nation with a population of at least 205,000 where more than half the children live in poverty, according to new U.S. Census data (2019). The racialized makeup of the county is 63.6% white, 29.7% black or African American (U.S. Census, 2010), with 5% Hispanic and 2.8% Asian populations. This and neighboring counties can be characterized as containing racialized, economically isolated, predominantly "black" citizens, disproportionately represented as impoverished, and outer ring predominantly “white” wealthier citizens. The life expectancy between isolated, racialized groups only two miles apart is 23 years less for the predominantly black racialized grouping (Warren & Ahern, 2019). The pilot studies described in the following section were conducted under the auspices of a major urban university in Northeast Ohio.

Pilot Studies

This narrative study was shaped by and extended two pilot studies, which are discussed below.

First Study, Fall 2017

Inquiry into this topic was first conducted for Introduction to Qualitative Research (EDU 807) with Dr. Anne Galletta in Fall 2017, where I interviewed three Teacher Education faculty using semi-structured interviews (Galletta, 2013) and observed them teaching in some of their undergraduate education courses. My initial interest was, in part, on how Teacher Education faculty described their ideals and values pre-PhD and how those values changed. I utilized a convenience sample of three faculty members with whom I was conversant as a Graduate Assistant. In part, I wanted to evaluate if my feelings of urgency and alarm regarding the ongoing violence of racialized inequity with which I am pre-occupied were shared by more senior practitioners. Another aspect of my interest was I felt I needed to explore a respectful way to approach potentially difficult conversations with more senior colleagues about raced, systemic inequity while learning about their theoretical stances and evolution as Teacher Education faculty practitioners.

This was important to me because, in spite of the rigorous training and thoughtful guidance provided by highly-qualified faculty during my more than three years in an

Urban Education PhD program, I have also experienced an almost unrelenting barrage of feelings of terror and alienation vis a vis what I view to be "business-as-usual" manifestations of the academy's uninterrogated operationalization of white supremacist "malignant normalcy" (Lifton, 2017). This shows itself in the form of "white" cultural incompetence on multiple fronts in its many dealings, not only with urban students and families, but also with lower-status professionals, often black, who perform the most intensive emotional and intellectual labor in working with inner-ring students and families. Those "contact zone" relationships, in other words, re-enact the very interpersonal colonial violences and educational malpractices to which I so strenuously object. In classes, I was not always able to temper my sense of urgency, distress and anger to conform to what seemed to me to be a dispassionate and often dishonest discourse characterized by the kinds of interpersonal networking, jockeying for position and favor-seeking behaviors among classmates that I associate with careerism, not good-faith inquiry.

The exercise in sharing a process of respectful inquiry with senior educators provided a sense of relief and "normalcy" (although not unproblematic) and grounding in what I experience as a safer, more power-neutral kind of collegial relationship. It mitigated to some degree the alarm, rage, despair and grief that have characterized for me the entirety of this endeavor in my relationship to forms of institutional "whiteness."

My first set of guiding questions for semi-structured interviews were as follows:

1. What did you use to be passionate about, pre-PhD?
2. How is this former passion manifested or not manifested in your present career?

Because my first two interviews elicited more answers related to the participants' resumes and publications, with the help of one participant, we refined the questions in this way:

1. What do you, as a teacher of teachers, feel is the most important take-away for your students to gain from you now?
2. How did you arrive at this?

I collected course artifacts such as syllabi and class plans, and I observed at least one teaching session with their undergraduate teacher candidates. Afterward, I followed up with clarifying questions. I interviewed all three professors for a total of three hours over two sessions and observed over six hours of their classroom teaching undergraduate teacher candidates. I transcribed and coded these interviews in a kind of abbreviated grounded study from which themes emerged of the importance of helping TCs facilitate student autonomy, belonging, and competence, as well as themes of concern about the lack of longitudinal data regarding practices and career trajectories of former teacher candidates. From this study, I was able to broaden my understanding of how Teacher Education faculty justify and apply their varying theoretical approaches. Although only one of the three faculty would characterize themselves as critically oriented scholars, all three practiced, in my observation, highly engaging, student-centered pedagogies and sustained a dynamic, committed teaching practice.

Study Two, Spring 2018

Because I wanted to encourage participants to speak more specifically about raced and classed differences between teacher candidates and students they encountered in the field, I developed a second iteration of the study for an advanced Qualitative Research course with Dr. Catherine Hansman (EDU 808) in Spring 2018. Utilizing another convenience sample of two additional faculty members, I altered my stance slightly as an interviewer by introducing myself as one bringing a critical and "decolonizing" lens to the conversation. I and the participants first established what each of us meant and understood by "critical" and by "decolonizing" as it pertained to our positioning as practitioners in urban education. In this way, I was able to have participants address themselves more explicitly to what I was by then calling the "ontological divide" (Dominguez, 2017) or the meaningful perceptual differences implied between white and non-white racialized students and teachers in "contact zones" (Moje & Martinez, 2007; Pratt, 1991; Torre, 2009).

I then posed the following questions, the first two from the original study and an additional third one suggested by an advisor.

1. What do you, as a Teacher of Teachers, feel is the most important "take-away" for your Pre-Service teachers at whatever stages you instruct them, prior to entering the field?
2. How did you arrive at that?
3. What challenges do you negotiate in terms of outside regulations, if any, in imparting what you feel is most important to Pre-Service teachers?

In this second pilot study, as before, I conducted a semi-structured 20-40 minute interview, observed at least one course session with the faculty members and their teacher candidates, then met with them in a follow-up interview for debriefing and additional clarifications based on the course observation.

I was further encouraged to speak with departmental leaders to gain an overview of accreditation and state standards with which any Department of Education must comply as a matter of law. I followed through with this suggestion. In these informal, unrecorded conversations, I learned of a crushing architecture of standards, measures and endless outcomes checklists with which Teacher Education departments must comply. This provided a useful context with which to understand the curricular frameworks with which faculty are required to design courses and conduct field training.

Research Design for Present Study

This study was informed by core ideas from the first two pilot studies and aimed to focus more deeply and particularly on how TEF were narrating the role racialization, played particularly "whiteness," whatever that might mean to them, in the ways they chose to approach their work. I continued with collegial conversations about "diversity" in urban learning sites, even more specifically at the level of how "race" was being discussed and whiteness conceptualized. I employed a stance that Denzin and Lincoln (2013) articulated and which I called "abolitionist" for the purposes of the study: "We want a social science committed up front to issues of social justice, equity, non-violence, peace, and universal human rights. We do not want a social science that says it can address these issues if it wants to do so. For us, this is no longer an option" (p. 23). I called it an abolitionist endeavor along lines explained in Love (2019) which asks educators to acknowledge the U.S. and its policies as "anti-Black, racist, discriminatory, and unjust... [Educators] must embrace…critical theories…that have the ability to interrogate anti-Blackness [and be] ready for a long and dissenting fight for educational justice" (p. 12).

I established my research framework as coming from a decolonized or critical lens in recruitment communications so participants would be allowed to know from what theoretical context I was approaching our conversations, whether or not they subscribed to it. Early on in initial interviews, I paid attention to the wordings of participants, their metaphors, markers and ways of framing stories. I anticipated delving into participant constructions like “diversity,” “multi-culturalism,” “culturally responsive” and “trauma-informed practices” as they characterized their orientations to their work. In initial interviews, questions were more open-ended to elicit a narrative early on to draw on emic-like stories of experience, followed later in the interview with more etic-driven questions that explored concepts associated with the study’s theoretical framework.

Participant Recruitment

I used the method of purposeful sampling, wherein the researcher establishes criteria to obtain rich data of a phenomenon or experience prior to recruiting participants (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 164). Building on relationships and referrals developed from the convenience sampling from the earlier studies, I was able to gain several participants from my home institution. I also gained consent to distribute flyers via e-mail that provided a description of the study and the type of participants I sought (see Appendix C).

In addition, I reached out via Twitter to a number of critical education scholars and Black, Latinx and Indigenous studies scholars whose work and commentary I had been following for months or years. I sent over 50 private messages asking if I could forward the formal recruitment letter and received several cordial acceptances and referrals. “Snowballing” utilizes networking and referrals to gain other participants who are likely to meet criteria. As an ongoing process, these conversations also assisted in theory development and verification (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 169). Opportunistic sampling made room for unexpected opportunities and developments in the research and "capitalize[d] on the appearance of new potential samples as the research process evolve[d]" (p. 170).

A recruitment flyer was posted on the AERA Division K (Teacher Education) Facebook page which also resulted in the successful recruitment of participants (see Appendix 4) and asked them if they would . The final participant sample included TEF who have engaged TCs in field experiences in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and Newark as well as in smaller urban districts in other parts of California, Texas, Indiana, Minnesota and South Carolina.

Data Collection

With 11Teacher Education Faculty (TEF), I conducted two 60 minute semi-structured interviews beginning with gaining their signature on the IRB approved consent form assuring their rights to full access to my research process as well as every assurance of confidentiality that can be reasonably offered (see Appendix A). I collected syllabi, course schedules and other related course artifacts and reviewed participant publications and course vitae.

I provided participants with transcripts of our recorded conversations and arranged to conduct a follow up interview (60 minutes) for clarifications. This second interview was also recorded with their permission, and transcripts completed and transcripts were made available for their viewing.

Semi-structured Interviews

I utilized a semi-structured interview approach, which is well-suited to engaging participants on a deeper, more multi-dimensional level (Galletta, 2013, p. 45) than, say a survey or a prepared question template. It enables one to elicit feedback that starts with a particular, or a directed conversation but allows participants to reflect in ways they would rarely be called upon to do in day to day conversation (Charmaz, 2006, p. 26). The researcher uses her observational and social skills to encourage the participant to delve beneath the surface and to explore and she also guides the conversation to stay somewhere within the area of inquiry (p. 27).

Interviewer as Participant and Bricoleur

My narrative approach included myself as the interviewer in the role of both participant and bricoleur, as Ladson-Billings (2005) states, "Creating a narrative and navigating the relationship with the participants" (p. 22). Because "[t]he social sciences are normative disciplines, always already embedded in issues of value, ideology, power, desire, sexism, racism, domination, repression and control" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 25).

I interpreted in the way of the "bricoleur" who uses the aesthetic and material tools of her craft deploying whatever strategies, methods or empirical material are at hand (Becker, 1998). An interpretive bricoleur makes a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation. In qualitative research, "The solution (bricolage) which is the result of the bricoleur's method is a construction (Yardley, 2008) and a "choice of practice that is pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflective" (Nelson et al., 1992, p. 14).

Bricolage is a way of dealing with complexity from multidisciplinary and emergent fields of inquiry (Kincheloe et al., 2011) and "exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world and the complications of power and privilege or the lack thereof. Indeed it is grounded on an epistemology of complexity" (p. 244). Kincheloe et al. characterize the work of bricolage as "tinkering": Bricoleurs tinker and this "tinkering is a high-level cognitive process involving construction and reconstruction, contextual diagnosis, negotiation and readjustment" (p. 244). Because interaction is always "complicated," they continue, bricoleurs are "methodological negotiators" (p. 245) who seek insight from the margins (p. 246). Although the authors here are speaking about actual participants from the margins, as a bricoleur, "margins" for me in this instance is not necessarily referring to the social location of my participants although it can certainly also inform any unfolding dialogic. One major aspect of insight I gain from "margins" in this case is informed by my own subalternity (a white-racialized defector from whiteness) and depth experiences living as a profoundly marginalized U.S. citizen who inhabits a racialized color line.

Ongoing Iterative Analysis

In eleven semi-structured interviews, I utilized guidance from Galletta's (2013) "ongoing and iterative data analysis" (p. 119), which includes multiple sequential steps. The first phase includes, a post-interview reflection, organizing and storing data, establishing an inventory, checking on accuracy of transcriptions (p. 120). Then, in an ongoing analysis phase, one establishes code names and their meanings and then provides an exemplar or direct quotes from interviewees that best represent the coded theme. One includes other instances and maintains an ongoing conversation, moving from codes to categories as they evolve and change in relationship to one another, if any, and in their salience to the discussion (p. 123). The analysis moves toward more interpretive thematic work.

Interview Questions

The interview questions (see Appendix A) covered general inquiries about TEF, their students and the field sites in which they worked. They then moved into more specific questioning about how TEF address race and racialization in their courses, if it all. Questions were designed to elicited narratives about approaches TEF took with TC in field experiences around the phenomenon of "whiteness" however TEF chose to define the term.

Conversations were recorded and transcribed in their entirety utilizing REV, a professional transcription service. The digital recordings were uploaded to my password protected computer and stored there as well as on a password protected USB, which was stored in a locked file cabinet of Dr. Anne Galletta, per IRB requirements.

Electronic transcripts were kept on my personal, password-protected computer at home and stored in a secure location with Dr. Anne Galletta.

Interpretive Analysis

Critical Race Theory (CRT) holds that a) racism is a fact of American society rather than a phenomenon of isolated bigoted attitudes or acts and b) that uninterrogated whiteness or coloniality adds to harms perpetrated on non-white racialized students where logics of white settler superiority are in operation (Bell, 1992 ; Gillborn, 2006). These approaches to discourse problematize and reject the "white gaze" (Morrison, 1993) and the settler colonial gaze (Tuck, 2009) wherever it informs “white” research and education of non-white children.

Narrative inquiry lends itself to undertaking research from differing ontological assumptions and can be understood as “the continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social and material environment (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39). Although I will explain my own CRT approach and grounding with participants and engage in dialogic around what that might mean to us both in our conversation, the study does not necessarily require its participants to have a critical orientation in their own practices.

Clandinin and Murphy (2007) describe narrative inquiry as “knowledge that leads less to generalizations and certainties and more toward wondering and imagining alternative possibilities” (pp. 35-75). This characterizes for me the collaborative spirit in which this narrative inquiry can proceed, regardless of participants’ individual theoretical orientations as TEF.

Validity and Reliability

Articulations of knowledge are socially constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 22) and the expressed results of a narrative study must necessarily raise questions around how one defines and accounts for reliability and validity. Ladson-Billings (2005) in her book detailing interviews with established African American teacher educators, colleagues with whom she had rich pre-existing relationships, speaks of “authenticity” and “keeping it real” as a form of validity (p. 24). She described the difference between “cold” interviews with colleagues she didn’t know and the detailed, frank, open-hearted exchanges she was able to have with people with whom she was already in relationship

(p. 21). In all of my work with Teacher Education faculty during my 30 years in the field, I have relied upon the kind of open-hearted way teachers talk to teachers. There's an ease and a practical understanding that classroom teachers share by virtue of the sheer volume of hours, students, and situations seasoned educators have necessarily engaged. Although I won't personally "know" my participants as Ladson-Billings did when she made inquiry among her educator-scholar friends; however, I claim here that I "know" teachers by virtue of having been one most of my career. As such, participant narratives will be co-constructed in the context of relationships of trust and consensus. In addition to the "teacher to teacher" common ground, I believe trust can be built by virtue of my positioning: I am a PhD student closely monitored and guided by academic advisors conducting a university IRB-approved dissertation study. As such I am a slightly more advanced "student" than the ones they routinely see during office hours and I posit my questions from that kind of positioning. In my experience, professors will readily engage in straightforward conversations and are quite seasoned in the practice of measuring the depth, length and tenor of responses being called for. They are generous with students.

Care was taken to gain consensus regarding meanings between interviewer and participant. A presumption of good faith inquiry in partnership with the Teacher Education faculty member informed my approach. The interview processes, in short, embodied the spirit of dialogic (Bhaktin, 2010). I employed the following safeguards and professional oversights as recommended by Hays and Singh (2012, pp. 205-214).

Member Checks

This key strategy for establishing trustworthiness (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) utilizes a strategy of ongoing conversation and consultation with participants regarding developing findings. It includes inquiring with participants how well the presentation of analysis fits their experience and intended meanings (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 206). Participants will be invited ongoing access to any aspect of the work but not expected to spend any more time with it than is outlined in the study parameters.

Thick Description

A thick description makes use of inferences, as contrasted with "thin" description, which confines itself to empirical observations that avoid inference. Thick description enables a rendering of meaning and interpretation of what one has sensed, noticed, observed or heard in the conversation that doesn't pretend to be "objective" while still make its assumptions and stances visible to the reader. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1989, as cited in Hays & Singh, 2012), a thick description includes the following: a) context of the act or observation; b) statements of meaning and intentions that might organize the observed act; c) traces the trajectory or evolution of the observed statement or action; d) presents the observation as an interpreted text (p. 213). Participants will have access these thick descriptions if they wish to look at them and they have final say so on how interpretations of them are rendered, even while measures will be taken to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

Peer Auditor

At every stage of the study, transparency marked the approach. Transcripts, fieldnotes, writings and interpretations were made available to the methodologist and chair of the dissertation committee. Participants had access to transcripts. From August to November of 2020 while writing up the results of the study, I met with my advisor and methodologist every two to three weeks for detailed input on my interpretations and choices for structuring a final dissertation document.

Audit trail. This study will produced a fairly substantive collection of records that can be examined. An audit trail "provide(s) physical evidence of systematic data collection and analysis procedures" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 214). These include many hundreds of pages of annotated, coded and memoed interview transcripts, reflexive journal entries, field notes, records of correspondences and recordings.

Confidentiality, "Do no Harm" and Critical Friends

Clandinin (2006) emphasizes narrative inquiry's ability to create conditions where "participants' narrative authority is honored. She recommends that the researcher consults regularly with researchers from differing methodological backgrounds in ways that "are attentive to the lives being represented" (p. 18). In my immediate professional network were scholars, administrators and school leaders who represented a multiplicity of theoretical orientations and areas of expertise with whom I was able to converse on matters of theory, practice and interpretation. Participants themselves served as consultants to the process of co-creating narratives.

Weaknesses and Limitations

Parker (2008) has observed the development of international education and describes how it is often shaped by a "provincialism" or a nationalistic bent which inculcates the economic, patriotic and military aspirations of the dominant culture. As such, the project of teacher education in Northeast Ohio is informed by the larger framing of militarist nationalism which, in our particular moment, poses a threat to civil liberties and freedom of speech. Professionals will, of necessity, be taking great care in how they express themselves. To be aligned with Critical Race Theory or grassroots, black liberation movements is to potentially make oneself a target as a "Black Identity Extremist" (ACLU, 2019). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) have also remarked upon the chilling effects and attacks on legitimacy of qualitative research as field (p. 13), and this statement predates the present political regime. In addition, the participants in this small sample may not be representative of other regional Urban Education Teacher Education faculty taking student candidates into field experiences in the nation. Finally, stories and narratives are not truth claims but rather a tool for representation and communication of human experience.

Conclusion

This study was conceptualized as an abolitionist (Davis, 2003; Love, 2019), justice project (Tuck & Yang, 2017) whose purpose was to conduct a narrative inquiry to explore what urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) narrated about their experiences addressing racialized positionalities and relationalities in courses including inner ring field components. This included their evolving uses of racialized verbal or non-verbal "markers," such as the word "white," "black," "person of color," to describe themselves, teacher candidates in their university classrooms and students in inner ring, metropolitan learning sites. Although the study's theoretical framing rejected racialized categorizations of human beings as they have been encoded and enforced by 400 years of white supremacist policy, the study itself held out the possibility of complex conceptualizations within the TEF narratives, regardless of what terminologies they used. The co-constitutive, authentically collaborative nature of the narrative inquiry method made room for new ways of participant seeing, being and saying that could assist in decentering the unproblematized “whiteness” of the field as a whole.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore what urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) narrate about their experiences addressing racialized positionalities, relationalities and use of racialized verbal or non-verbal "markers," such as the word "white," "black," "person of color," to describe themselves, teacher candidates in their university classrooms and in foundations practicums that include urban field experiences. The overarching purpose was to consider practical ways "whiteness" might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education.

Participant Data

I interviewed eleven university Teacher Education Faculty candidates throughout the United States of America. Table 1 shows their general demographics according to gender, academic career stage, racialization and TC populations specifically discussed in the interviews.

Of the eleven participants, one was cis-male and ten were cis-female-identifying scholars. Seven TEF are early academics who secured their first tenure-track position in the past three years and one is an Adjunct Professor in Teacher Education courses with field experiences. Three are mature-career faculty: an Associate Professor, a Professor of Practice and a Full Professor.

Eight TEF are white-racialized and three are non-white-racialized according to my own theoretical framing but would identify themselves as "white," "black" or "person of color."

As indicated in Table 2, collectively TEF have engaged TCs in field experiences in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and Newark as well as in smaller urban districts in other parts of California, Texas, Indiana, Minnesota and South Carolina.

Table 1

TEF Composition

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**AC Stage**	**Racialization**	**TC populations**
Dr. Price	F	Early*	W (White)	NW (NonWhite) International
Dr. Morales	F	Mature	W	WF (White Female)
Dr. Williams	F	Early	NW	WF
Dr. Arbor	F	Early	W	WMale (STEM) WF
Dr. Chapel	F	Early	W	WF
Dr. Nabih	F	Mature	NW	NW/International WF
Dr. Jones	F	Early	W	WF
Dr. Wise	F	Early	W	WF
Dr. Gosling	F	Early	W	WF
Dr. Corazon	M	Mature	NW	NW
Dr. Cliff	F	Early	W	NW

*Early = became Assistant Professors in past three years or Adjunct; Mature = ranking of Associate or Full Professor

Table 2

K-12 School Districts Discussed

Major Urban Districts Represented by City	Smaller Urban Districts Represented by State
Cleveland, OH	Ohio
Pittsburgh, PA	California
Detroit, MI	Texas
Chicago, IL	Minnesota
Houston, TX	Indiana
Los Angeles, CA	South Carolina
Newark, NJ	

University Course Types Represented

The TEF have been involved with undergraduate and graduate TCs in field experiences associated with early foundations of education courses, multi-cultural orientation to the teaching field courses, STEM graduate certification tracks and a variety of focused residential programs that included participatory action research. TEF narrated interacting with TCs who were undertaking or about to undertake their first field experiences as well as those who were involved in full immersion teaching field experiences. The varied education programs all had differing points of entry and levels of immersion for their TCs at any given stage of their certification processes. Some programs carefully trained students for one or two years before first field entries, others took "sink or swim" approaches which were or were not closely monitored by university mentors. One senior TEF teaches a required TC multi-cultural orientation course which prepares students for a field experience though he himself does not oversee the experiences.

Main Research Question

The overarching research question was "In a study of the narratives of a national sample of U.S. Teacher Education Faculty (TEF) who instruct Teacher Candidates (TCs) in field experiences, how is the phenomenon of whiteness represented, constructed or deconstructed?"

Research Subquestions

Two research sub-questions were as follows: 1) In what ways do TEF who instruct TCs in urban field experiences narrate how they have conceived of and named the racialized markers of themselves, their TCs and students with whom they interact in educational learning or contact zones? 2) In what ways do TEFs narrate their conceptualizing, naming, and acting upon racialized identities and positionalities of themselves, their TCs, and the students with whom they and their TCs interact?

Interview Questions

The researcher explored the Main Research Question (MRQ) and two Sub-questions (SQ1, SQ2) with eight main Interview Questions (IntQ; see Appendix). These eight interview questions included guidance for the possibility of an additional fourteen exploratory subquestions (see Appendix A) The following table shows where data were gathered that specifically addressed the MRQ and SQS by means of interviews guided by eight IntQ questions as well as presence of data that explicitly answers some portion or all of eight IntQ questions.

Table 3

Data Gathered Corresponding to Research and Interview Questions

Participant	**MRQ**	**SQ 1**	**SQ 2**	**IntQ 1-8**
Price	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,4,(5)**,(6),7,8
Morales	**X**	**X**	**0**	1,2,3,(4),(5),(6),7,8
Williams	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,(4,)5,6,7,8
Arbor	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Chapel	**X**	**X**	**0**	1,(2),(3),4,5,(6),7,8
Nabih	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,(4),5,6,7,8
Jones	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,4,(5),6,7,8
Wise	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,(4),(5),6,7,8
Gosling	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,4,(5),6,7,8
Corazon	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,(4),(5),6,7,8
Cliff	**X**	**X**	**X**	1,2,3,4,(5),6,7,8

*0 indicates absence of data corresponding to the Subquestion **Numbers in parentheses represent interview questions for which little data was gathered (see Appendix B).

Note: In order to observe social distancing and travel precautions presented by the COVID-19 international pandemic, all 22 interviews were conducted live on Zoom. Interview Question 5 referred to gestures, expressions, silences and body language signals TEF exhibited themselves or attributed to TCs. These went largely unasked and unanswered given that classroom observations were not possible under COVID conditions as had been initially envisioned.

Arranged in three distinct sections, Content Findings I provides a display of how TEF participants represented and constructed whiteness in narratives of how they present themselves to TCs. Content Findings II covers the ways TEF narrated their sense of responsibility to their TC in the context of "whiteness" and the approaches they take as well as their perceived limitations of those approaches. The third section, Content Findings III will cover ways in which the phenomenon of whiteness was "deconstructed" in a narratives that I characterize as "decentering" whiteness.

Findings I

TEF Constructions and Representations of Whiteness

Content Findings I shows how participants tended to identify themselves to others "racially" in the section "TEF 'Racial' Self-Descriptions: Black and White' and 'TEF 'Racial Self-Description: Non-black and non-white.'

TEF "Racial" Self-Descriptions: Black and White

All eight white-racialized TEF identified themselves to researcher and reported that they introduce themselves to TC as "white." When the researcher provided her rationale for identifying herself as "white-racialized" in relationship to historical white supremacist legal constructs, all but one of the eight white-racialized TEF re-iterated comfortably that they were "white," full stop. An e-mail exchange with Dr. Price captures one pointed iteration of this self-definition. She wrote, "I identify as white (lowercase for sure)."

> Researcher: "And why do you say 'white,' definitely lower-case?"
>
> Price: "Based on critical race theory and critical whiteness studies, I prefer to lowercase the w in white because it is a step to decenter whiteness through writing. In turn, I capitalize Black, Indigenous, Latinx, etc. in order to (re)center People of Color. It's a political statement that I feel strongly about and it's something I had the freedom to do in my dissertation!"

Similarly, Williams, the one black-racialized TEF participant said, "Your race. It just *is.*" "I self-identify as black or African American. Mostly black."

Several participants touched or stroked the skin on their arms or the backs of their hands or made a gesture toward their physical persons to indicate that their whiteness (or blackness) was a fixed thing in terms of how they identify themselves and would be identified in relationship with others in the U.S. and abroad. The statements were sometimes made in a humorous or theatrically credulous way as if to say, "Well, of course! Are you kidding?" particularly when referring to how they are "read" or "viewed" by others.

Morales' self-definition as a person with a white race category wasn't altogether settled for her. "I have a whole thing with the whole race thing because I always talk about okay, you have white, black, and then you say Asian. And I'm like okay, well where do Latinos fit in?

So I'm Italian, I'm white. But my husband is from Mexico and then my children are bicultural." She said "bicultural" was a more accurate way to signify "race" where her family is concerned.

Of the white-racialized TEF, Dr. Cliff alone expressed ease with self-identification as both white-racialized or white. There are no statements from Corazon or Nabih in this chart since neither one identified themselves in black, white or "brown" racialized terminologies but rather by their parents' birth countries.

Table 4

TEF Self-Identifiers

Participant	Black and White Racialized Identity Statements
Gosling	"I push my students to think of themselves visually…Your race and gender. So you can't say that you go around the world and you don't exist as a racialized person because that's one of the first things people notice about you." "A lot of my growth…has been an understanding of a more global situation of myself as a white person. Going to India and having people call me …'English lady'."
Wise	"I do identify as white…" "White is real." "I will say, I'm a white person standing in front of you and with that comes a whole bunch of privilege…" "My [child] is 50% [non-white] but 100% white-passing… [They] will always physically be identified as white. I mean, you wouldn't know they had a [non-white] bone in their body but she's a full 50%." "[They] will automatically be classified as white and with all the privileges."
Price	"I identify as white (lowercase for sure)." Researcher: "And why do you say 'white,' definitely lower-case?" "Based on critical race theory and critical whiteness studies, I prefer to lowercase the w in white because it is a step to decenter whiteness through writing. In turn, I capitalize Black, Indigenous, Latinx, etc. in order to (re)center People of Color. It's a political statement that I feel strongly about and it's something I had the freedom to do in my dissertation!"
Morales	"Race is weird for me." "My kids say, 'Mom, you know you're white, right?'" About five years ago, when I was assigning this the very first time, I said, "All of you, who are mostly all of you white girls, do not tell me you don't have any culture because you do. You are white."
Williams	"I am black all day and my students know that. They see that when they walk into the room." "Your race. It just *is."* "I self-identify as black or African American. Mostly black."
Arbor	"Ah. I am that white woman doing that." "And this is where I have had to catch myself, because I've been talking to one of my high school friends who also has a PhD. I said, 'I know this is like the white woman in me. Was it easier? Was it easier to be friends because we were in high school and we were forced?'"
Chapel	"Yeah, I'm definitely at the point where, yes, I'm white, and yes, I have an even better understanding of all that that means and the power and privilege that I have, due to my racial identity." "In my early journey…I don't even know. I don't think I thought that I was a white teacher."
Jones	"I'm saying I'm white only because it is a part of me." "Being white influences how people view me in the room."
Corazon	
Nabih	

Cliff	"I'm fine with 'white-racialized" for your study. I'm fine with just white as well." "I introduce myself [to my students] as white and not 'down'."**

*E-mail correspondence ** "Down" is a term that means "cool" or "in the struggle" with black people. Cliff specifically says she is *not* down because of her awareness of how white-racialized people in teaching positions who have adopted that posture have contributed to harming non-white students.

Two "non-white" TEF, Nabih and Corazon, identified themselves in relation to whiteness differently than as in a black and white racial binary or on a white to black continuum.

Dr. Corazon identified himself in this way: "I'm a very dark-skinned brown body. So I'm not white-passing by any script…Despite being Indigenous, I mean phenotypically, we're a thoroughly colonized people…I don't really refer to myself as Latino, but where does a Latino, Chicano, Mexican American, whatever term you want to use for those of us who cannot be white, not only because of surname and nation of origin; I can't be white because I literally fucking do not feel typically white. Right? Where does that leave us who can not claim a tribal number by Western standards…I can't claim Navajo…the only thing I can claim [and reject] is Catholicism."

Dr. Nabih described her identity in neither black, white or "brown" terminologies, but rather by the two different countries of origin of her parents, the family's several languages, distinct traditions and immigration through Puerto Rico to become U.S. citizens. Of her identity in relationship to whiteness, Nabih said "So I was born in [country in South America], but then [had] the abrupt experience of coming to [the U.S.A] and then entering a predominately white environment with predominately white educators. Even though I was living in a city in an urban context with other children of color, the people in power and the people in charge were white. So, [I experienced] my invisibility, in the way in which I was subsumed, and then expected to act white and accept or be complicit with the ideas that were anti black…and racist."

Anti-Blackness of Nabih's TC Immigrant Cohort

Nabih spoke at length about a cohort of immigrant TCs for whom her department prepared extensively. The department understood in advance that among non-white immigrant students, they would have to address racialization very specifically in order to create a basis to counter immigrant anti-black stereotypes.

"[T]hey have assimilated and bought into whiteness and white supremacy and are trying at every step to get closer to whiteness. So loyalty to the white, to the dehumanizing, anti-black framework is very strong. We knew we were going to need to counter that and we knew from the onset that just because they were 'people of color' and I say quote unquote, because they didn't all start off identifying as people of color, but at the end of the program they did…Some of them might have started off identifying as white because forms are so limiting. You choose white or you choose black or you choose Native American, and I'm not white and I'm not black. So then I must be… 'I'm sorry, I'm not Indigenous, but I'm not black, so I must be white.' So that affiliation with whiteness – we knew that was something that we were going to deal with from the onset."

TEF Theoretical Representations of Whiteness

When the researcher directly asked participants how they would define "whiteness" as a concept or a phenomenon, participants articulated a historical and critical orientation to their understandings of whiteness. They described it in terms of power, normalcy and historical categorization that keeps categories intact. The following

TEF expressed representations of a range of theoretical definitions that emerged in all the interviews

Whiteness as ruling class. Williams stated, “I would say that whiteness is being a part of the ruling class in the US. Being the standard from right in the United States of America. That's what whiteness is, and everything else exists in its relation or opposition to whiteness.”

Whiteness as hegemonic system of power. According to Nabih, “Whiteness is sort of the hegemonic system of power that is in control of the way in which we are able to live our lives. It's in control of the social structure within our society, in the US. It's in control of our economic structures, our political structures and our cultural structure…What we call standard language.”

Whiteness as social construct. Cliff provided this analogy: “So it's kind of like hegemonic masculinity, right? No one is the perfect white person but everyone's acting in a way that supports the ratified ideal which is why when you try to get into these things of like, ‘Oh. But Ancestry.com said I'm 3% native American, blah, blah, blah.’ It doesn't matter. That's not how the construct works. People are still giving resources in a system to people that fit the certain category whether or not it's biologically real, right? So that's how whiteness works.”

Whiteness as a census category. When the researcher asked Jones if she knew the history of how race was invented she responded, “…[F]or whatever reason, probably to separate us. They wanted to count, right? How many white people, how many black people, maybe for slave purposes? I don't know…Random categories. They could have been purple, green and yellow, but they ended up to be whatever they are now, the census categories. And I don't think they've changed that much. I don't know. But I don't think they've changed all that much.

Whiteness as hierarchy. Chapel defined whiteness in this way. “For the country and all of its systems, the racialized hierarchies are systems of power and oppression that are white supremacist…And if you’re going to teach the kids in [poorest local black district], you don’t need to tell them where they fit. Let them know that you [as a white-racialized person] know and … you’re going to base your curriculum on liberation.”

Summary

The above two sections provide a view into several ways TEF claim “whiteness” or “blackness” as fixed racializations for themselves while also articulating an understanding of “whiteness” as a “sliding signifier” (Hall, 2017) related to U.S. founding history and policies of white supremacy. This indicates that while TEF understand and identify themselves as “white” or “black” or “non-white” they also have an understanding of race or racialization as an invented construct based in a premise of white supremacy.

Findings II: TEF Sense OF Responsibility, Ways of Approach and Limitations to Practice in the Context of Whiteness

TEF often mentioned, in their relation to whiteness, what they believed was their professional responsibility to their TCs and to the school students with whom those TC would engage. They described specific approaches they took in their teaching and mentoring practices based on how their stated identities situated them, their TCs and school students in a position hierarchically related to each other and to white hegemony.

In their descriptions of their practices, they almost universally spoke of the limitations of their practices and programs. Many alluded to “harms” they saw themselves perpetrating, mitigating or avoiding. Several mentioned the role grant funding played in their ability or lack of ability to work at depth with TC in more immersive field experiences. A number of TEF worried aloud about the impact they were or were not having with their TCs in a variety of scenarios.

Responsibilities

TEF described their professional and personal responsibility to the field in three main ways: 1) The "noblesse oblige" of white privilege; 2) Mitigate or do no harm; and 3) Shift TC perception.

"Noblesse oblige" of white privilege. "Noblesse Oblige" refers to what the European upper classes under monarchy believed was their implied moral obligation to underlings. The following statements were representative of TEF seeing possession of whiteness as giving them an inherent duty or obligation, as those of higher class or caste, to those with less privilege. Several TEF who identified themselves as "white" discussed their white privilege as TEF among non-white TC or as teachers of majority "white" TC who would be interacting in the field with majority non-white K-12 students.

Jones echoed a sentiment expressed by all white-racialized TEF. "With privilege comes a responsibility to see your own privilege and then do something good with it." Gosling said, "I recogniz[e] as white folks we have a huge responsibility to teach other white people how not to be oppressive and how to be anti-racist."

Arbor spoke of how her relationship to whiteness has shifted to a more explicit analysis of white supremacy, particularly in light of a hate crime that happened right in view of her home while her young children were outdoors. "I think my positionality now is that yes, I'm there to, hopefully, be the voice that the 85% [white TCs] will listen to…

just listen. Right? I'm here not to attack you. I'm here to share with you what I went through and let you know that if you truly care about children, then you should work on yourself before you go into classrooms.

Price spoke of how her dissertation committee had pressed her to examine how her “whiteness” showed up in multi-racial and black-led community organizing spaces. She said she came to the realization over time that her role as a white person in non-white organizing spaces was to fall back. “I [am] conscious of the fact that as a white person in that space, I have a particular set of responsibilities…I think really through being at that table and those [grassroots community] spaces, I was able to understand, ‘Okay, this is when I sit back and just listen… I'm a white woman here. I can be the one to submit the FOIA request.’ A lot of instances like that where I began to understand, ‘This is what it means to embody my whiteness as someone who has a critical consciousness.’”

Mitigate or do no harm. Many TEF referred to a consciousness of harms they and their TCs could potentially cause K-12 students in the field as well as decisions they make so that TC class environments will feel safe for inexperienced and untrained TCs. Chapel stated, “I think I just am continuously thinking about how [to enact] least amount of harm [to K-12 students and TCs] but also how am I continuously checking myself and putting myself in place.” By “in place” she echoed a similar sentiment as Price about the importance of taking a more subdued, listening role in settings where “taking up space” with the presumed authority or arrogance of “whiteness” creates impediments to “non-white”-centric leadership and strategizing.

Gosling, who was working a on a Masters in brain-based learning when she taught in multiple impoverished, all-black districts said, “I was focused on like socio-emotional learning so that I think in a way I wasn't as dangerous to those students as I could have been." She was struck by an incident in a charter school in 2008 where her brain-based practice of allowing first graders to stand or sit on their knees in their desks was countervened by a principal. He walked into her classroom, picked up a small African immigrant girl in the armpits and firmly sat her on her bottom in the seat with her stomach up against the desk and a straightened back. She described this as an example of "very punitive, white normative discipline."

In this situation, the principal was a black- racialized man. She said, "So anyways, I remember seeing that and just being like, 'Wait a second. Like people of color can oppress children of color too.'" She said this was a meaningful and memorable understanding for her at that time. "It's like, okay, so it's not just white people that are the problem, like myself. It's also people of color that are internalizing these narratives."

Cliff distinguishes between "harm" to K-12 students and "discomfort" in university conversations with TC and colleagues. "I teach classes like queer studies and education and our goal is we don't want to harm young people, right? We have to think about our assumptions of what does cause harm and what doesn't, because this is often a way that people also avoid having conversation…Discomfort and offense are not the same as harm, right? And then adults having to have a difficult conversation, is not a traumatizing experience necessarily, depending on how it is, right? But if I enact whiteness in my classroom in the same way that has been enacted on a student of color before, sure, that could be traumatizing."

A number of TEF spoke of their responsibility to make their classrooms safe for conversation and exploration. Williams and Wise mentioned the importance of creating trust with majority white TC cohorts so as not to intimidate them or close them off. Corazon, in the context of having very few white-racialized students in his majority Latino cohorts expressed concern about a balance between "coddling" white supremacy and making his course "equitable" in terms of everyone being made to feel safe in the discourse. "[M]aybe I shouldn't be catering…but really I want to have it be a safe space for everyone. And I truly believe that unless you're a fucking Nazi or a a Trumpite, right? And even with some Trumpites I would have patience because I think I would rather try to get them to see some light than not. And it's not my classroom space against them. It's they're forced to be here [in this required course in Multicultural Schooling]."

Shift TC perception. It was the implied or explicit view of every participant that the nature of their work was to facilitate a change in perspective in their TC students through course and fieldwork. Although all noted inevitable obstacles to effectiveness, none suggested the work shouldn't be done at all. When the researcher told participants that she "takes a knee" to the entire enterprise of university teacher education, they did not disagree per se but also offered what good they believed was possible.

Morales, who has been a clinical professor (teaches full course loads that place TC in K-12 field experiences) for over a decade said, "[This is] what I want for [TCs]. I want for them to realize it is a life-long sort of journey. It's not like oh, I took two classes and I'm not racist anymore. No, that's not how it works. It's a lifelong journey and if it's important to you, then you will do the work to learn and put yourself into those spaces." She told several stories of TC changing over the course of a field placement from being afraid of the neighborhoods to becoming much more comfortable.

She also discussed the difficulty her TC often faced inside K-12 building cultures where mentor teachers expressed beliefs about children's constitutionally low IQs and inherent criminality. There is no shortage, according to Bianca, of such teachers and they serve as a stark contrast to what she knows she has provided TC in her coursework and training.

Jones said, "I used [pictures of dilapidated schools] to say, 'Look. This is who you think these kids are. You've got to make a change.' I was like, 'If this is who you think these kids are, you can't go in there. You have to make a change. You have to see kids from the perspective of who they are and what they bring, not what they don't have.' …I tell them that's what's wrong. [And that] that's what I'm trying to fix right now. 'Here in these 15 weeks, I need you to see stuff different.' Typically, when they come back at the end of the semester with their pictures, they have made a change. The greatest change that I see is in their perception of the school buildings." In the second interview, the researcher asked Jones if she thought TC might have a noticeably changed view of their students if they did happen to meet with them in dilapidated schools. Jones said she hadn't considered the question in that way.

Cliff gave an example of a lone white-racialized woman in one of her majority non-white classrooms who kept referring to "illegals" in reference to an article the class was studying. The TEF interrupted and asked the student if the author of the article referred to people as "illegal" and how specifically did the author frame how she spoke of her subjects. She described the woman as being genuinely baffled and uncomprehending of the question. Cliff says, "I was like, in this classroom we're not ever going to call people illegal immigrants. The author says *undocumented* people. That's the word we're going to use." The woman agreed and the class moved on. Cliff said she received four e-mails that evening from students who said they would have dropped the class had Cliff not intervened in this way.

At the same time, in her classrooms with TC, she is very careful in her approach to identifying problematic TC beliefs "There are lots of times when I could make a point about how a student is saying something really offensive, but all I do is prove I'm right. I don't actually change their mind about something. When we're working with pre-service teachers, that has to always be the goal: How are you not going to harm other people as a teacher?"

Approaches

Participants discussed the approaches they take with TCs in the context of "whiteness." Most teach "whiteness" as a phenomenon of phenotypical embodiment that comes with varying layers of access and privilege. The TEF who identify firmly as "white" or "black" instruct on the category of race as part of an equal and larger discussion of diversity or difference which includes, gender, ethnicity (from whence one's ancestors come), ability, social class, military service and other areas of difference. The TEF who do not identify in a strict non-white/non-black binary teach TCs more from an analysis that explicitly delineates anti-blackness as a category unto itself within a focused race analysis. The following two sections highlight conversations that reflect "Discourses of Diversity: Getting at Race by Means of Other 'isms'" approaches as contrasted with "Discourses Explicitly about Anti-Black Racism." Included in diversity discourses are 1) Distinctions Between Race, Culture and Ethnicity; 2) "Whiteness" as Absence of Culture; and 3) Calling Out "Whiteness" Tropes.

Discourses of diversity: Getting at race by means of other "isms." In general, TEF who approach teaching about whiteness from a "discourse of diversity" treat race as a phenomenon not entirely distinct from other "isms." Diversity conversations include everything from age, gender, ability, socio-economic category and sexual orientation to religious beliefs, places people have lived and whether or not they have served in the military. Alternately some TEF said that because race conversations tend to be so fraught, they intentionally approach it along with other "isms" because they find that TCs are more open to discussions on diversity in gender orientations, for example, or in discussions about ableism.

Williams, who identifies as Black, described her motive for putting "race" on equal footing with other "differences" as a classroom climate consideration. "I feel like if you start a class out with race, you're polarized for the rest of the semester…Whenever I have a social issues class, I don't start out with race. I start out talking about how people view different situations differently based on where they're located. I started focusing on male-female because we're comfortable with the fact that men are privileged more than women. That's an easier conversation. Or I'll talk about ableism, because everybody in the class is in the majority when we talk about ableism for the most part."

Similarly, Arbor approaches race indirectly from a discourse of diversity in "status." She specifically instructs TCs in the field to observe what status students appear to hold within the school building and the classroom. Are they popular? How are they carrying themselves? Does the school create tracks, and are those tracks associated with social status among the students? "And through that, of course," she stated, "we get to race. But what I found is by wrapping it in status to begin with, they can identify if I say to the students in their week three in the field, 'Who in your class has high status and who doesn't?'" Arbor mentioned that it was easier to discuss gender and sexual identity with TCs and that the students were much more comfortable with this.

TEF further differentiate race, ethnicity and culture. Within the "discourse of diversity," Jones, Morales and Wise explicitly include instruction distinguishing race, culture and ethnicity in assignments designed to get TC talking about their identities. Jones says it is important to emphasize the difference between race and ethnicity since race is more or less fixed, but ethnicity speaks to actual places one's family and ancestors come from. Bianca further defined ethnicity as culture. "We all have culture. We all have culture. Culture isn't just ethnicity. So we talk about that, that there are traditions that we do that oftentimes come from our ancestors, from our culture. And some are ... like for example, I'm Italian. A lot of students who are Italian will get up and Italians tend to keep the culture. Generation after generation after generation, with the food and with various things, the Sunday dinners. And they still keep it."

Refute whiteness as "absence of culture." In the context of ethnicities or cultures, several TEF spoke of their white TCs as stating they had no culture or ethnicity. These TEF would respond in general with providing more contexts for white TCs to understand "difference" or bias or perspectives based on different life experiences. Several named learning circumstances in their own journeys as white-racialized students or teachers when they learned that their "whiteness" meant something other than an uninterrogated "normal." Because of these moments, many TEF shape lessons and approaches designed to bring the idea of whiteness as a "presence" rather than an absence in discussions of diversity.

Morales said, “So then what we do is with this culture course, it's the first term of junior year. We start out by talking about your identity, and then in that course we have a lot of discussions about many things. Like race, culture, linguistic, language, religion, gender, ableism. We have a discussion about all of that.

And so we do a lot of identity, what is your identity, and what are your microcultures. Like who are you, what are you a part of…I talk a lot in the first term, which is becoming increasingly difficult as you can imagine, about the fact that I'm not talking about politics even though it might seem that I'm being political. That I'm not being political.”

Address problematic TC conceptions. In working with TCs, many TEF recognize problematic TC attitudes and biases directed toward poor, black and brown-racialized metro K-12 students. They consider it a matter of fostering educational growth to move TC away from harmful pre-existing assumptions. The following are direct examples of TEF narratives on how they viewed the needs of TCs in relationship to their potential future practice as educators. These statements represent on some level the sentiments expressed by all the participants.

Arbor. “I don't know that I want to call the students racist. I think what I would have said is that they were uninformed or unexperienced. And I guess I qualify that, because I had and still, I think would have ... I'm struggling with how to call out students and not distance them.

“I do mean somebody that probably believes that their position in life is completely uninfluenced by the color of their skin and that they earned that right where they are. A lot of teacher candidates, as we talked about, are middle class, but when you listen to their life stories, their parents came up in the generation of "I worked hard for everything I earned. I grew up poor. My dad worked in a factory, my mom worked on the line, or a cook, or this or that." Maybe they were a teacher. Then their parents were likely teachers. Then there's that influence. So, there's still that generational influence of "My family earned their right in this spot."

Gosling. "I think it's because I'm reflecting on my own behavior in high school and before and even my early years of teaching. I know I did racist things, and I know I was in their shoes. So, I'm trying to be patient with their learning process so that they'll be permeable to the ideas. Because I know it doesn't do any good if I just say, 'Well, you're racist.' Right? That's not helpful to anybody."

Williams. "I think when you start mixing races and mixing classes and things like that, mixing religions, mixing genders, and sexual identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. When you start mixing that stuff, people start being a lot more careful. But to me, the classroom space is the safe space to explore all of that stuff, because you have somebody to give you feedback, appreciatively, you know? You have somebody who is trying to make sure that you're okay, that you can go out into the world and speak boldly and intelligently about these diversity issues. If we're not having those conversations in class, and you're saying…'In my class, nothing's going to happen to you. If you say it out on a street, outside of school, then it might.' I find myself constantly thinking about how to challenge the way that they think and speak, and getting them to examine how they're representing things. Getting them to recognize their own biases."

Focus on anti-Blackness and White supremacy. Several TEF made a distinction between diversity discourses and discourse around anti-blackness and white supremacy. Nabih explicitly countered the efficacy of "diversity" discourse by emphasizing the importance of making "race" and anti-blackness the anchor of discourse with TCs. She described how, when colleagues push back [against anti-black race-centered focus] with the spectrum of "diversity" topics like ability and gender, she and one of her colleagues counter it. "[Race] is always subsumed or race always gets erased. So yes, it always has to be about race first, and yes, absolutely, all these other ways that people are oppressed and marginalized will also be addressed… Race first."

Morales, who has spent a majority of her career working with white TCs in "very, very brown," bilingual school districts said that there was a general sentiment in K-12 school buildings that there was a racial hierarchy related, not only to darkness or lightness of skin, but also to blackness. "I'm just going to say this here very bluntly, it became very clear to me that the black kids were at the very, very bottom. It wasn't like people were treating the brown kids great, but they were treating them a little better than the black kids."

It was in conversations with TEF embedded in "brown" K-12 districts that notions of racialized distinctions which put "blackness" as the bottom of a hierarchy became even more evident. Cliff spent her early teaching in majority black K-12 schools and then accepted her first academic appointment in a majority Latinx district. "…whiteness absolutely matters in all contexts. Because like I don't know if [Corazon] talked about this, but a major thing that we definitely are trying to deal with is like the anti-blackness in Latinx communities. There are lots of our students who've come from very homogenous Latinx communities [who] haven't really had a lot of black colleagues or friends or neighbors. So they still had [stereotypical ideas] that are really anti-black and problematic. So you still have to address these different things and that's still about whiteness.

Chapel also spoke of becoming much more assertive in her practice with TCs. “Your onboarding [TC] to critical consciousness can’t take some twenty odd years. We don’t have time for that. I’m being far more intentional. And wait for this year to come. I’m just naming it. I’m not going to tiptoe around and call things ‘biased’ and ‘microaggressions. It’s called ‘racism.’ It’s called ‘white supremacy.’ It’s called ‘privilege.’ Just name these things and I want [TCs] to be comfortable in naming.”

Arbor also spoke of being more intentional in the past two years in using the words “white supremacy” to describe what is happening in the broader culture and in classrooms. Where Chapel attributed her newfound assertiveness in part as a result of the George Floyd uprisings in the Spring of 2020, Arbor, began using the word “white supremacy” explicitly after an act of mass murder was carried out at a synagogue that she can see from her window at home. Her small children where outdoors at the time of the shooting and ordered back inside by storm troopers.

Limitations of Practice in the Context of Whiteness

Without exception and unprompted, each TEF spoke of the limitations of their practices and, in some cases, the limitations of their university departments and of certain mentor teachers in the school systems where they monitor field placements. Most stated that one or several semesters was “not enough” to instill in TCs a critical consciousness or critical way to assess how power was operating according to raced positionalities vis a vis white hegemony. Others spoke of how some of the more immersive, community-centric programs were subject to changes and stoppages in grant funding as well as subject to what Cliff calls "nice white lady" leadership that is not critical in its approach. Two TEF spoke of tensions on admissions committees related to problematic TC dispositions, Nearly all TEF stated that in terms of instructing TCs well in the context of "whiteness," no one was doing "enough."

Departmental limitations. Nabih spoke of a five year intensive residency program which involved TCs in a profoundly community-centric approach which had the potential for meaningful long-term changes in TC perception and practice. These were the projects that TEF reported as having the best chances for depth instruction of TC in the political and social contexts of inner ring, impoverished metro schools as compared with standard university course trajectories supporting certifications processes. "I [do] think [TCs] end up in a different place… and I could do a five-year retrospective on, where are you now as a teacher, given that this was the input." However, Nabih cited a shortage of time for such a project.

Price and Wise also alluded to associations with immersive multi-year university field projects and residential programs whose grant funding had changed or ended. Cliff talked of being in association with an immersive residential TC project but only in the role of teaching one required course for it. She underscored that she was not in a position to influence how that particular program was directed and could not speak to its effectiveness. We discussed what Cliff calls "the nice white ladies" in the leadership certification programs who believe "California white" is somehow not as white as Ohio white, but are mistaken, and that just working in urban education legitimizes their "not racist" credibility.

Wise made a distinction between what she called "truly diverse" or multi-cultural field placements and urban only programs which she referred to as "very challenging" and not truly "diverse." Her framing seemed to imply a marginalization status within her own thinking of the overwhelming majority black schools in Chicago. As a university mentor in a decade-long "school transformation" initiative, Wise stated flatly that "nothing really changed." So-called transformation projects, according to Wise, proved to be another failed reform remedy,

Admissions decisions. Morales and Nabih are able to influence acceptance decisions for candidate applicants. Nabih said, "When I'm sitting at the admissions table and interviewing prospective candidates, and I see people who I can immediately flag for how problematic their ideas are going to be… I try to challenge the admission of that student into the program. The pushback is always, it's about our numbers. They're going to become teachers no matter what. Whether I teach them or not, they're going to go to the neighboring institution." Morales finds herself in a similar position when she interviews undergraduates for admittance to her field-intensive junior and senior year seminars. Most often, she opts to keep the students with her and with her institution rather than lose them to neighboring institutions.

As Nabih said, "It's better that they do [coursework] with us, where at least, we'll challenge those ideas and we already know about those dispositions from the onset. I'm like, but I know that they're going to do harm even after I've fed them this meal."

"Not enough." Almost all TEF at one point in the interviews flatly stated that what they and their departments did with TC was simply "not enough" and could not be enough. As Nabih stated, "It still feels like it's buying into a transmission model of education. That we're still buying into this myth that we're going to be able to somehow transmit, and through this transference of knowledge, that they're going to change their ideas and their ideals…" As Wise offered an overview of the problem as follows: "It's evolving. We're evolving. It's too slow, I understand that, but I guess there's a pragmatist, which I think is probably part of white middle class culture that says like, 'I can only move as fast as I can move' and I'm sprinting but I know that's not fast enough. I know we need collective sprinting."

Mentor Teacher and TC Limitations

Morales, who has frequent and in-depth contact with the field placement schools where her TC are placed talked about the racism and limitations of mentors and other teachers in the buildings. "…there are so many teachers that should not be in schools, should not be educating kids, and there's nobody making them leave. It's changing children's lives from the get go… I would be very happy to be the one to tell them to leave. It just makes me mad."

Regarding her TCs Arbor asked herself aloud, "But I will say, it's something that now I'm wondering if that is something that I shouldn't challenge more abruptly. I'm struggling with, 'Am I sort of watering down the issues in order to make it more comfortable for my white students? Or is it okay because they will adopt some of the practices?' Because then we do a lot of work on how to disrupt status issues in your classroom, how to identify them, and how to disrupt them."

Arbor finds herself in an unenviable position of working with STEM TC in the field who are already fully formed science professionals taking on a second career as teachers. She described this population as majority white males in their late 20s or early

30s. They begin their certification process by going straight into urban field experiences to teach full-time with no guidance which Arbor feels is both troubling and problematic. After that experience, they engage in a university coursework trajectory which prioritizes effective K-12 teaching of STEM over more traditional foundations and history of schooling coursework.

She said she has often experienced the phenomenon of one white male student overpowering the discourse of a course for an entire semester: "I've had those experiences as I say with Groupthink. It only takes one loud-mouth, alt-right man to [shut discourse down] forever…I think other people can shift that conversation well. I haven't always been able to do that. And so, that's my worry…I have witnessed where my teaching philosophy has made students just completely shut down. And they're like, 'I'm done. I'm going to do my work, but I'm not really listening to anything she says. I'm going to follow my primary teacher, who is a very traditional teacher, but knows what she's doing, and ignore the rest.'"

Summary of Findings I and Findings II: Constructions and Representations of Whiteness

Participants constructed and represented notions of "whiteness" as fixed phenotypical traits, and as theoretical constructs with historical and political ramifications. In the context of "whiteness," they described teaching responsibilities, approaches with their TCs in the classroom and in the field. They spoke of limitations of support within their departments and challenges in their TC populations. Many saw "whiteness" as a social standing of privilege that implied a duty or "noblesse oblige" or responsibility toward those less privileged. They also cited a responsibility to "mitigate or do no harm" to TCs and students in the field. All stated a responsibility to "shift TC perception." Among their teaching approaches, they cited varying discourses that included discussion of "difference" and identity along a more or less equally distributed spectrum of "isms." A smaller group resisted this discourse and instead underscored "anti-black racism" as an anchor concept along with more unsparing analyses of the operations of white supremacy. All participants spoke of limitations and obstacles to the effectiveness of their work with TC in the context of teaching about whiteness.

Findings III: Whiteness Decentered

The overarching purpose of this study was to consider practical ways "whiteness" might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education. TEF defined "whiteness" in many ways, including phenotype, social construction, social responsibility or forms of anti-blackness. What emerged were areas within narratives that held moments where a degree of the potential harm of "whiteness" as it can be variously defined was mitigated by the communities or individuals most egregiously impacted by the presumptions and policies that stem from a hierarchically arranged, racialized social order.

In one narrative, a TEF was able to conduct research in a community of black women in a midwestern state who saved a neighborhood school from state take-over by hiring an entire support staff of mature community women and men to advise and participate in the workings of the school. In another, a TEF was able to observe and assist in an intervention with a white male TC who had caused offense and harm to a high school student by evoking the phenomenon of "code-switching" (the phenomenon of switching from "home" languages to "school" or normative white languages) in a way that implied to the student that "white" English was in some way superior or a requirement for "acceptable" expression. This same TEF narrated a story in which she was able to provide meaningful support to a talented black TC who had to navigate white or settler-normed university and state accreditation systems in order to be allowed to teach in her own neighborhood.

This findings discussion begins with how two TEF described "whiteness" as a character deficit and a lack of human understanding. This is followed by three stories narrated by TEF that showed "whiteness" in a non-authoritative, supportive role to black-racialized communities and individual projects of survival and agency. The final section displays content from TEF narratives that struck the researcher as profound, "whiteness decentering" TEF research, teaching and modeling of advocacy with TC cohorts.

"Whiteness" Framed as Deficit in Knowledge or Humanity

Jones spoke of how her own "whiteness" made her less constitutionally "caring," more competitive and individualistic than what she observes as a "culture of caring" among her black colleagues and students. She described a scenario where a black colleague called her up after a committee meeting where their white male chairperson turned over chairpersonship after a long period of service. The only black-racialized colleague in the gathering called Jones afterwards expressing horror that not one person had thought to thank the man or acknowledge his years of labor in any way. Jones admitted that this hadn't even crossed her own mind and that she experienced over and over again a lack of concern on her own part as compared with black racialized K-12 students and colleagues.

Williams noted a deficit in the ability to humanize black children and youth among white TCs. She decried the ways formal teacher ed sets up black kids as "attractions" (her word) for white TC to observe, teach or manage when the TC would be better served to make themselves learners in communities for a good period of time, without any presumed authority. TCs are the ones, she contends, with a deficit in the full range of human understanding and empathy, not the children in the schools.

"Whiteness" in Non-authoritative, Supportive Role to Projects of Self-Determination

In the following stories, TEF narrated instances where black-racialized individuals and communities enacted effective forms of agency in direct resistance to "whiteness" or the normed, harmful workings of white-centric scenarios. In the first, a talented Black TC is able to lead and "shine" in spite of obstacles her traditional certification program. The white-racialized TEF in this instance, an adjunct with minimal departmental influence, was able to play a role in helping the student navigate academic meetings with her non-sympathetic white mentor. In the second story, a white TC who causes offense is immediately "called in" to a Black-led restorative justice process in which, not only is the harm addressed and corrected, the TC is ultimately re-embraced an hired full-time at the same school. Although the third story does not involve a TC, I include it here to highlight the role of the white-racialized TEF in that she was not enacting any role of white institutionalized authority at the time of the telling. As an elementary school science content expert, , she was able to participate with a team of black women who employed and leaned upon their neighborhood elders to save a distressed urban elementary school from the violence (Hernandez & Galletta, 2016) of a state closure. She was a witness and contributor rather than an "agent"

Assisting a talented Black-racialized TC in navigating academy. Price told a story of a black woman and an HBCU graduate who was older than Price and who appeared quite skeptical of Price's right or ability to be her mentor. "She didn't sit at our table, and she kept giving me this, 'Who are you?' face like, 'She can't be my coach. I didn't come here for her to be my coach' type of face."

Price labored to provide what she could, such as access to a black woman mentor and to multiple nurturing grassroots organizations with which Price worked. Observing her student teaching, Price described the TC as extremely effective, "like she had wings." The HBCU graduate TC found other experiences with white faculty in the Department to be dispiriting and disorienting. At several junctures, Price says she "helped her find her agency" and was able to suggest ways for the student to approach navigating her certification program. Over time, they developed a mutual, trusting relationship that continued after the mentorship period. "So there were so many instances where I could tell her, 'Okay, this is what I would say in the next meeting. This is maybe the language I would use to go about it.'" Price noted

> …I saw her maneuver through those spaces, and it just was very frustrating to me. If we are a public university in the middle of [city]…We're preparing the "effective urban educator," whatever that means, depending on the professor. Why are we making it harder for someone who is so brilliant and so natural?

Restoring a White-racialized TC to community after harm. Price as a TC mentor was able to observe and assist in an intervention with a white male TC who had caused offense and harm to a Black K-12 student by evoking the phenomenon of "code-switching" (the phenomenon of switching from "home" languages to "school" or normative white languages) in a way that implied to the student that "white" English was in some way superior or a requirement for "acceptable" expression. Price described this

TC as “introverted” and “shy” and someone she had sensed early on would need close supervision.

In the situation at issue, the TC had told a black female student that she would need to speak and write in a certain way in his classroom if she expected to go to college. His tone or delivery implied a superiority or condescension that injured the student. She called her father who was a dean of multiculturalism at the university who then contacted the TEF’s superiors. Because the high school in question was utilizing a well-developed restorative justice model, they invited the TC (and his mentor, my TEF participant) to a circle where the injury was discussed at length and the TC was able to understand how his words and approach had caused harm. He willingly re-learned and adjusted. The TEF provided him with readings and directed him to a number of grassroots direct action groups in the city. This TC embraced the process, read the readings and became deeply involved in the community. He was hired at that same high school and the TEF reported that he is a much loved teacher among the youth activists in the area.

Black-racialized community self-empowerment in reclaiming a school. Arbor conducted research in a Midwest urban school that had earlier been facing the threat of shutdown by the state for ineffectiveness. A black-racialized female leader had taken over administration of the school and made a success of it in a remarkably short period of a few years. Arbor was able to speak with this leader and observe what was making the school work.

> Yeah, so anyway the school…was an all girls school, public school. It was all girls because it was the last sort of ditch effort before the state took over the

> school. And the principal was from Gary, Indiana. And 100% of the girls either identified as black, African American. They all walked from one of four low income housing that surrounded the school. The teachers were all women of color. And the principal did something really smart. So she wanted the community to be welcome and knew that that was the way to success and so she also knew that most of the girls lived with multi-generational families and so she got them all certified to be substitute teachers because you only needed so many college credit[s]. But then every single classroom had what she called matrons, they were called matrons. Because they were mainly women. And there were a few dads and the dads were the playground monitors or the lunch, cafeteria.

The TEF, then a PhD student researcher, worked specifically in the area of science curriculum with the school's youngest students. She described a situation where the Kindergarten teacher was using "home discourse and student discourse" to teach science concepts but then received pushback from the community members in the building [who said] "[We] want you to teach them the right word… [W]e want them to have a science lab, [not] just do science outside. [We] want them to know what a science lab looks like."

The TEF said that the school encouraged her to use their real name in her research because they were so proud of their successes. The school has since moved into a new building and taken on a STEM-oriented curriculum. In this story, the TEF participant was an observer and a participant, not a person afforded any educational authority other than what she could contribute in terms of grade-level science content knowledge.

TEF Decentering Whiteness through Teaching, Research and Advocacy

Chapel said that, quite recently in her practice, she recognized the importance of not only being able to teach students how to critique racialized power structures in school classrooms but also to show them where to look for "transformational" solutions. She has just begun inviting students to join her in specific work she is doing. "I think that one of the things that I'm thinking about that needs to happen more, if I say that Teacher Ed and I need to be training up teachers to be more politically and civically and all that engaged…I've got to put myself out there too, and I have to bring those kids and say 'I'm seeing not only an injustice at my university, but I'm also offering a solution or an idea, and it's not just enough for me to teach you guys in the classroom. I have a model.'" Chapel said she is presently working on a model for K-12 educators to evaluate whether a practice is anti-racist or assimilationist. Chapel, Jones, Price and Arbor all mentioned participating in the summer of 2020 in sessions of The Abolitionist Teacher Network, a newly established teacher education collective founded by Bettina Love.

Price has conducted multiple projects with her TC where community youth are the teachers and her TCs are the students. In one, her TCs were able to spend time in neighborhoods studying and discussing the graffiti art on site with the young people who had created it or who could describe what it meant to them. She said, "With teacher candidates, I have found that a lot of the place-based and community-based practices, when it's connected to the culturally relevant or culturally sustaining pedagogy, that One, it helps them to start to relearn and to rethink what they know about [city], and at the same time we're having a lot of conversations about race, around class, and around gender." She also invites a local historian and documentarian who has been a postal worker in one city zip code for decades to narrate the history of the city from a "black" perspective. She reported that the historian's account "was so affirming for him" that he stayed after class two times "to talk things through more." She reported that those same classes with the historian made several white female TC visibly quite uncomfortable, and they too spoke with Price about their "disagreements" with the man's perspective. Price said his visits always evoked a range of reactions from TC. Regarding the uncomfortable TC she said, "[H]opefully that discomfort is opening up and relearning for them."

Price situates herself as a TEF whose main responsibility is to the communities in which her TCs practice field experiences. "I think my relationships in grassroots community spaces… are that grounding piece for me in who I hold myself accountable and responsible to. I think for me that continues to be my motivation of as a white teacher educator, as a white scholar, how can I continue to introduce teacher candidates to white supremacy, to anti-racism, white settler colonialism, and how we just continue to talk through that."

Nabih, the second most senior scholar participant (Corazon is most senior) in this study spoke of a multi-year community and school immersion program of which she was a part that for her created the best imaginable conditions for TC instruction. They partnered with an organization that helped students see structural racism and understand it theoretically through direct contact with the community at intersections of housing, food and employment scarcity, police brutality and the ravages of lead in paint and drinking water, "and on and on…" Quoted below, Nabih detailed the experiences of the students and the project aims:

> My students kind of interned with them for the entire summer doing urban farming, doing food distribution, attending city hall meetings where the

> organization was lobbying against some of the developers who were trying to get variances passed. So the enactment and the disability of what it means to have a community fight for itself. At a very basic level, we were trying to disrupt the idea that a lot of our students come with of this savior mentality. Because the program from the onset was set to place students in … the largest city in [the state], we would also make sure to frame and situate them in the historical context that looked at the Great Migration and how that affected and moved people into [this particular] city.

Nabih described community partnership experiences with activists and artists, environmentalists and urban planners, as well as multiple witnesses and experts on that city's 1967 uprisings. They emphasized with TC "talking about the importance of using the language of uprising as opposed to a protest or to riots." These "and least 10 other examples" she said she was probably leaving out created what she felt as a powerful learning experience for TC. "[H]ow do you turn away from that," she said. "How are you [TCs] going to deny the reality of oppression?" She added that the STEM aspects of this program, used curriculum to link science and math learning to site-specific realities: "[We] were folding in this new knowledge that they were developing not only to understand the socio political, historical and economic context, but also to situate their curricula and connect their curricular experiences in science and in math, to those kinds of examples."

Summary of Findings III: Decentering Whiteness

The above section described ways TEF narrated phenomena that decenter "whiteness" as normalcy, expertise or earned authority. In the first instance, two TEF described “whiteness” as a character deficit in the area of “caring” and as an absence of human understanding. In three stories narrated by TEF, white-racialized actors’ roles were as participant observers, guests and “servants” to processes that centered black healing, restoration and empowerment. Finally three TEF described teaching scenarios that struck the researcher as having utility to decenter whiteness and that might carry some descriptive power in naming developing “abolitionist” understandings and praxes.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I offer what I characterize as an emergent “abolitionist” interpretation of the findings from narratives of 11 urban Teacher Education Faculty (TEF) drawn from approximately 22 hours of online interviews conducted over the spring and summer of 2020 and possible implications for one particular kind of abolitionist stance or practice. The chapter opens with a revisitation of the conceptual framework and how this framing occasionally produced what I call the “liminal space” in the interview where new, indefinite formulations around decentering whiteness had the potential to emerge.

Conceptual Framework of Study

I approached this study from a position of refusal or “taking a knee” (as did NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick in 2016 to protest police brutality in the U.S.) to the ongoing operationalization of white supremacy in urban teacher education (Gillborn, 2005) and the violence it continues to perpetrate on children (Picower, 2009; Rodriguez, 2012) This study was conceptualized as an abolitionist justice project (Davis, 2003; Love, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2018) which takes to heart a statement by Delice Mugabo, a Canada-based Black feminist scholar, “I cannot work side by side with people who are not able to imagine what joy would look like for me in a new world” (Tuck & Yang, 2018, p. 8). In "taking a knee" to white supremacy in teacher education, we seek practices of abolition, where a refusal to participate in the oppression of children makes room for the joy that was already their birthright.

The overarching purpose of this study was to consider practical ways "whiteness," wherever it signified a potential to commit harms to self or others, might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education. In using the words "harms," I took as an assumption that studies undertaken by researchers in the present U.S. Apartheid schools (Denton & Massey, 1993; Kozol, 2005) perpetuate protocols of an uninterrogated ideology of white supremacy (Emdin, 2016; Picower, 2009) with which scholars should refuse to participate (Grande, 2018) or, where possible, participate in a way that refuses, transgresses and interrupts.

I presented the term "whiteness" loosely, or as a "discursive construct, a sliding signifier," after Stuart Hall (2007, p. 32), who said, "Any attempt to contest racism or to diminish its human and social effects depends on understanding how exactly the system of meaning works, and why the classificatory order it represents has so powerful a hold on the human imagination" (p. 33). Race is a constructed falsehood that requires "whiteness," and whiteness cannot deconstruct itself so long as it believes it is white (Baldwin, 1986; Morrison, 1993). As a social, legal and political category for a human being in the U.S., "whiteness" functions with a tacit understanding of what it is *not*. The belief that there exists a "not white" other fuels political logics of violence, genocide and erasure (DiAngelo, 2017; Harris, 1993). I further conceptualized whiteness as a construct that can be described by non-white racialized observers in terms of its impact on people -- an impact that "white" or white-adjacent actors (myself included) can seem curiously unequipped to recognize. As W. E. B. DuBois (1926) stated, "We who are dark can see America in a way that white Americans cannot" (as cited in Love, 2019, p. 1). Overwhelmingly white-racialized actors in positions of institutional power are often incapable of assisting in meaningfully changing systems and policies that are white supremacist in conception and construction. DiAngelo (2019) explains, "If I cannot tell you what it means to be white, I cannot understand what it means not to be white" (p. 2). DiAngelo speaks here to the individual reader. At the level of policies and systems, "whiteness" absolutely "knows what it means to be white" in historical material advantage as well as in every political, legal, social and cultural ramification that can be attributed to its existence (Harris, 1993).

Grounded in an understanding that there is no biological or genetic reality to the notion of "race" (Graves, 2008), I problematized whiteness in teacher education and approached reflective faculty practitioners in the field in discourse where "whiteness" as an idea was unstable or *sliding,* and there might be potential to disrupt its inevitable outcomes of harm. Utilizing the tools of qualitative narrative study (Clandinin, 2006), I explored what urban Teacher Education faculty (TEF) narrated about their experiences addressing racialized positionalities, relationalities and use of racialized verbal or non-verbal "markers," such as the word "white," "black," "person of color," to describe themselves and teacher candidates (TCs) in their university classrooms and practicums that include urban field experiences. I engaged participants from urban-metro districts around the U.S. in discussions about what "whiteness" means to them in their work with teacher candidates who engage in urban field experiences as a part of their certification processes. I focused in particular on what I call the "contact zone," or contemporary urban learning sites where each person in the room has a different relationship to whiteness and access to institutional and social power. Pratt (1991) refers to contact zones, as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly assymetrical relations of power, such as colonialism...or their aftermaths” (p. 34).

Liminal Space within the Interview

In conducting the interviews, there was some depth of difference regarding identities participants held as chosen or ascribed to them versus the ways I was framing all identities and positionalities as falsely and violently imposed by a system of white supremacy. With participants, I usually went no further than to explain that I defined myself as white-racialized in the context of historical constructions of race. I also told my participants at some point that “I take a knee to all of it,” meaning the entire enterprise of university teacher education, since I saw it as functionally incapable of extracting itself from operationalized white supremacy so long as it kept re-inscribing “whiteness” as real.

Most agreed with this stance whether or not we shared mutual understandings of what we meant by whiteness. It was not possible within a two hour time frame to establish a basis for in-depth co-analysis. Nonetheless, it was in this context that co-construction and meaning-making around whiteness in teacher education could occur and it is in this context where so-called co-deconstruction of whiteness could occur as well, albeit according to different understandings and positionalities vis a vis whiteness. All of us, while holding differing positionalities in relationship to one another and to institutional whiteness or power were still able, nonetheless, to postulate whiteness as a phenomenon and a force for harm.

Exchanges sometimes entered into what I call a “zone of liminality” or moments when, even if constructions of language or conceptualization were as yet not agreed upon or unformed, participants were narrating professional approaches and stories where harmful whiteness had the potential to be mitigated or disrupted.

Discussion of Findings

The research questions focused on the narratives of U.S. teacher education faculty (TEF) who instruct teacher candidates (TCs) in urban field experiences. The study looked at how the phenomenon of whiteness is represented, constructed, or deconstructed in these settings and in the narrative exchange of myself and the participants. In the sections below I provide a discussion of my findings followed by further interpretation, discussion of implications, consideration of limitations and recommendations for further study.

Whiteness Perpetrates Violence

In the introduction and literature review I establish the basis upon which I contend that teacher ed perpetrates ongoing colonial, white supremacist violence, no matter how dedicated and well-intended certain educators may be. Participants all concurred that “whitenesses” perpetrate violence, and all offered examples of hope, correctives, approaches -- none of which were "enough" by their own accounts. All of the white-racialized TEF narrated stories of earlier harm they may have contributed to unknowingly as a result of their own uninformed ideas of who they were and who their students were. This included understanding K-12 classroom celebrations of “heroes and holidays” as a form of culturally responsive pedagogy or “grit” and meritocracy discourses as helpful and non-violent. Love (2019) and many other scholars (Rodriguez, 2012; Sleeter, 2008) the shortcomings of those so-called multi-cultural approaches to pedagogy. Several white-racialized TEF spoke of making use of stories of their own evolutions in understanding their own “whiteness” in guiding majority white, female teacher candidates. My sense throughout the duration of the study was that we all shared understanding that we all would have to labor to mitigate “white” reproductions of harm.

I encountered committed and hard-working academics with a nuanced perspective on how racialization plays out in the contact zones of urban field placements. Many possessed a more sophisticated analysis than I of the historical forces in play in their areas of witness and practice and had many more years of practical experience in urban teacher education courses with field experiences.

Regardless of their racializations or stated positionalities in university teacher education programs, all but the single black-racialized TEF articulated how “anti-blackness” in some form operated in white and “brown” educational spaces. The black-racialized TEF was less explicit about anti-blackness as a concept, but her approaches to practice with majority white female TCs constitute a master study in what it means to navigate anti-blackness while Black in white university classrooms.

It bears mentioning that almost every single white-racialized participant volunteered the information that they had non-white children, spouses or partners. It could well be that *all* had non-white intimates, but it was not a question I posed; it would simply come up in conversation. In addition, most if not all of them described themselves as “outliers” within their own departments in terms of their perceptions and practices guiding TC in field experiences. I include this information here to underscore what turned out to be an unanticipated particularity that might have informed the general responses of participants.

All but one white-racialized TEF represented whiteness as a physical phenotype which defined them socially and that created certain social responsibilities and positionalities that accompanied statements such as “I am white” or “I am Black.” All but one TEF articulated understandings of “whiteness” as an abstract historical and social construction upon which false “sciences” were built that continue to have ramifications in education policy. The one TEF who did not articulate an analysis along these lines spoke several times about her work as being “not political.” She framed “whiteness” almost exclusively as a phenomenon that implied individual bigotry rather than systemic oppression.

“Whiteness” Carries Obligation

Teacher Education Faculty (TEF) often represented “whiteness” in their narratives as a phenomenon that carried an obligation. They addressed their sense of responsibility through multiple approaches that they described as also having many shortcomings. All included the responsibility of creating a climate for “unlearning” racism or “relearning” history for their TCs. All eleven utilized some form of a “discourse of diversity” to deconstruct with TCs their biases and historical orientations to the work of teaching in urban schools, although two of this were explicit in emphasizing anti-Black racism discourse as a central anchor. Discourses of diversity without the anchoring of anti-Blackness weighed “differences” such as ability, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity with equal emphasis. Another responsibility cited by TEF was in instructing non-white international students (or being instructed by them, as one white-racialized TEF pointed out, while recognizing the anti-black sentiment often harbored in international communities "of color." In designing curriculum and approaches, the TEF narrated he phenomenon of "anti-blackness" they had observed as a form of "whiteness" they address in their TC cohorts, even when no or very few white-racialized TCs or Black-racialized K-12 students were present in scenarios they describe.

Several stories emerged in the context of TEF sense of responsibility and approach that represented scenarios in TEF practice where "whiteness," although an indefinite word or "sliding signifier" (Hall, 2007) might have been less harmful in relationship to communities kept vulnerable by generations of white supremacist policies of redlining, segregation, bussing skirmishes, and funding injustice. TEF used their leadership roles in these instances to facilitate a kind of "standing down" of their own institutionally "white" authority. These stories included a white-racialized TEF supporting a process wherein a white teacher candidate she supervised underwent a school-led restorative justice circle to repair an offense he had unconsciously perpetrated on a Black student by suggesting her uses of language were inferior. In another instance, this same white-racialized TEF was able to earn the trust of and help a talented Black teacher candidate navigate a gambit of whiteness in their teacher ed department in the form of unsympathetic mentors and onerous processes that had little to do with getting a bright, motivated Black teacher into the classrooms she seemed born to serve.

Although no participant explicitly concurred with my focus on the strategic utility of refusing white supremacist categories in self-referencing, there were many instances where conversations entered what I call an area of liminality. I define an "area of liminality" as an exploratory space at the borders of two people's best understandings of a concept and where they can co-create new ways of speaking about a phenomenon where language may not yet exist. This is an area where I focus a portion of my interpretation of the contents of interviews.

Interpretation of Findings

Winant (1997) suggests a “new abolitionist racial project” as including a repudiation of white identity and white privilege and an endeavor that “invites us to contemplate the emptiness, indeed vacuity, of the white category” (p. 47). Apprehending that vacuity of meaning created methodological tension between notions of shared meaning-making in narrative research and contradictory ways of knowing and being in relationship with my participants.

Any interpretation I offer holds as a premise that “whiteness” is an unstable concept and problematic, even in TEF’s racialized referrals to themselves, particularly as “white.” Roediger (1994) stated, “It is not merely whiteness that is oppressive and false; it is that whiteness is *nothing but* oppressive and false…It is the empty and terrifying attempt to build an identity based on what one isn’t and on whom one can hold back” (p. 13). This conceptual approach on my part opens the door wide for contestation in my execution of and interpretations of conversations. My stance of “refusing” what I mean by whiteness, whether or not participants subscribed to or concurred with it, created a precondition that produced a dialogic tension wherever participants used the word “white” to signify something fixed. As I stated earlier, all but one white-racialized TEF represented whiteness as a physical phenotype which defined them socially, as in “I am white,” even when pressed.

Several participants did directly contest my approach. Two suggested that I myself was operating out of presumption and white privilege if I believed I could choose to refuse whiteness. A third stated flatly that my analysis, because it was laser-focused on "race" was not intersectional and therefore gave short shrift to experiences of non-white people who inhabit a broad continuum of "passing" or not passing as Black or white, for example. In this exchange, in retrospect, it appears to me that there was a disjuncture between the participant's concern with individual "experiences of racialization" and my focus in that moment on the legal construction of the "one drop rule" a policy that claimed that "one drop" of "black" blood consigned a person to "not-white" permanent blackness (Davis, 1991).

Since the overarching purpose of this study was to consider practical ways "whiteness" might be deconstructed and decentered in urban teacher education I must restate here that participants defined "whiteness" in many ways, including phenotype, social construction, social responsibility or forms of anti-blackness. What emerged were areas within narratives that held moments where a degree of the potential harm of "whiteness" as it can be variously defined was mitigated by the communities or individuals most egregiously impacted by the presumptions and policies that stem from a hierarchically arranged, racialized social order.

I conceived of asking colleagues how they were dealing with and speaking about "race" with their overwhelmingly "white" student teacher candidates who would be entering overwhelmingly Black and Brown classrooms as an abolitionist project aimed at destabilizing whiteness. This, I reasoned, might be one pathway toward mitigating some of its violences. Where might a discussion of our racialized self-markers give us room to converse more “humanly” about the malignant normality of institutionalized “raced” assumptions and practices, as well as our own relationships to each other and to children? Non-white-racialized TEF and TC, a miniscule minority in the profession and student demographics as a whole, provide powerful understandings of the ramifications of black and white racialization in TC and K-12 contact zones.

The study did not presume white-racialized TEF engaging only white-racialized TC, but left room for a discussion of any racialized positionalities or interactions including those complicated by class and other considerations of culture. TEF provided powerful understandings of the ramifications of black and white racialization in TC and K-12 contact zones, even where TC or K-12 populations were majority Hispanic, immigrant or otherwise categorizable as non-white or non-Black.

Tensions notwithstanding, interview exchanges always moved fairly seamlessly from mutual recognitions of the implicit harms of whiteness to narratives of practices that could be said to de-center or mitigate the harm of whiteness. These included in several narratives, the hoped-for but unmeasured efficacy of some well-staffed, well-funded decade-long projects that allowed TEF and TC to immerse themselves in the historical and political predicaments of communities where they would undertake classroom field experiences. TEF faculty narrated stories where they had to navigate and participate in fraught racialized situations with their teacher candidates in the context of K-12 school field placement and within university departments that were not necessarily supportive of critical approaches to education. All indicated that even the best approaches of which they had been a part were “not enough” or did not have the utility to dislodge white supremacy from the overall project of teacher education. All described themselves more or less as outlier practitioners with a handful of allies in the contexts of their departments and universities. All described themselves as changing, in transition and open to change when it came to becoming more anti-racist in their syllabi and teaching approaches. At least five TEF mentioned "abolition" as a part of a practice into which they were growing. Several had already attended sessions of the Abolitionist Teacher Network founded by Bettina Love and colleagues.

Implications for Teacher Education

The fact that all the participants more or less readily accepted and could work with a framing of "whiteness" being a phenomenon rather than a fixed category assures me that problematizing whiteness in teacher education is a form of inquiry that could be productively pursued. The notion of verbally and conceptually decoupling ourselves as teacher ed faculty from white supremacist categories offers possibilities as varied as any scholar's exploration of such pathways in the context of their instruction and guidance of teacher candidates.

Several TEF alluded to lessons about eugenics or DNA ancestry information they had utilized on and off in courses through the years, but they had not specifically tied those lessons to a practical interrogation of the category of whiteness or racialization itself. More carefully crafted and executed, lessons like these in foundations or history of education courses could potentially carry the instructive power to explicitly delineate how one becomes and remains "white" for centuries and what that might mean in particular to a white-racialized teacher (of any skin color) in authority over Black and Brown kids in city classrooms all these centuries later.

Discourses of diversity and of "white privilege" are becoming more mainstream fare in teacher education, but, absent an anchoring understanding of forms of "whiteness" that constitute anti-Blackness, an admission of "privilege" and the pieties of "responsibility" lack the instrumental utility to dismantle the "whiteness" that white supremacy requires to continue to exist systemically

Tawana Petty, long-time Detroit scholar and organizer points out, white-racialized people having to continually confess "privilege" and being tied to a history of violence is dehumanizing. She asks "Why…would we encourage well-meaning white people who hope to grasp the magnitude of slavery and the current system of white supremacy, to identify their connection to that violent history and current brutality as a privilege? Why are we framing it as a perk to benefit from [any] ongoing displacement and marginalization in this country? I would much rather hear co-liberators say, 'I recognize my detriment. I am actively struggling against white supremacy. Here is how...'" (p. 8). She says that if co-liberators can see their connection to the legacy of slavery, lynching, redlining, and other forms of racial violence "as a detriment to their humanity, rather than a privilege to their existence," it could reduce and begin to dislodge the embedded, largely unacknowledged social habit of viewing "blackness" and "whiteness" in an over/under kind of hierarchy in human interactions (p. 8).

Martin Luther King, Jr., said "…an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring" (as cited in Petty, 2018, p. 9) As abolitionist educators, we might direct our efforts as Mariame Kaba (2020), prison abolitionist, suggests, "[A]bolition is a positive project that focuses, in part, on building a society where it is possible to address harm without relying on structural forms of oppression or the violent systems that increase it" (p. 1).

University teacher education itself, in order to remain accredited and funded, must demonstrate compliance with state policies carrying long legacies of anti-Black exclusions and violences. The excluding and punitive ramifications of these policies land hardest on U.S. children most vulnerable-ized by white supremacy. As Jonathon Kozol (2005) said, “There is something deeply hypocritical in a society that holds an inner-city child only eight years old "accountable" for her performance on a [state] high-stakes standardized exam but does not hold the high officials of our government accountable for robbing her of what they gave their own kids six or seven years before” (pp. 53-54).

As I have indicated numerous times throughout this document, I don’t believe teacher education practitioners can by any means extricate themselves from this machinery so long as they work within state-crafted systems. However, they *can* study and practice forms of humanity that refuse, at every possible juncture, to oppress children (Love, 2019b). Authentic caring then, in the context of schooling, will continue to require principled resistance to the many ways whiteness can be observed to operationalize itself in the form of harm.

A number of faculty participants mentioned using an audit tool to test for the depth of diversity and representation in their syllabi. Another practice that has gained traction among some scholars on social media in recent years is the admonishment to #CiteBlackWomen. While I would expect to see trends like these become a more prominent feature of teacher education curricula and discourse, absent the rigorous dismantlings of white supremacist violence long called for in those literatures, one will only have added interesting “content.” As an Ontario Vice-Principal, Melissa Wilson (@Drawn2Intellect) states on Twitter, “When educators omit [interrogations of] white supremacy from their lessons, they are ensuring that the next generation…are ill-equipped to discuss race and racism. This is how educators are complicit in strengthening and re-creating white supremacy” (used with permission).

Settler- colonial educators in the U.S. (Adams, 1993) have long been at work in the shadow of the child-killing catapult referenced my opening chapter. Whether professional educators labor as architects of the catapult or as humble villagers interested in offering assistance to sorely impacted children, the destruction to children and communities has not abated. Reform was never an option.

Limitations

Because my sample was small, the study can only provide a small glimpse at what conversations that problematize “whiteness” in urban teacher education can evoke. Further, the conversations I conducted were necessarily circumscribed and perhaps limited by aspects of my approach and personality.

The Role of Social Unrest in the U.S. in the Summer of 2020

Also included in a discussion of limitations must be an acknowledgment of the period in which the interviews occurred. The summer of 2020 marked advancing months of the COVID-19 pandemic with the death toll in the U.S. passing the 100,000 mark and a U.S. president that underplayed the seriousness of the virus. It was also marked with sustained mass uprisings all over the U.S. protesting the police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Most if not all U.S. businesses and educational institutions were profoundly affected by both COVID-19 and by the uprisings and a national call for a "racial reckoning." I believe this enhanced my ability to find participants for the study who were willing to examine "whiteness" with me on the terms of the study. Whether or not they continued to think the study "important" after two hours of conversation with me is an unknown, but the events of the summer very likely played a role in delivering faculty with a willingness to participate in the study. Interest and relevance of this study might therefore, for some, be a matter of fleeting sentiment. However, narratives on the whole do suggest that participants have been engaged in many forms of struggle to de-center whiteness, whether or not they'd call it by that name.

Researcher as Person Navigating Trauma

I return to a discussion of researcher subjectivity in order to offer a more expansive view of what might be considered a strength, a limitation, or a combination of both. For me, this study has been what we call in trauma recovery circles "a return to the scene of the crime," in this case for me, to the crime of historical white supremacy. In a situation in Cape Town, South Africa in 2014, I witnessed first-hand how "whiteness," while believing itself to be reasonable, practical and liberal, wouldn't hesitate to allow my son to die during a medical emergency. As such, interchanges with people who "believe themselves to be white" (Baldwin, 1984) for me can be excruciating. They hit me physically in the form of an adrenalized shock to my nervous system from which I must recover. Therefore, for over four years, it has been under almost crushing emotional duress that I have navigated academic coursework and collegial relationships. Nearly every engagement with the writing and reworking of this study and dissertation has required persistent labor in what for me are nearly unbearable states of emotional pain. In undergoing an in-depth two year course of treatment for Complex PTSD, I learned how to navigate the socially disorienting effects of a reaction to a triggering interchange without discounting what I understand to be a valid "re-reaction" to sources of harm. In actuality, this re-reaction offered insights that informed my conceptual framework and analysis. I recognize that this could also be categorized as a form of subjectivity and a limitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Working groups where "whitenesses" or operationalizations of white supremacy are communally identified for purposes of deconstructing and decentering white inhumanities at intersections of harm could be instrumental in developing instruments for further exploration. These kinds of explorations would require cohorts of people who can readily acknowledge positioning within white supremacist hierarchical constructs and race as a sliding signifier as well as the historical trajectory of hypodescent and the "one drop rule" in its many political and social ramifications. They would have to be able to be nimble and flexible around assumptions, particularly about what constitutes whiteness and blackness. The Combahee Collective comes to mind as a group of serious activist inquirers who lived and loved together in order to theorize liberated Black, queer feminisms (Taylor, 2017). I would envision a group of educators, perhaps a working, national cohort interested in deconstructing whitenesses to operate in a similar spirit. It could constitute a think tank of sorts wherein deconstructing the ramifications of historical whiteness as a false category was a a specific abolitionist aim.

An Abolitionist Approach

"I urge you to be teachers so that you can join with children as the co-collaborators in a plot to build a little place of ecstasy and poetry and gentle joy"
— Jonathan Kozol

The study results suggest that the abolitionist educator can work with an array of options, many which have not even been conceived of yet. Angela Davis creates a roomy foundation for multiple kinds of white-supremacy disrupting work: "…[R]ather than try to imagine one single alternative to the existing system…we might envision an array of alternatives that will require radical transformations of many aspects of our society" (p. 107).

In a 2019 keynote address to urban faculty educators at Cleveland State University, Bettina Love admonished those present not to wait for her to establish her as-yet unlaunched Abolitionist Teacher Network to become active abolitionists. Instead she encouraged us all to seek and develop our own abolitionist pathways. She said that wherever we committed ourselves in the labor, we would be finding ourselves in the lead in an uncharted territory.

Love (2019) insists that abolitionist teaching this requires us to "demand the impossible" and "employ a radical imagination focused on intersectional justice" (p. 12). An abolitionist approach further requires that we tell the truth and "recognize America and its schools as spaces of…White supremacy…which functions to terrorize students of color" (p. 13). Our first and foremost obligation to these students, she says, is to refuse to oppress.

Policy specialists would do well to re-examine every racialized conceptualization in education law and trace its legal antecedents all the way back to 3/5s of a person or "not a person." It could be that an extraction of every white supremacist assumption would cause the entire educational enterprise as it presently constitutes itself to collapse. Or, it could reveal more precisely in what ways humans are specifically responsible historically for the present plight of oppressed children in their schools.

There is not a website in any urban school or teacher education in the country that does not claim unstinting dedication to students and a mission of excellence in nurturing and serving every child. An abolitionist educator becomes free to stop laboring in service of a reformist lie and apply their energies instead to the actual project of supporting children and communities who are born into systems of oppression but who are not inherently unfree. In this enterprise, a more deeply parsed "whiteness" would have to relinquish authority in order to participate meaningfully in Freirean exchanges of co-teaching and co-liberation.

Conclusion

The much-heralded "racial reckoning" that many claim is occurring in 2020 can be seen as a misnomer if we eliminate the construct of race from the phrase. From this vantage point we can define the endeavor more accurately as a *human* and historical reckoning, perhaps a meaningful one. We have an opportunity to understand more deeply what we believe constitutes our own humanity, particularly those of us with a white-racialized historical legacy who inhabit positions of educational authority over, not the most vulnerable, but the most vulnerable-*ized* by "us" in our historically acquired positions of "superiority." This seeming ascendancy is undergirded with long legacies of benefiting from inherited wealth extracted through forced labor and stealing of lands. This is of course one meaning of the term “white privilege.” However, white-racialized people must press further on the dehumanization of their category by “digging deeper into the impact racism has had on their own humanity (Petty, 2019, p. 4) The findings of this study offer a small contribution to this endeavor by providing a window into narratives around “whiteness” that a small national sample of U.S. teacher education faculty engaged in when considering their work with teacher candidates who undertake field experiences in urban K-12 schools as a part of coursework.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NARRATIVE INQUIRY STUDY

Main Research Question:

In a study of the narratives of national U.S. teacher education faculty (TEF) who instruct teacher candidates (TCs) in urban field experiences, how is the phenomenon of whiteness represented, constructed, or deconstructed?

Interview questions:

1. Could you talk to me about your teacher candidates, your field sites and what it's like to do this work?
2. How do you personally use "race" and racial categorizations in lectures when referring to yourself and others?
    a. What specific adjectives or descriptors do you use?
    b. How do you inflect your voice, facial or body expressions in different instances? (For example, lately I make air quotes with my fingers almost every time I use the word "white" or "race" in Foundations of Education Lectures. In the past, I've delivered the words like "white," "black" "African American" and "race" with no inflection, in an objective tone of voice. I sometimes use a mocking or ironic tone referring myself or others as "white.")

   c. How do you mark or identify yourself racially, if at all, (for example "white," "black," "person of color") and how did you arrive at this?
   d. How has it changed over time, if at all?
   e. What has been your reasoning around your usages?
3. As part of coursework and/or fieldwork, how do you discuss race in the U.S. as a social and historical construct, if at all?
   a. If you do engage the topic, can you give specific examples of how you do so with readings, lectures and/or discussions in class?
   b. Can you give specific examples of how you engage the topic, if at all, in field learning sites?
4. What are some scenarios you've had in classwork and fieldwork where you've made decisions, acted upon and/or intervened based on what you saw as potentially problematic, harmful or alienating behavior on the part of your TCs?
   a. What are ways in which your TCs and students in the field have assisted you in making adjustments to what you now might see as potentially problematic, harmful or alienating in your own orientations to the work?
   b. How have you thought about, presented and or acted upon your own racialized, gendered, classed, ability leveled and/or sexually oriented social positioning in the present U.S. social order in relationship to your TCs and students in the field?
5. Can you describe words, gestures and silences have you observed TCs using to signify racialization or racialized "differences"?

    a. How do you interpret these words, gestures and silences, particularly in their meanings related to racialized differences?
    b. When you say “people who look like me,” what do you mean?
    c. When you run your forefinger over the top of your hand, are you referring to your skin tone?
    d. When you widen your eyes, raise your eyebrows and nod at me, is there an unspoken meaning I could take from that?
6. What, if anything, do you believe is important for TC’s to grasp on the subject of race or racialization?
    a. What, in retrospect, if anything, might your TCs and/or students in the field have liked for you to have grasped on the subject of student/teacher relationships in light of race or racialization?
7. What does the term “whiteness” mean to you, if anything, or if you had to give “whiteness” a definition, how would you define it?
8. Are there other topics or stories you’d like to add?

Research Sub-Question 1

In what ways do Teacher Ed Faculty narrate how they have conceived of and named the racialized markers of themselves, their Teacher Candidates and students with whom they interact in educational learning sites?

Interview Questions: 2, 2a,2b,2c,2d,2e

Research Sub-question 2

In what ways do TEF narrate acting upon racialized identities and positionalities of themselves, their TCs, and the students with whom they and their TCs interact?

Interview Questions: 3, 3a, 3b; 4, 4a, 4b

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Cleveland State University
engagedlearning
College of Education and Human Services
Department of Curriculum and Foundations

Informed Consent Letter

My name is Auburn Sheaffer and I am a student in The Urban Education Ph.D. program at Cleveland State University. I am working with Dr. Catherine Hansman and Dr. Galletta, who are members of the College of Education and Human Services faculty and the supervisors for this research project.

What the study is about: This study looks at how Teacher Education faculty members think and talk about the idea of Whiteness with teacher candidates, if at all. We are interested in how you approach the subject.

What participants would be asked to do: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview of about 60 minutes. You will also be asked if I can observe a class of your choosing and review the syllabus and materials related to the course. You will also be asked to participate in a one-hour follow-up interview as well. You will be asked if it's all right to digitally audio record the interviews. I will use a micro-cassette as a backup. I will provide you with transcriptions of your first interview. I will also provide you with transcripts of the second interview if want them. You can review the transcripts and make any changes you see fit.

Participation is voluntary: If you agree to participate, you may end an interview at any time. You may choose not to answer a question, if you don't want to respond. If you're willing to be audio recorded, you may turn off the digital recorder at any point. The digital recorder belongs to me. Only I have access to the recorder. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any point in time with no consequences.

Confidentiality: Your response to the questions will be kept confidential. It will be transcribed by me. The interview transcript and notes from observation will be given a code number. I will keep the master list of names and code numbers on my password protected computer, and Dr. Galletta will keep the same master list in a locked storage file in her office, Julka Hall, room 378. Only Dr. Galletta, Dr. Hansman, and I will see the coded transcripts and notes from the observation. This is to ensure your confidentiality. Parts of the interview, observation, and related documents may be included in a final report, or in related reports during and after the study. It is not known at this time whether a further study will be conducted. Your name and other identifying information will not be attached to the interview transcripts, observation notes, or related documents on any later reports. (see next page)

Risks of participating: One risk of participating in this study involves confidentiality. To address this risk, reports on the research will not include identifying information. Reports will use pseudonyms for the participants and your college/university. Also, to lessen the risk that confidentiality would be breached, consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Galletta's office. Interview transcripts and the digital audio recording files will not include your name. They will be maintained on a password protected USB in Dr. Galletta's office and on my password protected computer for a minimum of three years. There remains a risk of confidentiality due to our email correspondence. This occurs when you email back to me about your interest in participating in the study. It also occurs with my email to you that includes attached transcripts.

Benefits of participating: There are no direct benefits to participating in the study. An indirect benefit may be that you reflect on your own experience. It may lead to a deepening of your own understanding of this experience. Also, you will be adding to the research. This will help others interested in this topic.

If you have questions: If you have any questions regarding this project and/or would like to receive the final report, please contact me at Auburn Sheaffer at 330-634-4759 or via email at auburnsandstrom@gmail.com or Dr. Anne Galletta at 216-687-4581 or via email at a.galletta@csuohio.edu or Dr. Hansman at (216) 523-7134, or via email at c.hansman@csuohio.edu

Please read and sign one of the copies of this consent form and keep the other one for your records.

Thank you for your contribution to this research and for your cooperation and support. Signing below indicates you are 18 years or older and that you agree to participate.

I understand that if I have any questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630.

I have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate.

Signature: ____

Name: ____ (Please Print)

Date: ____

APPENDIX C

FACULTY LETTER

April 9, 2020

Dear Teacher Education Faculty colleague,

As part of my dissertation research, I am reaching out to Teacher Education faculty who work with teacher candidates in inner-ring metropolitan schools field placements.

I'm interested in understanding how Teacher Education faculty members think and talk about the idea of "whiteness" with teacher candidates, if at all. I'm also interested in how that has changed over time, if at all. I'm interested in challenges you face, if any, in your thinking and practice around the topic.

My study would involve a one hour interview and a follow up interview. Interviews will take place by Zoom or by phone (or by another mutually acceptable conferencing medium). Should COVID-19 stay-at-home requirements be lifted, the interviews may be in person.

I will provide you with transcriptions of your first interview. I will also provide you with transcripts of the second interview if you want them. I'll ask if you would be willing to bring an artifact to the interview, perhaps a syllabus, course activity handout, or some material related to the course. You can review the transcripts and make any changes you see fit.

Please let me know if you're willing to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary. There are no direct benefits associated with this study. An indirect benefit is that the study will provide a better understanding of the experience of teacher educators in preparing teacher candidates to teach in an urban setting.

Sincerely,

Auburn Sheaffer

PhD Candidate, Urban Education Policy

Cleveland State University

sheafferCSUstudy@gmail.com

or text 330.634.4759