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Learning To Live: Urban Black Male Youth, Curriculum Protest and Transformative Citizenship

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LEARNING TO LIVE: URBAN BLACK MALE YOUTH, CURRICULUM PROTEST

AND TRANSFORMATIVE CITIZENSHIP

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by

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We approve the dissertation of Colette Thelemaque-Collier.

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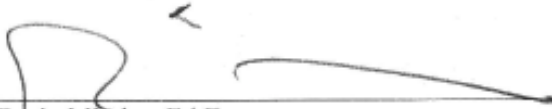
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Abstract

Social justice curriculum argues that preparing students for life should involve a process of dialogue and schooling as a place of power disruption versus an approach built on social and political neutrality. This study examined the experiences and perceptions of urban Black male youth who participate in social justice curriculum. Through narrative inquiry, I used the concepts of Black "curricular protest" (Watkins, 2005) and concenticization (Freire, 1993) to understand how urban Black male youth who engage in curriculum as critique come to understand their own "transformative citizenship development" (Banks, 2008). Across three interviews, participants shared their experiences to inform more deeply what occurs in the process of learning to become a "transformative citizen." The study concluded that participating and learning such a curriculum void of action left the participants informed but with a feeling of frustration and a sense of hopelessness. Implications revealed that for social justice curricula within urban communities to be intentionally action oriented, a stronger connection between school and community is needed and issues should be selected by the constituents themselves.

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Chapter I: Introduction—Learning to Live

Many years ago, while working in a community on the west side of Chicago, I noticed five young brothers, who I perceived to be of high school age, standing in front of a convenience store. They were less than five blocks away from the neighborhood high school in the early hours of a school day. After one of the young men greeted me, I responded by asking, "Why are you out here instead of inside the school building?" He looked first at his friends and chuckled before telling me, "What goes on in there don't mean nothing to me. They ain't talking 'bout what's going on with me!"

"It's boring," another declared while the others nodded their heads in agreement. I naively thought I could take at least one of the young men with me to the "boring" school if I just addressed their concerns. I continued to pry and asked, "Well, what's going on out here that you can't talk about in there?" With a condescending chuckle and turn of his head, he looked at me as if to question the seriousness of my inquiry. He replied, "Everything—money, jobs, making it! I'm out here learning how to live—and ain't nobody talking 'bout that in school!"

At that time, I was not a researcher; I was a concerned community member, not just by geographical proximity but cultural affinity as well. Encountering these young men was not a random occurrence. For me, they are my "brothers" or "sons," youths I meet on a daily basis in schools and the community. They are visible on street corners in our urban communities, overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and fill up city and county morgues throughout the country. They have "checked out" of schooling and general society, a painful illustration of society's failure that weighs on me.

The young man's comment—"learning how to live"—became my context for understanding this prevailing phenomenon of urban Black male youth's disconnect with society. Although I was not able to clarify if the young brother's use of "learning how to live" was about financial stability (since these young men were on a corner openly selling drugs) or was a broader statement about being able to "authentically" participate in the world. By authentic, I mean be a valued member of society who understands his access and whose agency is the goal of our educative system. As I continued to engage more young brothers over time, I have come to understand their social and academic absence as a form of resistance. Their rejection of being forced to attend schools that are run like prisons, controlling and punitive in nature, curriculum that doesn't keep their interest, and a society that invests more money in their incarceration then their development. They have helped me understand that authentic living is about their voice, equity, and opportunity to thrive and contribute to their communities, cities, and the world.

These young men represent dreams deferred: Individuals who were once filled with hopefulness of a bright future that has been diminished by underperforming schools and oppressed communities abandoned by government. Fine and Ruglis (2008) asserted that urban education in America creates a culture of dispossession due to school policies, procedures, and curriculum. Glaring statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics showed that in 2008 an estimated 4,777 of every 100,000 Black males are held in federal or state prison or a local jail (West & Sabol, 2009). In contrast, for every 100,000 White men, only 727 are estimated to be incarcerated (West & Sabol, 2009). In a report on the social and economic effects of dropping out of high school, the Center for Labor and Market Studies (2009) found that 23 of every 100 Black male dropouts between the ages of 16 and 24 were in a jail, prison, or juvenile justice institution on any day in America. Of the Black males who graduate from high

school, only 8 percent also graduate from college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Statistics show

that Black men who graduate from high school have two times the unemployment rate of their

White male counterparts (Center for Labor and Market Studies, 2009). These grim statistics

point to our society's negligence, which results in a sentence of social death for urban Black

males: They fail to thrive socially (Patterson, 1982).

Giroux (2011) stated that "in the case of minority youth they have not just been excluded

from the 'American Dream' but they have become utterly redundant and disposable" (p. 7). He

went on to argue that we "re-imagine what liberty, equality, and freedom might mean as truly

democratic values and practices" (Giroux, 2011, pp. 15-16). Practices and values that result in

the life and death of human beings by a permanent state of class and racial exclusion lead to

"nullism" (Giroux, 2011). This cycle is pervasive for urban Black male youth who come from

communities with high incidences of violence, unemployment ,and poverty. Society's response

to their dilemma results in stricter laws, schools that resemble prisons, and fewer community

resources. I contend that urban Black male youth's reaction to such conditions is a form of

protest—a protest against the educational system's failure and, more broadly, society's failure to

follow through on its promise to provide a curriculum that actually prepares these young men to

live.

As children grow up in a given society, they are exposed to numerous and at times

conflicting messages about why they should learn or attend school and what is worth learning

(Goodman, 1992). The notion of schooling as the pathway to success is a contested philosophy at

best (Apple, 2006; Giroux, 1981; Oakes, Wells, Jones, & Datnow, 1997; Saltman, 2000). Both

nationally and globally, it is an inarguable fact that schools are the recognized institution charged

with preparing individuals for citizenship.[1] The attempt to re-engage and academically prepare our most vulnerable students often is complicated by hegemonic practices that are intertwined in "outcome-based" approaches, which limit or ignore the importance of student experience, culture, race, and class.

I often reflect on stories shared with me by young brothers regarding their absence from school or willingness to participate in alternative modes of earning money during my 20 years of community and professional work. These stories suggest that their way of living was not always a first choice but was more a method of survival. Preparing students for life should involve a process of dialogue, and schooling should be a place of power disruption instead of social and political neutrality, which often leaves students feeling disconnected. The complexity of youth development within academic settings needs a more ecological examination of curriculum's ability to develop young activists by way of nurturing the social, political, cultural, and civic self (Banks, 2008). If we are to address the cultural disconnect students experience between their world and school culture, curriculum must result in agency building so that students begin to experience curriculum in its most authentic sense (Delpit, 2003).

I began to wrestle with the role curriculum plays in the process of "living." More directly, I wanted to understand how we have come to define some individuals as those who are prepared to live and others, as stated by Patterson (1982), who are socially determined to die. My exploration would take me on the journey of not only this degree program in curriculum studies but also a very personal examination of my own ideologies. What theories have I myself subscribed to that have conveyed messages to my young brothers of being silent versus heard, obedient in lieu of civilly disobedient? Have I taught them assimilation instead of individuation?

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[1] Citizenship is defined in most dictionaries as the status of a citizen with rights and duties. For the purposes of this research, citizenship is defined more broadly to include *how* citizens are afforded opportunities that result in the development of human agency. See Chapter II for further discussion.

As someone who works and lives in an urban community, I personally have experienced what I term a "mismatch" of school goals and educational reality. I have experienced firsthand schools and community organizations that preserve archaic philosophies about success and design ill-suited curriculum, which foster disengaged, disinterested, and non-committal youth. On any given day, one can hear teachers, administrators, case managers, and counselors alike reminding students of the importance and purpose of education. They stress the need for students to be committed to learning in order to be "successful" in school and have a chance at being a "productive citizen." However, these professionals emphasize their approaches without considering what terms like "successful" and "productive" or "citizenship" really mean. Often, they implicitly teach obedience (Watkins, 2001). When we as teachers, administrators, and people in positions of power teach young people that citizenship is about obedience, what are we really communicating to our most vulnerable generation?

The Need for Culturally and Socially Relevant Curriculum

During adolescence, the academic self of urban Black male youth tends to develop simultaneously alongside their social and racial sense of self due to the distorted views of Black males within the curriculum and media (Hilliard, 1992; Noguera, 1995). While urban Black male youth are attempting to construct their own sense of self, they often battle social depictions of themselves in popular media and society as lacking intelligence and being violent human beings (Watkins, 2005; Webster, 1974). These depictions are supported by dominant ideology that informs curriculum and schooling practices. Conversely, Black males' White counterparts reside in communities where their textbooks and schooling experiences are consistent with their lived experience. These White students do not suffer from contradictory identity development within

schools and are more likely to see themselves as successful and education as a reward for those who work hard (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Gullen & Leff, 2011).

For young Black male students who have limited opportunities to see themselves within their curriculum or engage in a dialogue about disconnections between the "American Dream" and the realities of their community, curriculum becomes part of a façade. If students are to be participants and co-constructors of their own knowledge, there must be an agreed-upon entrance into such a dialogue that current standard curriculum does not afford. Regardless of race, culture, gender, or differences in youth, youth development researchers agree that the healthy development of youth involves breaking from the adoption of truth and moving towards the questioning of assumed truths (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Morrell, 2002; Yang, 2009).

However, this process of teaching to question or for social critique cannot be undertaken lightly. Students must see the cultural and social relevancy of their education curriculum in order for teachers to earn their interest and commitment. Individuals must be "enabled men to discuss courageously the problems of their context—and to intervene in that context" (Freire, 2007, p. 30). This calls for curricularists, teachers, and community organizers to work alongside our students and co-construct the process of liberation.

Curriculum must be situated in such a way that urban Black males are taught to uncover these acts of injustice to increase their human agency while allowing education to operate as a transformative power. Goodman (1992) stated,

> Schools should be sites where students are invited to engage in the struggle against any premature closure of the democratic imaginary, where institutional, governmental or popular limits to the meaning of freedom, dignity and social justice are put into effect. (p. xiii)

As such, our thoughtful praxis, examination, and re-examination of our process is called upon to teach freedom and increase our students' human agency.

Protest and Praxis: A *Real* Reconstructionist Approach

These issues of urban Black male youth's lack of connection to curriculum and societies' failure to re-engage them in the educational process are not new. What has been missing from this argument is research that allows the voices our urban Black male youth to inform how a curricular process does or does not assist the development of their human agency. If we are truly concerned about supporting our young men as they reposition themselves in society, such an investigation cannot be conducted in a traditional school. This approach must be conducted in social justice schools and allow those participating in the curriculum to speak so that we avoid mistakes made by a seminal curricular theorist, whose social reconstructionist ideology supported curriculum that restricted Blacks' position in society to that of second-class citizens.

This research aims to understand the experiences of a group of urban Black male youth who participated in curriculum as critique and the process of becoming a transformative citizen. It is my hope that the voices of the young men of Meigs[2] begin to contribute to the important scholarship on preparing Black men for authentic citizenship and the concept of protest as a curricular medium. In order to offer a counter-narrative to current pedagogical movements that result in deliberate occurrences of curricular injustice, this research seeks to understand the perceptions of urban Black male youth who participate in curriculum as protest and understand the process of learning to be a transformative citizen.

I wanted the voices of our underrepresented urban Black male youth to contribute to the important scholarship on how students make sense of their experience with curriculum and, more

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[2] Meigs is a pseudonym for the community where the participants reside. Pseudonyms are used throughout for all individuals and locations in this study.

importantly, how they question notions of power and its effects on structural inequity. The following questions guided my research:

1. How does participation with curriculum, as a form of social critique, develop the social, political, civic, and cultural dimensions of urban Black male youth?

   a. How do urban Black male youth who participate in curriculum as a form of social critique define citizenship?

   b. How does their understanding of citizenship assist them in mediating their lived experiences within the community?

Using a narrative inquiry approach, I engaged seven young men in interviews about their lives and their perspectives on participating in protest as a curricular medium.

Dissertation Overview

Chapter II is a literature review centered on the historical analysis of democracy and citizenship. I cast a net widely and analyze how varying concepts of democracy promoted oppressive types of Black male citizenship within education. In addition, I discuss how Black curricularists challenged these static notions of citizenship and charted their own course of transformative education and protest.

Chapter III situates Black curricular protest, transformative citizenship, and praxis as theoretical lenses that I used to uncover how education can operate in a social reconstructionist frame. I also present my research design in Chapter III.

Chapter IV introduces the young men of Meigs and their thoughts on community experiences, social justice curriculum, relationship with teachers, notion of curriculum in action, and social critique. Chapter V builds on these five themes to present the findings and analysis of curriculum as protest.

In Chapter VI, I revisit this concept of "becoming" a transformative citizen as result of "learning" protest and uncover the critical role praxis plays in promoting the transformative dimensions of self. Lastly, Chapter VII concludes with what the young men of Meigs have taught us about essential elements of liberatory education, and I make recommendations for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review—Democracy, Citizenship, and Curriculum

The notion of an equitable educational system that *prepares students for life* or *develops students into productive citizens* is steeped in a racial, social, and political history that neither the individuals who promote *democratic schooling* nor those who are subjected to its use fully comprehend. This challenge of understanding rests on how "democracy is a 'terrain of struggle' [that] complicates how we have come to understand and define being a citizen and citizenship" (Giroux & McLaren, as cited in Goodman, 1992, p. xii). More specifically, how loosely adopted catch phrases like *democratic schooling* and *citizenship education* continue to operate with an assumed neutrality for all citizens begs questioning.

This chapter calls into question the foundational pretenses of democratic schooling by exploring and disrupting historical concepts of democracy and citizenship promoted by the nation state, highlighting how these concepts influenced a stratified society through curriculum, positioning silenced Black curricularists as seminal constructors of "curriculum as protest" (Watkins, 2000), and introducing how that process develops a transformative citizen through the awakening of the "critical consciousness" (Freire, 2007). This review of literature casts its net widely in order to depict the problematic trajectory of citizenship as an outcome of education. It involves disrupting assumptions that democratic schooling has been inclusive of Blacks or that social reconstruction education was ever intended to socially reposition Blacks.

This lengthy three-part analysis centers on how government desire for a particular type of citizen influenced curriculum and the goals and aims of education. First, in the Convoluted Beginnings section, I examine the historical development of traditional, liberal, and transformative democracy within curriculum to explain how the promotion and maintenance of social order and citizenship were sustained. Second, in the Black Contestation of Citizenship

Preparation section, I explore how various Black curricularists sought to define a more authentic path to citizenship by challenging how goals for citizenship framed outcomes and aims of curriculum for Black America. In that section, I introduce Watkins' (2005) concept of Black educational protest and intersect it with Banks' (2008) citizenship typology to construct a template for understanding how Blacks have contributed important scholarship on how to best prepare individuals for an engaged citizenship and how Black curricularist ideology, although absent from seminal curriculum studies literature, offers a critical framework. Last, in the Erecting Transformative Citizenship Education section, I use the major themes that arise from Black curricular protest, such as social critique, activism, and the building of human agency, to establish how the concept of curricular protest may be applied when educating urban Black male youth to equip them for transformative citizenship. In doing so, we position urban Black male youth as the next wave of curricular protestor while substantiating a need for an educative process that results in urban Black males' authentic social participation.

We move now to examine the historical, convoluted development of the notions of democracy—traditional, liberal, and transformative—and how the promotion and maintenance of social order and citizenship have been ideologically intertwined since the inception of formalized education in America.

Convoluted Beginnings

In *Ideology and Curriculum*, Apple (2006) stated, "Any serious attempt at understanding whose knowledge gets into schools must be, by its very nature, historical" (p. 63). The relationship between the process of knowledge consumption or construction and education's purpose has been an issue of dispute since formalized education began. While political conservatives, liberals, and individuals with no party alignment consider education the single

most important vehicle to achieve success, the ways in which the democratic principle of an enlightened citizenry is defined and understood subjects curriculum to a politicized debate on what gets taught to whom and why (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). If we want to understand how to best prepare individuals for participation, we must challenge how democracy has been historically defined and how it informs the goals and aims of education, thereby promoting particular forms of citizenship.

As the government puts laws in place that support its construction of a democratic society, so too does the system of education succumb to government's influence. Curricular goals and aims of education are defined within the nation-state's narrow definition of democracy to promote particular forms of citizenship through curriculum. In the United States, the result has been two competing theoretical frameworks: the scientific movement in a more traditional democracy and the progressive approach in a more liberal democracy. These two distinct shifts within education are a result of ideological differences relative to the goals and aims of education in a democracy, and thereby, they have defined various types of citizenship. Each has held markedly different beliefs regarding the function of knowledge in a democratic society, but neither has resulted in a transformative movement.

Fraser (1997) stated, "Democracy is an intensely contested word that means different things to different people" (p. 173). In order to grasp the extent of how the aforementioned ideological shifts resulted in the nation state's construction of democracy, I propose three evolutionary concepts of democracy for investigation: traditional, liberal, and transformative. I took major theoretical definitions and divergent bodies of knowledge on the topic of democracy and citizenship (Dewey, 1916; Locke, 1960; Schwab, 1978; Thayer-Bacon, 2008) and developed these three categories for clearer understanding. Each one represents how I conceptualize

particular forms of democracy rather than specific democratic theories. Examining these three forms serves as context for understanding why the goals and aims of democratic schooling remain contested.

  Traditional notions of democracy in schooling. Thayer-Bacon (2008) found that traditional democracy, as argued by theorists such as Locke (1960) and Rousseau (1968), was concerned chiefly with loyalty to the nation-state and dependency on it for protection (Locke, 1960). The assumption that government, first, can define individual rights and, second, understands how to defend them occurs as a result of conflicting concepts such as patriotism being narrowly defined as citizenship (Thayer-Bacon, 2008; Westheimer, 2004). Traditional democracy as an act of patriotism is defined by Gutmann (2002) as a "love of and therefore a loyalty to one's country" (p. 48). If democracy is construed as the support and protection of the fundamental ideals of the nation-state and being a citizen is an "individual who lives in a nation-state and has certain rights, privileges, and duties to the state" (Lagasse, 2000, as cited in Banks, 2008, p.129), this traditional notion of democracy works to preserve a society whose participants are first and foremost expected to remain loyal and obedient to government. In this concept, the nation-state encourages social norms that shape this dominant citizenship discourse in order to fulfill America's need to create this form of democracy.

  Democracy in its most traditional sense is a concept of collective and personal freedoms defined and determined by government (Hahn, 1998; Zinn, 2006). In this vein, personal freedoms are recognized within religious beliefs, political affiliations, and personal rights such as freedom of speech. Citizens are members of a government structure that represents and protects their interests and personal freedoms within this notion of a democracy. Democracy as a political concept in this example appears to operate in the best interest of all citizens. However, given our

nation's use of the law as an oppressive tool, the idea of government as the author and defender of individuals' rights questions the applicability of democracy as an inclusive political term.

When we intersect race, class, and gender within this notion of traditional democracy, the protection of *all* individuals comes into question. For example, the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776, held that "all men are created equal," and as such, they are afforded equal rights and have the ability to "secure" these rights and have them protected by our government as a democracy. Women and people of color were not included. The White male-dominated government continued to preserve concepts of a pure America and strong workforce well beyond these writings; education played a role in its perpetuation.

As Rury (2009) stated, "Women, African Americans, Mexicans and Hispanics suffered greatly as a consequence of efforts to design schools to fit them to subservient roles" (p. 178). Particularly in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with the

> increase *of* [emphasis original] industrialism [to] sustain normative standards of white
> male superiority and develop loyal citizens [and the development of] curriculum
> emphasizing respect for authority, hard work, diligence, promptness, and individual
> success, facilitated working-class and immigrant children being prepared for factory
> work. (Beyer & Liston, 1996, p. 3)

This ideology assisted in the preservation of the stratified social order by determining which individuals were worthy of learning specific types of knowledge. These standards of academic proficiency and the erected ideologies about intelligence based on an individual's ability to master particular kinds of information would be the basis of the scientific movement within education. The mastery of knowledge not only determined a person's level of achievement but also their social positioning (Apple, 2006; Beyer & Liston, 1996; Zinn, 2006).

In the case of Black men, this traditional democracy did not acknowledge them as human and therefore determined their societal contribution would be limited to subservient roles (Akom, 2009; Hilliard, 1995; Watkins, 2001). Even as more progressive concepts of democracy emerged, Blacks as a whole continued to be treated as second-class citizens. In response to their personal and deliberate quests for freedom, Black men were visibly attacked and vilified. Blacks were pushed towards vocational trades with no local, state, or national right to contribute to society until their right to vote was legalized in 1965 (James, 1995). While our society argues that it is a more progressive society that practices an inclusive democracy, traditional concepts of exclusion based on race and class continue to exist today (Watkins, 2001).

In order to understand how a traditional understanding of democracy goes uncontested, consider Goodman's (1992) thoughts:

> American democracy is rooted in the republican form of government that serves as our
> state apparatus. Democracy as practiced in the United States is seen as inherently good
> and has something to do with choosing representatives, having faith in the will of the
> majority, providing certain checks and balances. (p. 3)

When politicians, law makers, and teachers discuss democracy, their discussions are filled with stories of founding fathers who fought for a land where individuals are free and can depend on government to represent and protect them, while the nation's history and educational system suggests otherwise (Zinn, 2006). In schools, democracy traditionally operates to promote the development of citizens who will trust and honor the rules and systems of government (Gutmann, 1999; Thayer-Bacon, 2008) versus challenging the authenticity and assumptions behind concepts of freedom and equity. Take for example how Blacks remained in segregated schools until the 1970s and did not legally have the right to vote until 1965 within a democratic

society. These are but two examples of how traditional democracy promoted a segregated society and afforded rights to some while sanctioning oppression for others.

Ideologically, we are not so far removed from the traditional democracy's promotion of second-class citizenry for Black America. Current trends in urban education allow for the privatization of urban education and curriculum shaped by corporate interests (Lipman, 2011; Saltman, 2000) in hopes to develop skilled and obedient workers. Students are still held accountable to learning the nation's history and laws as a part of curriculum without critique or question (Zinn, 2006), continuing a ritualistic practice of teaching obedience within urban school districts. The ways in which "the race issue saturates every aspect of our social, economic, political, education and personal life" makes the assumption that within traditional democracy all individuals are created equal and thereby have equal access (Watkins, Lewis, & Chou, 2000, p. 40).

Arguing for a more inclusive type of democracy, progressives worked to create an educational and social system whose goal was to develop citizens who could more actively participate and contribute to society. The next section discusses how liberal democracy appears to allow for a more active role in society for its citizens, but this activity also falls short of disrupting the status quo.

Liberal notions of democracy in schooling. In strong opposition to the traditional view of citizenship, progressive theorist John Dewey argued for curricular goals that prepare students for a more engaged form of societal participation (Dewey, 1916; Rugg, 1939; Schiro, 2008; Zilversmith, 1993). More specifically, progressive scholars have moved to define the objectives of education in terms of how schools equipped students to become active participants in society. Their main position was that a child's experience should be central to the educative process. The

progressive approach held that knowledge mastery be based on the learner's ability to build on their life experiences and create new knowledge that prepares them to participate in society (Dewey, 1938; Schwab, 1978).

One of the primary driving forces of the Progressive Movement was the building of a new social order (Counts, 1932). The changing economic and social times called for citizens with new skills. Social reconstructionism placed the onus of redeveloping society on schools. Specifically, progressives called for curriculum that better prepared students to respond more authentically to the social and economic times by closely relating curriculum activity to students' activity. This position is most credited to Deweyian philosophy, in which the aim of activity and bringing in the learner's energies and interests transformed traditional approaches towards preparing students for the future (Pekarsky, 2000).

Progressives argued that the outcome of schooling within a democracy should be a process that mirrors how one engages in society. A curriculum that allows for students to think critically and take action, as outlined by Dewey (1938) was unprecedented and believed to be essential in the reconstruction of a new society. The view of democracy could no longer be limited to the needs of the nation-state with a minimally involved citizen. For progressives, if a democracy was to be authentic, individuals needed to be able to define their level of societal contribution, and schools were the primary vehicle to achieve such a goal.

Arguing for this significant shift in educational reform has allowed the term "progressive" to be assumed to be a liberal type of educational reform that is chiefly concerned with preparing students for equal participation. In fact, the Progressive Movement is highly referenced in curriculum studies literature as the most influential pedagogical movement towards the goals and aims of education (Schwab, 1978). However, this shift in philosophy still allowed

for dominant groups to operate under an illusion of inclusion that actually afforded limited power to citizens (Banks, 2008).

A liberal democracy enables citizen participation or, rather, the voice of its constituents to be heard, but such participation is limited to voting and does not promote citizens challenging oppressive systems. This form of democracy continued to fail Blacks, Native Americans, and women because social reconstruction era reforms limited their development to vocational education (James, 1995; Watkins, 2001). I argue that much of what we understand as foundational precepts of democratic schooling and citizenship curriculum is built on the narrow definitions offered by progressive scholarship.

A large body of research calls for moving beyond a liberal democracy to that of a *transformative* democracy (Banks, 2008; Gutmann, 1999; Thayer-Bacon, 2008; Westhmeimer & Kahne, 2004) where citizenship is actualized through a welcomed process of social debate, critique, and questioning. The next section explores transformative democracy as a much needed radical shift within democratic ideologies.

Transformative notions of democracy in schooling. Scholars have espoused the notions of a critical democracy (Goodman, 1992; Horn, 2004), deliberative democracy (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Young, 1989), and radical democracy (Borg & Mayo, 2007, Lummis, 1996) as new options for charting a path to a more inclusive and transparent form of democracy—one where all stakeholders' needs are equally represented and addressed. Although each holds its own unique approach to democracy, the common thread among them is their "transformative" nature. Transformative democracy sees citizens as authentic contributors who have a right to be heard and actively participate in challenging social inequities.

William and Humphrys (2003) stated that citizenship within a democracy should be understood as the way an "individual perceives and practices being a human being in a society" (p. 4). Therefore, within a transformative democracy, education serves to teach individuals to critique, challenge, and inform government so that this participatory process results in equity for all people. Elements of citizenship, such as societal participation in public life, roles and responsibility to civic living, how the governed participate in governance, dominant societal values, and self-identity, remain some of the most common facets of citizenship development (Scott & Lawson, 2001) that transformative education seeks to change. A transformative democracy requires transformative (and transformed) citizens.

Different democracies require different types of citizens. To illustrate how varying forms of democracy foster certain types of citizenship and to situate transformative democracy more clearly, I took Banks' (2008) citizenship typology, which categorizes citizenship on four levels: legal, minimal, active, and transformative. Then, I juxtaposed them against the previously discussed categories of democracy. (See Figure 1.)
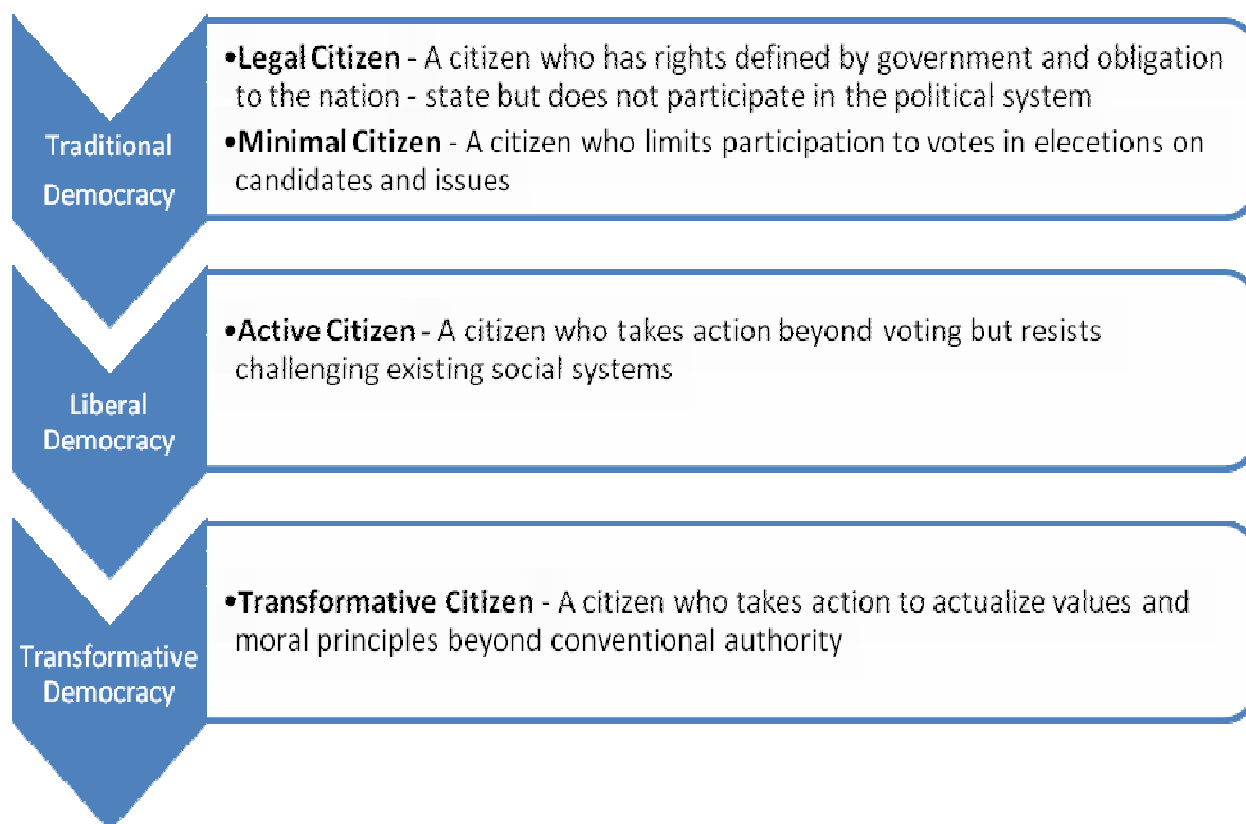
Figure 1. Democracy's relationship to citizenship. Adapted from "Diversity group identity and citizenship education in a global age," by J. A. Banks, 2008, *Educational Researcher*, *37*(3), pp. 128-129.

You will notice that traditional notions of democracy look to develop a *legal* and/or a *minimal* citizen: both are loyal to the nation, its rules, guidelines, and structure. Legal citizens who follow the legal-only category have basic rights and responsibilities but tend to participate in the political system. A minimalist citizen trusts that government structures, such as voting, are in place for protection and the preservation of the traditional democratic ideal. Beliefs and customs that differ from mainstream thought are not considered within traditional democracy because this divergence is thought to weaken the system. A *minimal* citizen is encouraged to participate in the existing social structure as long as their participation does not disrupt the current political order. The legal and minimal citizens operate within the traditional

governmental definition of citizenship. These individuals abide by the laws of governance and rely on the rules of society set forth by government to guide their beliefs and participation.

Active citizens abide by systems and structures set forth by government, but they go a step beyond voting and exercise their right to contribute to government. This type of participation may include assemblies and open protest but steers away from directly challenging systems and structures within society (Banks, 2008). This can be understood by rallies or marches that draw attention versus sit-ins and boycotts that can have an effect. This form of action almost becomes ritualistic in nature because the end goal is merely to draw attention to an issue versus fully engaging and demanding change.

Conversely, *transformative* citizens understand that their participation is critical and willfully engage in stratification disruption as a component of citizenship. According to Banks (2008), the "transformative citizen involves himself in civic actions designed to actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions" (p. 136). Transformative citizenship understands that democracies should be comprised of active citizens who are equipped and allowed to challenge structural equality and government policy. More specifically, transformative democracy holds that education should be the central vehicle for the development of an empowered and engaged citizen.

Conclusion. DeJaeghere (2009) stated, "the historical and present day practices of most democracies and the relationship between its members reveal inequality, discrimination and exclusion" as real tensions in the quest for citizenship (p. 223). I argue that despite Dewey's (1897) questions about making curriculum truly educative, or Counts' (1932) call to build a new social order, the foundational ideology of democratic schooling and citizenship education of the early 1900s needed a larger, more critical frame inclusive of Black Americans' social, political,

and academic development. Black America's existence was not considered or addressed within this movement, begging the question, for whose citizenship are social reconstructionists actually advocating (James, 1995; Watkins, 1993)?

I caution that since this educative movement did not concern itself with teaching the social, academic, or political development of Blacks (Greene, 1978; Watkins, 2001; Wilkerson, 1939), we continue to suffer from poorly defined goals and aims of Black education, resulting in inequitable citizenship. Scholars' interpretation of Dewey's use of activity and experience as political consequently led to an assumed hopefulness that early democratic ideology would achieve unilateral success. This surface reality or "mystification" (Greene, 1978, p. 63) leaves traditional democracy open to critiques on how it remains inconsistent for commonly othered populations. Thayer-Bacon (2008) stated that Dewey was "unable to move beyond his own entrenchment in a liberal culture and discover the biases that affected his criticisms and recommended solutions" (p. 15).

Proponents and scholars of the progressive and social reconstruction movements could argue that literature written about democratic schools reflected the culture of the time. Therefore, their position on neither race nor gender can be assumed. However, Dewey himself was quoted praising a school for preparing Blacks as citizens in vocational schools, implying that a different set of goals existed for Negro citizenship (Tiles, 1992). Given Dewey's (1897) position that learning was socially constructed in order to allow learners to read and participate within the world, Tiles' (1992) belief that Dewey was "less than a visionary relative to Negro education" has merit (p. 179). He was a product of his times.

I want to be clear that Deweyan philosophy should not be oversimplified due to its complex nature on the position of the learner and knowledge and the unique role experience

plays relative to both. However, my purpose here is two-fold. First, it is to highlight the shortcomings of early concepts of democracy and citizenship, not simply as defined by Dewey, but as practiced and enacted by other seminal progressives, which signals our continued error in narrowly defining what preparing citizens looks like in education. This is a crucial point for exploration given that Deweyian democratic philosophy is commonly referenced as the building ground for democratic and participatory education without considering seminal Black scholars' contribution (James, 1995) or challenging the progressive agenda (Mann-Bond, 1934; Wilkerson, 1939).

If we do not complicate how the stratified system of knowledge supports varied interpretations and enactments of democracy and citizenship relative to racial and gender oppression, we will continue to fail our most vulnerable students with this mystified approach toward citizenship. Additionally, we must position Black foundational scholars as not only contributors to the dialogue developing about citizens, but as rightful intellectuals within this critical scholarship on citizenship preparation and education. This substantiates a need for an in-depth analysis of a race-conscious citizenship as an educative outcome (James, 1995; Tiles, 1992; Watkins, Lewis & Chou, 2000). In the next section I expound on the concept of Black curricular protestors and how their contestation of American curriculum redefined foundational practices in education for citizenship preparation.

Black Contestation of Citizenship Preparation

Although Black curricularists never explicitly used the term citizenship, their emphasis on the emancipatory ability of curriculum in reversing social inequity and promoting human agency demonstrates they understood Blacks were not prepared nor invited to authentically participate in society (Crummell, 1995; Du Bois, 1903; Mann-Bond, 1934; Woodson, 1977). The

categorization of Black curricular movements in America as "curricular protest" (Watkins, 2005) supports claims by Payne (1995) and Perlstein (2002) that the contributions of Black curricularists taught concepts of human agency, curriculum for resistance, and cultural identity long before democratic schooling was popularized. In writing on the historical perspectives of citizenship in the United States, Kaestle (2000) asked the critical question of "whose citizenship" was advocated for within curriculum (p. 47).

While the progressive position of educating individuals rests on curriculum and a schooling system that believes students should be taught to participate, it is a philosophy that evolved free of the "historical tyranny and duress" (Watkins, 1993, p. 323) associated with Blacks' quest for equal citizenship in America. The liberal democratic schooling agenda coincided with the general American struggle for academic, social, and political equity. In examining how these counter-narratives were formed, Lee and Slaughter-Defoe (1995) examined historical models of education from 1860 to 1935. They described Black education during this time as education for Black self-reliance. The key characteristics of this period centered on the following: "reflecting African and African American cultural and historical traditions; explicitly tying education goals to political empowerment; and, creating education that challenges existing political and cultural norms" (Lee & Slaughter-Defoe, 1995, p. 352). These norms were understood as inadequate schooling, curriculum for control, and denying Black political and social involvement. The dominant American curriculum did not account for the experiences of Black Americans, leaving the Progressive Movement's call for incorporating learners' experience void of any critical understanding of race. Watkins (1993) explained the importance of Black curricular theorizing outside the American curriculum:

American curriculum generally evolved in an environment free of intellectual and physical duress and tyranny. Black curriculum theorizing, on the other hand is tied inextricably to the history of the Black experience within the United States. Black social, political and intellectual development in all cases evolved under socially oppressive and politically repressive circumstances involving physical and intellectual duress and tyranny…. Black America's socio-educational development is thus distorted, unnatural and stunted. (p. 2)

The stunted construction of Black citizenship, equity, and democracy occurred as a result of American curriculum's omission of recognizing the Black experience, which left even the most progressive attempt at fostering an equitable and just learning process for Black America incomplete.

In the rest of this section, I examine Black curricularists' exposure of the historically racist construction of intelligence by American curricula. This exposure sought to create a counter-narrative to the physical and mental obedience of American curriculum towards a more liberatory outcome; it became known as curricular protest (Watkins, 2005). I review the contributions of four movements of curricular protestors and how they intersected knowledge, citizenship, and gender to argue for a critical educative outcome. I conclude this examination by outlining the contributions of each category in order to position curricular protest as the foundation of authentic transformative education.

Knowledge and citizenship: The role of curricular protest. Constructing Black citizenship would mean highlighting Black America's omission from the goals and aims of American education and defining a separate agenda. This concept of struggle or *educational protest* is about "ideas and contested social knowledge and how those ideas translate into action"

(Watkins, 2005, p. 2). The contradictory practices of citizenship and democracy being about freedom for some and control for others was the foundation of protest within Black America since the era of enslavement. Blacks were not deemed worthy to be educated and therefore were being prepared for vocational work and other subservient roles due to the promotion of segregation within mainstream curriculum (James, 1995; Mann-Bond, 1934; Tyack, 1974; Watkins, 2001). In describing the failure of American schools and curriculum in creating an equitable social order for Black America, Horace Mann-Bond (1934) outlined why schools must become the most important terrain of struggle against a stratified society:

> We must think of the school, then, as a single institution which has a wide reach, and which may help transform the life of a people over a long sweep of time…. Better schools cannot themselves save a population which is condemned by economic pressure to remain in a half-starved, poverty stricken environment…. Character education, no matter how skillfully conducted, cannot be depended upon to reduce greatly the high rates of juvenile delinquency found in Negro communities so long as Negro children in cities suffer from the economic disabilities… Strictly speaking, the school has never built a new social order; it has been the product and interpreter of the existing system, sustaining and being sustained by the social complex. Schools for Negro children can perform the older function of the school; but even more they can venture beyond the frontier and plan for a new order in those aspects which affect race. To do this, however, they must function as coordinated elements of a unified system, and not in utter isolation from the world of action and social change. (p. 13)

Mann-Bond (1934) criticized the schools for not only building but also maintaining a stratified society for Blacks because our children were not equipped nor invited to function as agents of change.

Blacks advocating for equitable citizenry was not a newfound concept. Black progressives such as Doxey Wilkerson (1939) reminded progressives of the lack of attention and "disrespect" towards the Negro agenda that had not changed since slavery. However, with the nation setting a race-neutral agenda on citizenship preparation and democratic schooling, focusing solely on vocational work for Blacks, the twentieth century would give birth to a century of curricularists focused on social equity and authentic citizenship. In pushing for structural equity, Black curricular protestors' agenda always emanated from an educational standpoint attempting to dismantle ideological beliefs of intelligence in order to offer a new standard of knowledge for citizenship (Watkins, 2005). This debate became more formalized because Blacks argued that democracy was not about loyalty to the nation–state but the responsibility of the nation to provide and equip its citizenry for full involvement (education for empowerment).

Structural equity may have been at the root of progressive ideology, but without taking into account how race shifts what democracy and equity mean, education did not serve to create equitable opportunities within Black America. Formally, the progressive agenda did not argue against a tracked system for Blacks or inadequately funded schools and poorly trained teachers. However, through omission they supported maintaining an ideology that subscribed to beliefs of genetic inferiority that destined Blacks to second-class citizenship. This stigma of being "less than" full citizens greatly impacted the Black race as a whole. Furthermore society's depiction of Black males as savages placed a greater weight on curriculum's role in socializing, controlling,

and de-humanizing the Black man (Hilliard, 1995; Watkins et al., 2000). Thus, the beginning of

formal education also marked the beginning of teaching obedience, the rejection of indigenous

culture, and the promotion of marginalized social positioning (Woodson, 1977).

The curricular, cultural, and political contestation against traditional knowledge raised the

question of what information and activities are needed in order to produce critical Black citizens.

The term critical should not be understood as an academically exclusive or classist term. In this

sense, it is used to define one's ability to understand and critique the role of power and race on

the social constructs of knowledge acquisition. Black curricular protestors argued against static

distribution of knowledge and unpacked how knowledge production occurred and who benefited

from it in order to develop the critically-minded citizen and create their own counter-narrative of

knowledge.

Race and gender as discourse for citizenship: A review of four movements. Watkins

(2005) offered four categories that held the foundational beliefs that if human agency was the

goal of Black education then culture, race, gender, and political involvement were to be non-

negotiable components of curriculum. The Radical Black Intelligentsia, Cultural Nationalist,

Civil Rights, and Black Panther movements, while differing in their curricular approach, all held

that knowledge construction in Black America should be emancipatory in nature; hence, they

established an understanding of "Black educational protest" (Watkins, 2005, p. 2) or curriculum

as protest. Asa G. Hilliard (1995) stated that "systems of privilege and oppression in education

operate in six categories: ideology, political control, uses of history and culture, uses of group

identity, physical segregation and uses of financial and human resources" (p. ix). Figure 2, "The

Trajectory of Black Curricular Protest," depicts how Black curricularists undertook these issues

and charted a path for social, political and academic resistance.
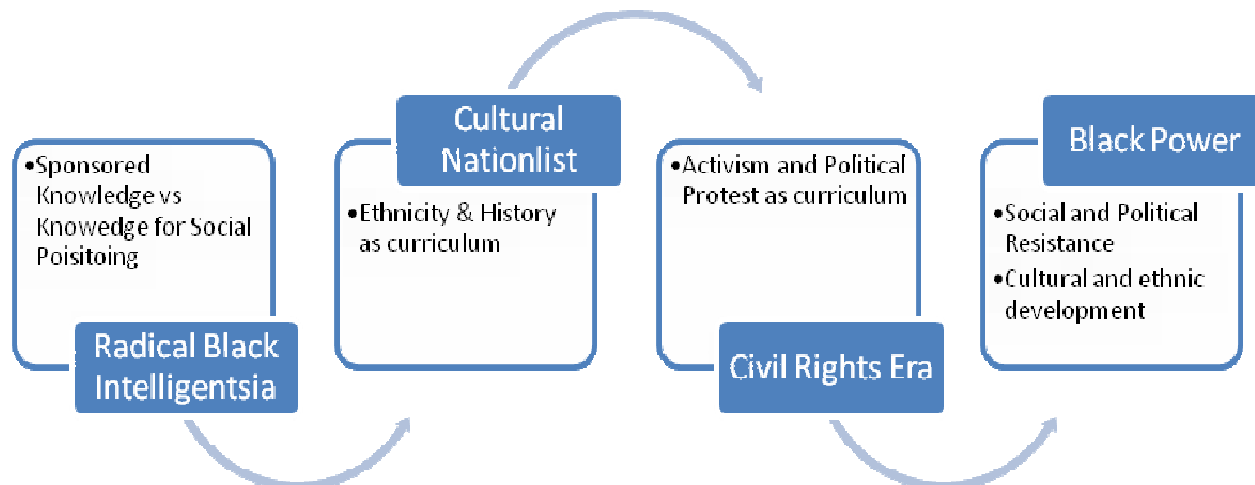
Figure 2. The trajectory of Black curricular protest. Adapted from *Black protest thought and education*, by W. Watkins, 2005, New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Radical Black intelligentsia: Academic protest. The most noted Radical Black Intelligentsia scholars span from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. These individuals were unwilling to accept compromised citizenship, and in doing so, they set a critical foundation of juxtaposing the academic against the political within Black education (Robinson, 2000). Through the call to action to "re-examine the problem of democracy…. and the ignorance of theory that all are equal and have equal voice in government" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 24), the stage was set for some of the most historically significant curricular protest in America. Black intellectuals argued in favor of combating the oppressive nature of traditional curriculum through intellectual development. Individuals like Horace Mann, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson argued that curriculum should be scrutinized on its ability to develop the intellectual capacity of Blacks in order to adequately prepare them for membership.

For these curricularists, sponsored knowledge in schools taught inferiority and oppression by omitting Blacks' history, limiting their schooling to vocational preparation, and upholding White male intelligence as the norm (Du Bois, 1903; Perlstein, 2002; Woodson, 1977). Du Bois (1903) more poignantly described the process of fostering obedience from Black men as a "survive through submission" mentality by "giving up first their political power, second, [their] insistence on civil rights and third, [the] higher education of… youth" (p. 30). Curriculum is not simply considered oppressive because it academically prepared Blacks for marginalized roles in society. It is the psychological trauma of participating in a curriculum that reinforces "white-architects" (Watkins, 2001, p. 2): the construction of White males as the norm of intelligence that results in conflicting views of one's personal authority and social positioning. Du Bois spoke to this tension that Black males undergo, that their identity is divided between how they see themselves and how the world defines them as "two-ness" (p. 2).

Therefore, the Radical Black Intelligentsia fought for Blacks to draw attention to the intellectual capability of Black men, reject vocational training as the premier academic preparation for Blacks, and develop goals and aims that result in social equality for all Blacks. While individuals who are defined as Radical Black Intelligentsia never formally aligned themselves within a movement, their individual contributions and emphasis on challenging what constitutes knowledge positions them as a seminal part of Black education.

Cultural Nationalist Movement: Race consciousness protest. The cultural nationalist movement and its primary protestors—Marcus Garvey, Hubert Harrison, Carter G. Woodson, and Alexander Crummel—arose in the early 1900s. These individuals combined class consciousness and race consciousness in arguing against cultural assimilation within a democracy (Fultz & Brown, 2008; Richards & Lemelle, 2008; Watkins et al., 2000). Their focus

on race consciousness and citizenship differed from other curricular positions in that it challenged the social, political, and academic inequality of Black citizens by promoting a critical understanding of African history and culture in order to achieve social prominence.

Carter G. Woodson (1977) understood that teaching the Negro to despise himself and believe in his inferiority made "so-called school a questionable place" (p. 3). In *The Mis-Education of the Negro,* Woodson spoke to how America used curriculum and the learning process as a tool of oppression:

> In certain parts, therefore, the Negroes under such terrorism have ceased to think of political matters as their sphere. Where such things come into the teaching in more advanced work they are presented as matters of concern to a particular element rather than as functions in which all citizens may participate. The result is that Negroes grow up without knowledge of political matters that should concern all elements. To prevent the Negroes from learning too much about these things, the whites in the schools are sometimes neglected also, but the latter have the opportunity to learn by contact, close observation and actual participation in the affairs of government. (p. 21)

Woodson, a self-professed radical and proponent of Negro self-efficacy, took issue that our most talented were educated by the ways of the dominant culture and were forced to reject their own culture in the hopes of being a "good American or good Negro" (p. 6). Since slavery, America's social construction of race and gender supported the building of a curriculum that promoted a rigid social order, particularly for Black males. Fultz and Brown (2008) described it as a "persistent apprehension" historically against how to deal with Black men (p. 857).

Defying America's construction of Blacks and the Black man in particular, Cultural Nationalists infused positive images and a deeper historical context of the Negro experience in

order to thwart the purveyance of White superiority and supremacy in every level of society (Garvey, 1938). This group called America's attention to the necessity of Black culture and history within curriculum. They actively sought to disrupt cultural assimilation and upheld that Black Americans' ancestry should be not only respected but also recognized for how it contributed greatly to the landscape of teaching and learning (Garvey, 1938). Additionally, Cultural Nationalists argued that curriculum should depict the historical strength and intelligence of the Black man and his African ancestry. Many have argued that this group of scholars serves as the building ground for race-conscious movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Van Deburg, 1997).

The Civil Rights Era: Civil disobedience as protest. The emerging literature of the 1950s pointed to the social and psychological effects of American curriculum on Black students (Clark, 1965). The effects of differing standards for Black education could not continue to be ignored. In 1954, the case of *Brown v. Board of Education* politicized educational equality, sparking a formalized legal debate drawing national attention. With separate but equal schooling, the fight for freedom began with an unprecedented interrogation of curriculum within the Civil Rights era (Webster, 1974). The racially biased achievement ideology and social disparities of Black children held that separate but equal was unconstitutional and segregated schools violated the legal right of Black citizens.

This sparked a significant beginning in the quest of Black citizenship. The quest to level the playing field for Blacks academically was politicized and prompted the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Black America not only mobilized around education but also challenged the nation's stance on voting rights, unfair housing practices, and violence against Blacks. Because of the Black man's push against marginalization and social stratification of the mid-

1950s, people viewed him as a "considerable threat" to the American social order (Webster, 1974). Therefore, the emergence of this movement also saw more public signs of violence against Blacks. In particular, lynching, hosing, and public burning of Black men became highly publicized.

Refusing to respond in violence, this era's protestors taught civil disobedience and non-violence as central tenet of their movement. They believed that focusing on marches, rallies, and sit-ins brought dignity and peace to protest. There was also a deliberate push to have men dressed formally in order to promote a more "masculine presence" (Estes, 2005), deserving of respect. Protests like that of sanitation workers placed their oppression in the context of gender with statements like "Ain't I a man" [3] to call into question unfair labor practices against Black men.

The Civil Rights Era marked an unprecedented time of struggle against structural inequity in Black America because of the unified nature of resistance. Organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were at the center of this movement, and they saw increased membership as they taught non-violent forms of activism and organizing. Citizenship education programs and Freedom Schools combined literacy and political action as core tenets of civil disobedience. To its credit, the Civil Rights era gave way to the practicing and teaching of protest (Payne, 1995), which continues to inform the emancipatory pedagogy of today.

Black Power Movement: Lived protest. The Black Power Movement grew out of the Civil Rights Movement, replacing its civil disobedience of sit-ins and non-violent responses with

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[3] "Ain't I a Man" was a significant protest during the Civil Rights Era, where Black Male sanitation workers framed their challenge of unjust wages from a position of gender, signaling the first time when a movement highlighted the inequity of Black men specifically.

"militancy." This form of protest centered around the "Ten Point Program," which demanded collective political, social, financial, and academic action for all Black citizens (Austin, 2006). The fundamental guiding principle of this group was that citizenship is an inalienable right and should no longer be requested but demanded. Black Power groups, such as the Black Panther Party, made the brutalizing impact of racism on Black men a gendered concern in order to inform their politics and pedagogy (Perlstein, 2008). In sharp contrast to the Black male persona and political style of preachers and college students of the Civil Rights era, the Black Panther Party was built on a heightened sense of masculinity in dress and dogma.

There was a clear shift to a more militant stance and open rejection of civil disobedience. The Black Panther movement reclaimed masculinity, depicting men in dressed in black, sunglasses, and fists in the air, boasting a radical strong presence. This positioned the "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to receive a privileged attention while the Black Power Movement is dismissed as nothing more than an angry reaction to the slow pace of progress" (Williams, 2008, p. 1) in many historical accounts.

The Black Power Movement trained individuals to use economic and cultural disparities to challenge inequity as activists and community members. The Black Panther Party took the historical oppression perpetuated by racist and classist American policy and built a curriculum and community to challenge structural inequity. Unlike other Black liberatory movements, the Black Panther Party outlined specific economic, social, political, and academic goals for Black citizenship within a Pan-African context thereby drawing a connection between the political and cultural development of Black citizens in America. Additionally, the focus on community

responsibility, self-determination, and community control taught youth how to be responsible for their community (Joseph, 2006).

 Conclusion. In reviewing the nation's determination of what constitutes knowledge in the preparation of citizens, I have presented how Black curricular protestors defined transformative citizenship across four movements by outlining a more critical definition of knowledge with specific outcomes for Black citizenry. The Radical Black Intelligentsia contributed the role of social positioning and curriculum content to the debate on the outcomes of education. The Cultural Nationalist movement emphasized the importance of race, ethnicity, and history as an essential base of curriculum. The Civil Rights Era created a movement that formalized curriculum and protest around the social and political positioning of Black America and introduced the importance of teaching resistance to youth. The Black Power Movement incorporated essential elements of these movements into an unprecedented focus on unapologetic activism.

 Coupled with the review of these movements, I also extracted how Black curricular protestors' intersecting of race and gender in a transformative citizenship context led them to propose specific social, political, and academic outcomes for Black men. Despite varying approaches, each era held that docility was the goal and aim of curriculum (James, 1995; Watkins, 2001). The American curriculum became more deliberate in its development of Black males as second-class citizens, using the construction of knowledge to teach social positioning and acceptable forms of manhood, particularly that of obedience, which made the movements' challenges of Black men's intellectual presence, cultural history, leadership, and radical abilities timely.

In situating curriculum as protest, Black curricularists have taught us how curriculum can operate toward a transformative end. While my proposed trajectory of Black curriculums as protest simply covered four movements, when contextualized within the evolution of democracy, citizenship, and curriculum in American education, the contributions of Black curricularists, which are often ignored, become apparent. Figure 3 illustrates this.

ERA	DEMOCRACY	CURRICULUM	CITIZEN
1800'S - early 1900's	Traditional Democracy	Traditional Schooling/Scientific Curriculum Knowledge for control	Legal Citizen/Obedient
1900's - 1950's	Liberal Democracy	Progressive Curriculum: Knowledge for Defined Participation	Minimal/Active Citizen Patriotic ivovled without critique
late 1950's to early 1970's	Transformative Democracy	Transformative Curriculum: Knowledge for equal positioning	Transformative Citizen Challenging Social and political systems

Figure 3. Influence of democratic concepts on knowledge and citizenship.

Although Du Bois (1903) introduced the concept of double-consciousness over a century ago, Black males, particularly those who come from urban communities, continue to struggle between the realities of their experience and the false depictions of their experience put forth by society. This "two-ness" between self and society becomes inescapable for Black male youth as

curriculum is designed to promote rejection of culture and community and works against the building of human agency (Noguera, 2003).

This review does not seek to place a higher importance on the historical oppression of Black males. We cannot discount the important scholarship on the historical oppression of Black women that subjugated them to being viewed as sexual property and domestic help and omitted them from the Civil Rights Movement (Coleman, 1998; Harley, 1990; hooks, 1999; Werum, 1997). Nor can we discount the growing body of literature on how gendered concepts of citizenship contribute to the continued oppression of women within society (Bair, 2008; Bickmore, 1999; Foster, 1996; Stone, 1996). However, there has been little research on the effects of the historical construction of Black male citizenship and its enactment through educational policy and curriculum (Fultz & Brown, 2008).

The next section proposes transformative citizenship curriculum as way to combat urban Black males' "double-consciousness." I narrow the focus on a more dialogical curriculum put forth by Banks (2008) that outlines four dimensions essential for the development of a transformative citizen.

Erecting Transformative Citizenship Education

While it has been over a century since citizenship curriculum, focused on teaching immigrants the American way, was introduced as *the* formalized citizenship program, not much has happened in terms of redefining citizenship curriculum that results in a more transformative citizenship. There has been a small group of scholars focused on citizenship as civic participation and social responsibility (Foster-Bey, 2008; Fridkin, Kenney & Crittenden, 2006; Stepick & Stepick, 2002), but "these studies take a deficit approach to different groups' civic participation, and they do not explain why these differences persist or how school and societal factors may

affect differing civic attitudes, knowledge, or participation" (DeJaeghere, 2009, p. 224). Banks (2008) asserted, "Mainstream citizenship education is grounded in mainstream knowledge and assumptions and reinforces the status quo and the dominant power relationships in society" (p. 135). Studies in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Israel researched the need to develop a more critical form of citizenship curriculum for the benefits of global society. However, little movement has been made here in the United States to move citizenship education from a social studies and civics paradigm to a critical orientation that positions power as the central tenet of understanding citizenship (Williams & Humphrys, 2003).

Neglecting to construct curriculum in ways that enable students to critique assumed truths allows traditional curriculum to operate as a tool of oppression. Participation and contribution must be defined critically and operationalized, resulting in voices that are valued and possess the ability to demand action. Current curricula and schooling trends in youth education focus on control rather than the cultivation of a critical mind and person (Fine & Weis, 2003; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Rauner (2000) supported this argument by saying, "There has been little room in national dialogue for what kind of people we want our youth to become, for them as human beings, and for our society as a plural democracy" (p. 2). Our nation's philosophy of youth development is thwarted by dangerous assumptions of who youth are and what they need to be successful (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

Like the goals of education, adolescent development remains complicated by the historical denaturalization of youth that depicts them as out of control and lacking intellectual ability (Lesko, 1996). In the case of Black male youth, who are commonly represented as being prone to violence, lacking intellect, and in some instances sub-human, they suffer a double stigma that further fosters their unruly view (Tatum, 2005). In schools, these assumptions about

Black male youth falsely depict them as combative, hostile, and disruptive (Ferguson, 2000; Kunjufu, 1985; Noguera, 2003). In this vein, one might say that urban Black male youth are victimized twice, first by their race and second by their adolescence.

Locating schools and individuals who understand youth's behaviors as responses to their social existence as opposed to flawed personality traits is needed. A misconception of adolescence is often that youth are problems to be fixed instead of individuals who can contribute to society. Research has pointed to the age of adolescence as one marked with discovery and curiosity where questioning and testing limits is perceived as maladaptive and unruly (Fine & Weis, 2003; Lesko, 1996). There remains a need to shift from changing our youth to honoring their strengths by empowering them to have ownership in the development of themselves, their communities, and society. To that end, while adolescence and adolescent development most inform our understanding of what occurs in human development from ages 12 to 18 (Erikson, 1959), I use the term "youth" as opposed to "adolescents" as it offers a broader and more critical understanding of youth as young people. Defining youth as young people allows their development to be marked as a time of self-discovery, questioning, and interaction with others versus the "deconstructing of unruly tendencies" (Lesko, 1996, p. 139).

Combating "double-consciousness." In speaking to teachers about the conflicted nature of the Black youth experience, James Baldwin (1985) said, "Precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with society" (p. 325). Many urban Black male youth are strained by the complexities of existing within oppressive social systems. This strain fosters feelings of despair and disconnection from community, family, and self. Disturbingly, hegemonic practices within schools prevent the most vulnerable students from

using curriculum as space to dialogue, discover, and analyze their experiences against curriculum.

Research points to urban Black male youth feeling disconnected from curriculum (Noguera, 1995). They fail to see the relevance of schools that are criminalized by policing discipline strategies and low teacher expectation (Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, & Zine, 1997; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Ferguson, 2000, 2003; Morrell, 2002; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Stelle, 1997; Tatum; 2005). Likewise, they have limited opportunities for community involvement as schools promote devaluing the community by teaching students to rise above their personal, social, and community experiences for a better life (Moll, 2000). This form of forced community renunciation increases negative self-concepts and disrupts appropriate racial and cultural identity formation.

In "Teaching to Restore Black Boys," Ladson-Billings (2011) stated that "schools are the primary places where Black boys' problems appear. From the moment Black boys enter, who and how they can be is already predetermined" (p. 12). These young men have to struggle against preconceived notions on their intelligence and ability to contribute to society. Schools as central places for societal preparation must engage in "teaching and learning strategies that develop young people's engagement in the democratic goals of equality and justice" (DeJaeghere, 2009, p. 224). This involves "moving beyond inquiry based curriculum where students inquire into their individual interests, where critical inquiry focuses on larger systems of meaning and connects the personal to the political" (Laman, Smith, & Kander, 2006, p. 204).

Four elements of transformative citizenship. In advocating for the development of a more transformative citizen, one who is able to engage critically in society, Banks (2008) offered four critical citizenship identities as a framework for radicalizing citizenship preparation: social,

civic, political, and cultural. When Marshall (1964) conceptualized citizenship as a development process, he outlined the civil as an engagement of rights, the social as the act of participating, and the political as the outcome of both the civil and social. Banks (2008) built upon this typology to include the cultural or the way "ethnic and language minorities" (p. 130) experience citizenship due to their cultural and racial identities. Specifically, Banks elaborated on the way in which citizenship has been historically used to promote cultural assimilation within democracy to deny rights and maintain dominant cultural norms as universal concepts of citizenship. In Banks' conceptualization, this cultural component of citizenship development not only values a learner's experience but also promotes collective civic action across cultural and racial lines.

According to Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008), developing the social, civic, and political dimensions simultaneously within curriculum "prepare[s] students to confront the conditions of social and economic inequity within their daily lives" (p. 3), which results in "increasing the opportunity of human capital in urban communities by creating graduates who recognize their potential agency to improve urban centers, rather than seeing them as places to escape" (p. 5). Too often in America's urban schooling, the struggle for equity rests on location, racial demographics, and access to materials and technology. If schools are to authentically reconstruct society, curriculum for our most vulnerable population must broaden academic development to include the social, cultural, political, and civic selves (Banks, 2008). Doing so enables youth's ability to change their schools, communities, and the nation.

Banks' (2008) transformative dimensions can serve as a context for urban Black male students to develop their critical consciousness through the process of conscientization (Freire, 1993). Using critical reflection, these young men can learn to combat their "two-ness" by developing their social, political, cultural, and civic selves and actively challenge the world's

portrayal of their experiences and social positioning through social critique. For urban Black male youth who are often powerless to act against community and political oppression within their schools and communities due to hierarchical and racist systems, teaching them to act as advocates for their individual and collective selves holds promise for their authentic or participatory citizenship. Freire (1970) spoke to the role of critique on the development of one's transformative self:

> The more radical he is, the more fully he enters into reality so that knowing it better, and he can better transform it. He is not afraid to confront, to listen, and to see the world unveiled. He is not afraid to meet or enter in dialogue. (pp. 24-25)

In this sense, development of the transformative dimensions equips an otherwise oppressed group to become producers of their own freedom. Unlike the connection between activity and experience, made popular by Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978), Banks (2004) used the political, social, cultural, and civic dimensions to more clearly define curricular activities to match our students' experience.

Youniss and Yates (1997) provided a context in which we can begin to define curriculum with such a purpose:

> When youth are given opportunities to use their skills to redress social problems, they can experience themselves as having agency and as being responsible for society's well-being. When they participate as a cohort and when participation is encouraged by respected adults, youth begin to reflect on the political and moral ideologies used to understand society. It is this process of reflection, which takes place publicly with peers and adults, as well as privately, that allows youth to construct identities that are integrated with ideological stances and political-moral outlooks. (p. 37)

As youth interact within the world, simultaneously their social, civil, cultural, and political selves are developing. Absent of curricular process that fosters an opportunity to question and challenge how power, racism, classism, and gender bias work to further oppress individuals, these four dimensions can cease to develop, leaving the growth of the transformative self stunted.

This idea of youth development beyond the academic sphere has been proposed before. Marcia (1980) advocated for youth development to involve the social, political, economic, and philosophical identities that grow as a result and response to each other. While Marcia (1980) differed in proposing economic and philosophical development, this train of thought suggests that academic development cannot occur in isolation and further substantiates that because schools are a part of an inequitable social order, urban Black males' involvement with traditional curriculum adversely affects the development of these four identities, which are essential to citizenship.

In fostering transformative learning, researchers have proposed various types of curriculum, such as multicultural social justice (Banks, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 2003), African-centered (Asante, 1991; Grant, 2008; Murrell, 2002; Tillman, 2002), and most recently, civic engagement (Duncan, 2005) or citizenship/democratic education (Gutmann, 2004; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Ruitenberg, 2009) in defining multiple avenues of transformative pedagogy. In reflecting on what is at the essence of teaching for freedom, Freire (1998) spoke of an unavoidable "ethical responsibility for action in the world" (p. 26). These aforementioned curricular types share Freire's burden and prepare students to dismantle structures maintained by dominant discourses through teaching students to take action.

Curriculum that "legitimates large scale structural inequalities" (Fine & Weis, 2003, p. 9) leaves students vulnerable to living stratified lives thereby making the role of education

dangerously political in that it sanctions inequity. The issue of power is rarely linear. It is

complex. If one is to be prepared to disrupt notions of power, first a person must be able to

understand its complexity. Developing students' multiple dimensions of citizenship creates a

place and process in which youth become empowered to participate in political and civic action

that challenges inequities within their schools and communities.

To this point, I have explained the need for transformative curriculum, how Black

Curricularists have continually pushed for such a curriculum, and the proposed ability of such a

curriculum on supporting the authentic development of urban Black male youth. The next section

looks at an example of a popular transformative social justice curriculum in order to understand

its definition and foundational relevance and view it as a curricular process that can benefit urban

Black males.

Social justice education. Attempts at defining social justice education (SJE) in the field

continue to be wrought with various interpretations and inconsistencies relative to its definition,

implementation, and outcomes. Often interchangeably understood as emancipatory pedagogy

(Gordon, 1985), liberation pedagogy (Freire, 2007; Payne & Strickland, 2008), pedagogy of

resistance (Zinn, 2006), anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000), transformational (Giroux,

1981), or radical pedagogy (Giroux, 1993), broadly SJE is understood as an educative process

that is both a critique *of* and action *against* oppressive social norms. More specifically Sleeter

and Grant (2003) described effective SJE as a "multicultural" approach that promotes social and

structural equity by teaching students to challenge oppressive structures and ideologies (p. 197);

Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) argued for a "critical" approach to SJE that rests on disrupting

traditional knowledge construction so that people understand how oppression and discrimination

make their way into curriculum (p. xviii), while Bell and Adams (2007) contended that SJE is an "interdisciplinary conceptual framework that analyzes multiple forms of oppression" (p. 23).

Attempting to map the terrain of social justice (Gewirtz, 1998) is "difficult to do with any real confidence as so many different discourses and theoretical movements claim a social justice vision" (Hytten & Bettez, 2011, p. 10). Williamson, Rhodes, and Dunson (2007) argued that a review of social justice education must reveal "how competing aspects of Social Justice in education are not new… and others appropriate history and memory are omitted in order to justify certain avenues into social justice education" (p. 195). Central to this contestation of what social justice education is and what name it is associated with are the myriad curricular, social, and philosophical movements that inform the "doing" of social justice education. These multiple points of entry allow for the term social justice and more dangerously social justice education to be loosely attached to multiple academic programs, curriculums, and policies without a clear examination or critique.

On the micro level, the "doing" of social justice education can be developing an awareness of other groups, such as through multicultural education or organizing a collective understanding of oppression across groups in hopes of having a more unified approach towards agency building without an action; while on the macro level, social justice education rests on state and national policy reforms that may actually translate into more oppressive policies in the name of social justice.

While we know foundational themes that commonly shape social justice or like curriculum, there is still no agreed-upon definition or understanding of SJE. The confusion that is created by the varying goals, domains, content, audiences, and agents of socially just teaching are conflicting (North, 2006) and therefore create a challenge towards a unified vision of SJE. In

order to avoid becoming "sub-oppressors" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008), we must be cautious in applying over-simplified, one-for-all approaches in defining social justice (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). To that end, we offer what Young (1990) promoted as "the having and doing" of social justice (p. 8).

Conclusion. Becoming a citizen in a democracy carries with it several assumptions relative to personal freedoms, equity, and the protection of government. These assumptions become increasingly constrained when concepts of race, gender, and class are introduced within our country's social systems and structures for the maintenance of democracy. America's school curriculum is an example of a major system's susceptibility to the dominant ideology of how our nation uses curriculum to influence unfairly the preparation of different individuals for participation in society. For young Black men, who are most vulnerable to mainstream curriculum that operates as the reproducer of a stratified society, equity and access reflect the empty language of traditional curricular goals (Apple, 2006; Kincheloe, 2008; Saltman, 2000).

In our traditional school settings, urban Black male youth are taught to obey rules, resist questioning authority, and engage with curriculum that does not speak to their experiences in order to garner successful social positioning. I have attempted to situate the historical development of democracy and its influence on citizenship as the ideological culprit that continues to promote an unequal form of Black male citizenship.

This literature review calls us to challenge the problematic nature of building on the progressive ideology of equity, freedom, and societal participation given progressive curriculum did not consider the historical oppression faced by Blacks and the effect on knowledge construction and social order. The concept of democratic schooling or preparing individuals for full participation in society needs challenging given that the founding fathers of this concept did

not factor race or gender into their platform on educating citizens. Progressive ideology was concerned more with vocational training and creating a space for minorities in American society than with preparing all students for equitable participation in society.

This critical omission by progressives illustrates why Watkins (2005) developed the concept of curricular protest as a response to stagnant curricula's influence on the social order, morality and overall humanness of Blacks within education (Isom, 2007). Black curricular protestors outlined the role of power in knowledge as a central focus of their debate on the goals of curriculum. This idea would seek to develop a curriculum that was responsive to the socio-political needs of Black America. Specifically, curricular protest was always about how curriculum should promote the social, political, cultural, and civic identities of Black people. As evidenced in Black curricular movements, maintaining one's cultural identity while participating in the construction of political and social identity has proven both powerful and necessary in the quest for Black education in America. In these movements, maintaining the cultural self and not being forced to reject one's cultural positioning was in essence very political.

Black curricular protestors have demonstrated how to challenge race-neutral ideologies of citizenship and democracy and put forth a plausible process of how to educate Blacks to participate in society (Watkins, 2005). Black education was long the terrain of struggle to humanize the Black experience and its people. Particularly for Black men, who historically were vilified, curricular protest outlined a process by which the socio-political nature of being Black and male was addressed as an outcome of curriculum and citizenship (Fultz & Brown, 2008). From the early debates between Du Bois and Washington regarding the preparation of Black men for citizenship to the Black Panther Party's dispute over the passivity of Black men within

the Civil Rights Era, there is a longstanding debate on improving the socio-political existence of Black men.

The outcome of Civil Rights era sit-ins, marches, and boycotts within Black American history is an example of Black America doing, engaging, and acting out protest on multiple levels. Similarly, in transformative education, students have the opportunity to extend their social critique skills with action as an extension of a dialogical process. When social responsibility becomes a goal of education, we prepare youth to be adults who are equipped to critically respond to and collectively mobilize around societal issues. In the case of urban Black male youths, providing them an opportunity to develop their own human agency assures that students develop a civic identity and move beyond feeling "good" to wrestling with societal injustices and their responsibility as a social agent.

There is a need to politicize current curricular reforms similar to the historic protest of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which emphasized changing how Black Americans were educated (Woodson, 1977). In the same vein, Freire (1972) believed that curriculum should result in "a [person] who understands the depth of the interpretation of the problems resulting in an awakening of critical awareness" (pp. 18-19), which equips him for action in the world. In this way, we are using youth's social and cultural experiences to develop their political voice, as well as increase their civic participation to create a reflective dialogical process that is currently missing in citizenship education today. The concept of curricular protest requires that the development of critical consciousness be a deliberate outcome of participation. Urban Black male youths must be involved in education for citizenship that allows them to explore the contradictions of society and their lived experience.

Freire (1993) stated, "Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence" (p. 66). How do we begin to eradicate acts of "violence" that result in urban Black male youths being slated as failures when they do not demonstrate "knowledge" based on subjective truths? Students' successes and failures must not be understood as innocent occurrences but in some cases as very deliberate acts of injustice perpetrated by individuals within education, public policy, and government (Apple, 2006; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Oakes, 1985).

Youth have an insatiable need to take part in and construct spaces in which they participate (Morrell, 2004). It is our dutiful responsibility as advocates of a critical democracy and as researchers to challenge existing norms that prevent such development by "chipping away" at corroded ideology that prevents voices from contributing to the world in which they live. Developing youth as protestors provides them with a renewed sense of purpose while creating a process of citizenship that enables them to play a transformative role.

In Black education, we are still very much involved in the struggle of challenging the concept of education as the central and most equitable way to allow youth "to choreograph their own learning to generate a curriculum of their lived experience" (Fine & Ruglis, 2008, p. 17). Curriculum protest as an ideology and activity provides an avenue to challenge this contradiction while equipping students with the necessary skills to be critical members of society, skilled in socio-political interrogation. Freire's work (1993) provides a complementary conceptual frame for Black curricular protest in that both advocate for a curriculum that exposes and challenges the deleterious effects of the anti-dialogical processes of mainstream curriculum. In advocating for a process that develops the role of social critique or develops one's critical consciousness, I argue that the social, political, civic, and cultural development of urban Black male youth is

essential in developing a transformative citizen. The process of transformative citizenship engages these young men in an important dialogue of power at a critical time when discovery, questioning, and voice are important to adolescents.

Youth, regardless of race, desire to speak to the world in ways that validate their existence and participation. In the case of urban Black male youth, their need for relevant cultural and social depictions of themselves and their community makes human agency and deliberation essential for the healthy development of self and preparation to participate and transform the world (Fashola, 2005; Hall, 2006; Kunjufu, 1985; Tatum, 2005). Using curricular protest, as a means of developing the four elements of transformative citizenship assures that youth can take their place and have a critical say in the world they inhabit.

I now move to the research methodology that guided my inquiry of social critique as curriculum and transformative identity development.

Chapter III: Research Design

As a researcher, I wanted to approach this study in a way that would help me "develop theories of social transformation wherein knowledge is generated specifically for the purpose of addressing and ameliorating conditions of oppression, poverty or deprivation" (Lincoln, 1993, p. 33). To do this, I would need to hear what tools and processes urban Black male youth use when trying to define their role in society. Specifically, what are their experiences with curriculum as protest, and how do those experiences inform how they advocate for their own social positioning?

In writing on the purpose of teaching, Ayers (2004) asserted:

Our broad ethical task is to make life more possible, more robust, more full and fulfilling more *livable* for each…This seemingly straightforward goal is not so simple in practice, for it operates within a world of conflicting claims, of dilemmas and contradictions, and, most important, because it is worked our by finite and flawed human beings…with all our limitations. (p. 28)

If researchers are to explore the potential promise of new pedagogy to make life *livable* for our students, we must allow for students' experience and voice to be central to our questioning. Narrative inquiry provides a rich way to allow participants' voices to inform how we understand the process of becoming an engaged citizen. In the following sections on this study's theoretical framework and methodology, I describe the methods used for data collection and analysis and how I attended to trustworthiness and ethical concerns; then, I end with a reflection on the process of doing the research.

Theoretical Framework

American curriculum posits citizenship and successful societal membership as its outcomes. As evidenced in the literature review, we see that urban Black male youth are disproportionately at an economic, academic, and social disadvantage. The theories that I have chosen to guide my inquiry are not simply limited to the outcome of curriculum, but how its process can result in transformative citizenship. In order to understand more about the process participants engage in that teaches them social critique as a means of exploring issues of equity, race, power, and knowledge, I use conscientization (Freire, 1998), transformative identity development (Banks, 2008), and Black curricular protest (Watkins, 2005). These three concepts provide a context to analyze the process of becoming a transformative individual. These three frames helped me examine the doing and learning associated with the process of social critique.

Watkins' (2005) concept of curricular protest and Freire's (2007) position on the critical consciousness provided a complementary framework to assess how learning to problem-pose or critique informed their ability to authentically participate in society. Likewise, Banks' (2008) transformative dimensions provided a context for me to understand their process of development within four distinct categories (civic, social, cultural, and political). I move now to discuss these three concepts in greater depth.

Conscientization. As previously discussed in Chapter II, expanding the concept of democratic participation to include social change and human agency as an educational outcome was the primary goal of the social reconstructionist era (Brameld, 1965). However, without having a clear reconstructionist frame that complicates race and gender and results in action, this theory remained limited. Subsequently, critical pedagogues built upon a reconstructionist frame and argued for a curriculum of liberation (Freire, 2007; Giroux, 1981; Shor, 1992). Specifically,

these theorists argued for teaching to be a dialogical process connected to curriculum, which results in students understanding and taking action against oppressive social structures. This occurs through the development of conscientization or critical consciousness (Freire, 2007).

Conscientization, as put forth by Freire (1976), "does not take place in abstract beings in the air but in real men and women and social structures" (pp. 146-147). The experiences and interactions that individuals have while attempting to live is where transformative learning begins. Freire's (1998) position on how the "conscious" is awakened when "those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word… reclaim their right to speak" (p. 88) allowed me to be more critical in interpreting the process of learning for social critique and teachers' role in that process. I juxtaposed my participants' responses against how they were taught to "reclaim their right to speak" and what they experienced during this process.

While the process of conscientization helped me understand how these young men's transformative beings were awakened, applying Banks's (2008) transformative identities as dimensions allowed me to understand their development within various planes.

Transformative citizenship. Banks (2008) isolated the process of transformative citizenship to the development of the social, political, cultural, and civic identities. While he categorizes these four terms as identities, I understand and apply them more appropriately as transformative *dimensions* of development, given they do not formally align with an ideological identity framework. As such, I use these four dimensions to determine my participants' progress towards transformative citizenship. These dimensions allow for the process of transformative citizenship to be "interrogated" by juxtaposing participants' experience with curriculum against the social, civic, political, and cultural development of self. Drawing out these four dimensions as a type of assessment on how effective the development of one's transformative self allows us

to assess how well "students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to… work for equality and social justice" (Banks, 2008, p. 129) .

With the awakening of the transformative consciousness on varying levels being analyzed, the last essential frame was to be able to code for when students understood they were participating in curriculum as protest. For that, I used Watkins's (2005) curriculum as protest to determine when curriculum was being defined, understood or referenced as learning protest.

Black curricular protest. Relative to the Black experience in society and more specifically the role of education in this process, Watkins's (2005) concept of curriculum as protest puts the idea of Social Reconstructionism, argued by Brameld (1965), as "for students to be educated in order to serve the prevailing power struggle on his own level" (p. xi) in the context of race. By organizing the historical struggle for Black education within America's broader battle to define democracy, Watkins (2005) outlined the importance of educational protest as the conduit for the development of human agency in Black America, and that this protest must be sanctioned and supported in the field of curriculum development. Black curricular protest is about more than developing individuals to understand how race is used to restrict them to second-class citizenship. It is about action, specifically how individuals become empowered when they engage in protest.

Black curricular protest allows me, as the researcher, to go beyond the typical role of question and critique. With this lens, I examine the role of curriculum on race and power and how it has informed the process of social change—more specifically, if the curriculum provides a space for participants to think in terms of Black social, political, economic, and academic development as an outcome of participating with such curriculum.

Lastly, positioning curricular protest as a theoretical frame allows new considerations for researching students' experiences in developing human agency. Watkins's (2005) historical and analytical presentation of protest as an educative outcome provides a necessary backdrop towards defining and understanding when my participants were engaged in learning protest. This was very important as I wanted to have a more operational definition of protest beyond traditional understandings that have been commonly espoused when describing social action.

Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

In attempting to gain access to the "inner world" of my participants, narrative inquiry was the preferred methodological approach (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Positioning urban Black male youths' voice and thoughts centrally to this topic was critical given that there is little research on how their experiences and voices contribute to our understanding of how one becomes an engaged participant in society as a result of an educational process. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that narrative inquiry is "both phenomena under study and a method of study" (p. 4). Essentially, it provides the way researchers understand their study as well as their approach for gathering and interpreting participants' responses.

In traditional interviewing, we ask questions, and participants' responses are recorded, organized, and their initial statements are understood as the sole way of interpreting and answering a research phenomenon. Interviewing in this way can be limiting in that it provides a very narrow understanding of the participant's experience. Undertaking narrative inquiry understands that "students learning, a school or a particular policy; there is always a history… we reflect on educational puzzles and problems… and move back and forth between the personal and the social simultaneously thinking about the past, present and future and to do so in ever expanding milieus" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 2-3).

As narrative inquirers, we undertake the complexity of telling the participants' stories, taking into context the known and the unknown, and move in and out of those realities with our participants as our guides. I had to be aware of my responsibility to put forth my participants' *real* voices when drawing meaning from their experiences. To assure their memories, thoughts, experiences, and feelings authentically contributed to the understanding of this phenomenon of Black males as transformative citizens proved critical, particularly when attempting to understand how race factors into one's personal experience within educational settings and curriculum development (Milner, 2007).

In regular interviewing, the analysis of participants' experiences generally rests on the participants' direct responses to the questions. Conversely, narrative inquiry uses participants' responses to produces themes of understanding. Hence, it is both a process of interviewing and the illumination of a story that is situated within the words of our participants. As such, my dissertation fits the product definition of narrative inquiry.

Now that we have briefly examined narrative inquiry and its applicability to my study, let us move to the theoretical framework.

Site and Participant Selection

Participants for this research were selected on the basis of residence in Meigs. I chose these areas as they represent communities where young urban Black males between the ages of 15 and 18 years of age who represent the lowest socio-economic categories have the highest arrest, incarceration, and dropout rates within that particular city. These social factors are important because the context that curricular protest provides for urban Black male youth who live in communities where the social, economic, and academic disparities are evident is central to the process of social critique.

The process of learning for protest and its connection to urban Black male youth is what I seek to understand. I selected Strongtower High School as a site for my study because their mission states they utilize social critique on issues of power, race, class, and gender to create individual awareness and activism as a part of their curriculum. The programmatic tenets are essential to qualifying Strongtower as engaging in curricular protest. I recruited participants from Strongtower High School by posting and passing out flyers that invited students and their parents to an informational meeting. The only data collected from the school site or community organization was the school mission statement.

Participants for this study were between the ages of 15 and 18 to ensure that they are of high school age. They must have participated with the curriculum for at least one year in order to have a sufficient amount of time to engage with curriculum. As previously addressed in the literature review, engaging youth in transformative processes requires time. Therefore, participants must have had at least one year of program experience; less experience was likely to be insufficient for providing enough experience from which to speak about the topics in this study.

The recruitment/informational meetings were formal but friendly in nature. I introduced myself and my research institution, described the purpose of my study, highlighted the benefits and risks to participating in the study, and described the voluntary nature of participation and the confidentiality rights of the participants. The young men had many questions about why I was interested in talking to them since they observed most individuals want to talk to the Latino students at their school. I restated the focus of my study and that the nature of the information I wanted to know were things only they could share with me.

Parents and students signed the Parent Permission and Assent forms, respectively, to participate. The two participants who were 18 years of age signed the appropriate consent form. As I collected the forms at the end of the meeting and scheduled interview times, my participants asked if they should bring anything to our conversation in order to be prepared. I assured them that were already equipped to have a conversation with me so that they would feel comfortable about the process.

Seven young Black men who attend Strongtower and lived within the appropriate geographical areas were interviewed. Originally, 12 students agreed to participate, but only seven showed for their first interview. Each of the seven went on to complete the research study; they are presented to readers in Chapter IV.

Data Collection

To understand how participants make meaning or take part in curriculum as protest, I conducted three in-depth interviews with seven participants, totaling 21 interviews. Chase (2003) stated, "If we take seriously the idea that people make sense of experience and communicate meaning through narration, *then in-depth interviews should become occasions in which we ask for life stories*" (p. 274). In order to allow the participants' stories to shape my inquiry, I conducted in-depth interviews in three phases (Seidman, 2006). The first interview was used to collect background information about the participants, their family life, interests, and communities. The second interview focused on the participants' involvement with social justice curriculum and their thoughts regarding their learning spaces and curriculum. This interview served to set a context for understanding the process participants undergo as a part of engaging with curriculum as protest. The third interview delved more deeply into the participants'

understandings and interpretations of their experiences within the curriculum and the development of their social, political, civic, and cultural dimensions.

To assure my analysis of the data would be credible, after each interview I listened to the recordings and took notes so that I could clarify information with my participants in our follow-up meetings. This process of listening to my interviews while reading my transcripts helped to remind me of the context of my participants' conversations by matching their tone to my notes.

This research was based solely on in-depth interview data and did not include site observations as I wanted to see how participants come to make meaning of the programs from their vantage point only.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process also was conducted in a three steps (Seidman, 2006). Step one included coding interviews, transcripts, and categorizing codes into broad themes. The themes that emerged are societal participation, social critique, and community engagement with curriculum. I then coded the transformative dimensions of social, civic, cultural, and political as an additional way to break down these three broad themes into smaller concepts. In Chapter V, I use emergent themes of societal participation, social critique, and community engagement and start to "build towards the narrative" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 224). I then intersected these themes with Banks' definition of social, political, civic, and cultural development to examine how transformative citizenship, curriculum as protest, or human agency developed. The emerging themes are the basis of findings as presented in Chapter V, and some preliminary analysis is also included there. Deeper attention to analysis is in Chapter VI to more fully explore the "research story" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Trustworthiness

To ensure that data collection and analysis are comprehensive, accurate, and reliable, Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined four components of trustworthy research as being credible, dependable, transferable, and confirmable. Credible research refers to the truth of findings, and dependable research assures that findings can be duplicated and are consistent. Transferable research is defined as the applicability of the findings in other research contexts, while confirmable research addresses the neutrality of the researcher's opinions and bias in assuring that research is formed by the participants. I used a variety of strategies that to address these four criteria of trustworthiness: member checking, peer review, thick description, and audit trail.

In order to let the data speak for itself, I provided information from my participants in the forms of quotes from their interviews. This ensures that the participants' rich "stories" speak for themselves and readers are then able to determine transition themes. Member checking (Creswell, 2003) and peer review (Tuckett, 2005) were two important components of my data analysis to ensure themes were not missed and data was credible. I conducted member checking with my participants during the initial emergence and cross checking of my themes.

Peer review. I enlisted the support of my colleague, Dr. Hansra-Matrenec, on both the initial coding and emergent themes analysis. These discussions assisted in making sure the construction of my analysis was sound. Dr. Hansra-Matrenec has passed the Human Subjects Research training.

Thick description. Much of what makes the qualitative inquiry process is the use of thick description. I accomplished this in two ways. First, I provided as much detail as possible to situate the research for my readers. Secondly, to assure that readers hear the voices of my

participants, I used many direct quotes. This also validated if I was adequately capturing salient points.

Audit trail. The methods section details the chronological order in which this research study was undertaken. Additionally, I added my methodological reflection for people to see how the process unfolded.

Ethical issues. I started the first interview session by reintroducing myself and explaining my role as a student conducting research. I wanted to make sure participants understood this was not a place of judgment and they could speak freely, with no fear of retribution. I also reiterated that participation was voluntary and at any time they could discontinue their participation. Despite having read the IRB-approved script at the informal recruitment meeting, I wanted to restate the research protocol in our shared space where the interviews would be conducted and set the tone between myself and my participants to alleviate any pressure to participate.

It is vital as a researcher to have considered appropriate ethical concerns, including potential risks to my participants. DePaul University's Institutional Review Board approved this study. (See Appendix A.) I was very aware that regardless of the framing of my questions or constant reassuring of my participants that they could speak freely within this process, the power dynamics of adult and student were noticeable initially. The young men apologized for profanity or tried to retract statements about adults, school, or their community as if they sensed I would not approve. I needed to address that while they are used to the dynamics within society of needing to act or talk in ways that are acceptable to adults, in this space I was interested in their thoughts, regardless of the language or opinions of others.

I was not professionally connected to these participants, but much of my professional and personal work has been with urban Black male youth and communities such as Meigs. There were times that the information shared by participants needed to be processed to avoid bias and to ensure as a researcher I flushed out my feelings to avoid contaminating the data or my analysis. Therefore, I kept methodological notes as a way to separate my feelings from my participants' experiences. My methodological notes served as a place for me to reflect during this research and in order to be a reflective, ethical researcher. (See the next section, "Methodological Reflection," for more about this.)

The results of the study were shared in a shorter report with the participants and Strongtower High School upon successful defense of my dissertation. I wanted to engage the research site and my participants in the findings of the study to allow my participants' voices to contribute to Strongtower's understanding of student experiences. No data about participants was shared with the school.

Methodological Reflection

Narrative researchers are compelled to move beyond the "telling of the lived story to tell the research story" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 10). To ensure my data collection process resulted in an accurate tracing of my participants' stories, I listened to each interview immediately after it was conducted. It was important to take another look at the data while my initial thoughts and notes were still fresh in my mind. I also read all participants' initial interviews and coded them in order to have a collective understanding of who they were and their initials thoughts about themselves and their communities. After coding the data, I sat with my emergent themes, re-examined my findings, and then listened to my participant interviews again in an attempt to hear the stories, feelings, and interactions these young men have offered to

us in terms of research. By re-listening to their voices after the emergent themes and findings process had been conducted, I was free to hear their stories anew; this was also useful in gaining more depth to my understanding and in verifying the credibility of the emerging themes. Where time permitted, I shared my preliminary thoughts and analysis with my participants.

In sharing my initial interpretations with them, there seemed to be a sense of relief that I understood: that I heard something infinitely deeper in their conversations with me and offered them an opportunity to conceptualize their thoughts in a way they had not done before. And yes, these are still 15 to 18-year-old young men who did not know me, so I was careful not to mislead people in thinking that they uncharacteristically responded or had some sort of epiphany experience. Comments like "you heard me," "that's what I was saying," or Ed's response that "You know teachers where it's just in the classroom … it doesn't mean anything to me," made me feel that these young men were holding me accountable to responsibly tell the research story, their story.

These types of exchanges, where my participants were looking for what appeared to be my affirmation or validation to their responses, were very difficult. After each interview, I listened intently to assure my questions were not leading in nature or that I in some way was presenting myself as a person who was challenging their educative system. I returned to our interviews the next day, making sure these participants saw me as an impartial interviewer seeking to gain information. I questioned whether my facial gestures conveyed that I had some reaction to their stories based on their responses, but during an interview, when one of my participants compared his participation in the research study to "the types of things people need to ask us here, so they know," I realized that it was not that they sought my validation but that they understood this research as an opportunity to have their voices heard.

This trust and accountability led me to refer to these young men as my participants (as opposed to research subjects or interviewees), not because I take ownership over their stories or seek some sort authoritative position in relation to who they are, but as a reminder that in their experiences and the "story" that unfolds as a result of their sharing, I alone have been entrusted with by the young men of Meigs. At times, this burden made it difficult to ask my participants to clarify statements that seemed contradictory because I did not want them to feel challenged as they shared their experiences. I was able to resolve this by making sure I clarified contradictions without trying to eliminate them, as that could have potentially lost the core meaning of their statements.

Conclusion

Narrative inquiry requires "understand[ing] the complexities of experience, honoring the subtleties of experience and understanding the dynamics between individual experience and the context that shape experience" (Phillion, 2002, p. 20). This study seeks to build on the stories of the participants—Black male youth—in order to provide a landscape for how we might begin to understand their development of citizenship. Through the lived experiences of these young men, I allowed their words to shape our understandings of what contributes to the authentic development of citizens and how that development shapes an individual's interaction with the world.

I introduce you now to the insightful young men of Meigs.

Chapter IV: Their Voices

I feel like I can make a difference out there. The reason that I am not engaging is probably the fear of not many people listening to what I said because I am young. And basically, that is the number one fear that I have, that nobody won't really listen to a kid that probably don't know what he is talking about, and I feel like that. —Neville, age 17

People won't take us as serious, and that is the problem. Yeah, I would be committed, right, but not as much if I don't have a strong team. There would be time you would want to give up and be like, "Oh, nobody else cares, so why should I?" —Q, age 18

I might want to see change, but ain't nothing I can do without help. —Malcolm, age 18

If they can't listen to their own parents and grandparents, I doubt that they'll listen to one of the people coming from their age group. —E Double, age 17

Some people don't want to hear young adults at my age lead protests because they think that we will lead a protest in the wrong way, so I wouldn't like to lead a protest yet. —Ed, age 18

You got to know people to talk about what is going on so they can help you make a change. —Jody, age 18

Because it's like, you know, you want kids to have a better life for themselves… somebody needs to help them for a brighter future. —Rakim, age 18

These quotes represent the sentiments of urban Black male youth who are attempting to understand and define their role in society. It is a process compromised by the duality of their existence. In one space, they are members of a school community that states it teaches the benefit of "struggling" against inequity and power as precursor to critical citizenship while existing in a community whose violence, desperation, and lack of community supports leaves them apprehensive and in some cases apathetic to be change agents. However, these young men, strong in their convictions and opinions about the spaces they find themselves in, eloquently call

our attention as community organizers, teachers, parents, and concerned citizens to how we support the development of their "transformative" identities.

I introduce these young men to you in their own way and with their own voices. If they shared about their homes, peers, schools, or future desires, I shared their stories the way they were shared with me, allowing my readers to come to know them as I did. Whether they believe they were the next Kobe Bryant or entrepreneur or were eager to divorce themselves from their current existence, I made every effort to be true to their voices—for it is through their voices that I believe we gain understanding on how we join with them on the journey of liberation.

Neville

Neville is a 17-year-old, lifetime resident of the Meigs community. The youngest of three sons born to parents who are still married, he prides himself as being a hard-working student who hopes his reward will be the American Dream, which he describes as "having money, happiness, and family."

Neville spends little time within his community by the design of his parents. After school, he meets his father downtown and helps him at his place of business.

> My parents pretty much were very strict on all three of us. So after school, I go and meet my dad downtown and work with him, and I do that on the weekends too… as little time in the neighborhood as possible, and I don't mind.

Working with his father is an escape for Neville from what he describes as his "isolation" within the community. Shooting and violence on every corner leaves him unable and unwilling to even sit on his porch. This reality leaves Neville with very strong convictions about who should be held accountable for the state of his community: "The people need to get more involved, young people need programs. We barely have no business in Meigs… corner stores are filled with drugs… all you hear on the media is the violence…. WE HAVE NO HELP!"

He was painfully clear that the drug infested playgrounds, foreclosed homes and stores, and the lack of opportunity were orchestrated neglect by individuals in power. His sentiments were extremely sophisticated. He did not make blanket statements about race being to blame or even indict individuals on a surface level. He spoke of "capitalist societies" and "young people who aren't taught their history so they don't understand where they come from."

While he did not mince his words about who is responsible for the plight of his community and what it is lacking, the very people he feels have been abandoned he holds harsh criticism for as well. "We are lazy, as a people, especially the young men…. We are like the Black people on TV, wasting our lives away. I think some African American people feel we shouldn't work hard," states Neville.

As for himself, Neville sets himself apart from some of his peers in that he understands the challenges that lie ahead for Black male youth, but he welcomes it.

> Society hard, that why you need to prepare for it. That's why when you become a member of society, you, you will already be aware, you will already be a step ahead of the game, and I feel like that if you don't, if you are not ready for it, then yes, you will struggle, SO I feel like that you should be more prepared to be in society because if you are not, then you will give up and will do alternative things… being more prepared…. I always say make sure you have the knowledge, prior knowledge… just be knowledgeable as young, African male.

Neville often speaks of learning and society, interchangeably drawing connections between "what you know" and "how you will live." He credits his initial understanding from his parents, but being a student at Strongtower High gives him a deeper understanding about what types of things you need to know in order to be "successful in the future."

School is a "fun place that has typical high school drama that I try to stay away from." As a junior who has always received high grades, Neville's describes his favorite classes as those that "are interesting and apply to the here and now." For example, he likes his political science and African-Latin American history classes because learning the history of other oppressed

groups and how that history contributes to the current political system is part of the prior knowledge Neville believes is important.

However, the curriculum does not operate in isolation. He talks a lot about his relationships with teachers and the principal, even more so than relating to his peer group. It is those relationships that have the greatest impact on Neville's opinions.

> Every day my principal says that social justice is having the knowledge, the skills that you need to have a better life for you and the people you love. What that means is like if you got the knowledge for yourself and you provide other people with that, you help yourself and other people achieve… and you can make a change.

Neville sees himself as a change agent, but he is reluctant to say when that day might come. Despite being in a school that has taught him the purpose of "struggle," there remains something missing, that last link to make the connection for Neville to feel empowered to take a risk and be an agent of change.

Q

As I waited to start my first interview with this young brother, I stood and watched as he shouted, "Everybody always talking about us being Black men, and we need to do this and that, be respectful, watch how we act, but teachers need to respect me too, keep it real!" I assumed that he'd had an exchange that wasn't pleasurable. I didn't want to pry, but I did want to give him a space to release his feelings. He never did share about that incident, but his sentiments of "keeping it real" would be pervasive in our meetings to come.

Q is a senior and 10-year resident of Meigs. He stated he recently "got back focused" and was eagerly working towards graduation. As far as future aspirations, his are not very clear. However, he spoke about people like Mr. Mel, the dean of students, trying to support him and provide direction for the future. He also talked about the mission of his school and how its founding principle of struggle impacts his life: "It just motivated me, like at times where you just

want to give up and then don't come back to school, but you really see what the school was built for." He is referencing the hunger strikes that resulted in his school being built. He talks about the impact that had on him and the importance of feeling committed to return to school and graduate.

But Q's community and the lack of opportunity he sees makes him less than eager to engage in a plan for the future. "The school can only help you so much, it is time to get out there on your own, there is not always going to be somebody." A sobering thought for an 18 year-old young man who should be filled with the hopefulness of opportunities waiting. I wanted to understand from Q's perspective why he feels despair when talking about his community.

> The police, yeah, they don't serve and protect… they more like harass and neglect…. People choose gangs because they have no family, no one to look after them, and they choose to sell drugs because they are not able to get jobs…. They lack the opportunities for the youth in the community, so there are not really strong people. They tend not to care.

He feels violence within the community has taken away resources. There are no block clubs, and he can only think of one community organization that actually provides young men with safe alternatives to "hanging out on the corners."

For Q, the curriculum at Strongtower has not provided as much in terms of social critique, but he talks a lot about the concepts of struggle and protest that he has learned. "We can fight for something if we really want it; no one is just going to give it to you." Fighting for something "felt good" and understanding you "made it happen" was hands-on experience about struggle for progress. However, Q has left those experiences at school. Change for Q is for the alderman or someone else, because "who will listen to him anyway."

Malcolm

"My days are spent talking to girls, tweakin' in the halls, acting silly with my boys." As

an 18-year-old senior, Malcolm boasts a very carefree spirit. At first glance, his main concerns

may appear to be limited to having fun and being able to master the dating scene, but he was

very introspective about himself and his community and how it weighs on him. He shared a

conversation that he has with friends about living in Meigs:

> We hang out, cracking jokes on each other, playing video games. Some of my friends
> smoke, so you know how that goes… but we talk about how this can't go on forever…
> the violence, the block I live on now, two grownups are fighting with each other… over
> drugs, and some of us are friends with both, and it impacts me because they think we are
> choosing sides, and you always got to be in groups.

When I asked Malcolm how the state of his community makes him feel, he responded

"there's nothing you can do," but he wasn't overwhelmed by the lack of resources or even

frustrated. There seemed to be a relinquishing of hope that his community could get any better.

> We have a store on every corner… selling drugs, blunts, but the gas station has scales to
> weigh your drugs baggies, all the necessary tools to sell your drugs… it's bad drugs are
> against the law… and little kids younger than me, eight and nine, coming out with what
> grown men should have… it's the gas stations have everything you need.

Dealing with individuals who are at odds and the violence that ensues caused a great deal of

stress for Malcolm and interfered with his performance at school. He shared that he understands

the principal and dean are concerned about his absences and not turning in assignments, but

"with these things happening there is a lot on my mind."

He is very clear that the dean and principal are invested in him and "preparing us for the

real world." A real world full of "statistics that half of us not going to make it… so they prepare

us pressure us… so we'll know how to approach it."

One of the ways Malcolm feels the school has worked to prepare him is how to connect

his classes to a social issue. "You can learn about, environment, how toxins mix with soil… and

that is connected to our outside life." He went on to share about connections made in other classes and how he has learned that "people don't know there is stuff going on." So, I asked if armed with this new information, did Malcolm share it within his community? He adamantly answered, "No!"

E Double

Today is a sad day for E Double. Two of his cousins were killed the week before in a car accident by another automobile "swerving." In Meigs, there is a new form of entertainment, cars swerving to the left and the right in and out of traffic. Perhaps this event has left E Double ambivalent about anything changing within his community or his role within that change. He stated, "They act like they just don't know how to act, they don't know how to control themselves… it's dirty and reckless."

He talks about the importance of being a businessman and having one his own and the importance of self-reliance as a Black man. E Double does not give credence to any systems being able to support him or his community. The loss he has experienced goes beyond the deaths of his cousin or the reckless nature of youth within the community. He described the anger he felt watching his father get hurt on the job and ultimately being let go, and he couldn't support his family. That turn of events led his Dad to sell drugs. He explained, "My daddy did what he had to do, what he knew how… others they put themselves out there, they put themselves in my daddy's position, they're not made to… they want to look cool so that's what they do."

While he did not make excuses for young men within his community, E Double believed certain systems operate to disadvantage young Black men. He said,

> They [White society] expect us to come out and be gang bangers, drug dealers, and things like that…. Some White lawyers that feel like that a Black is not going to make it or they shouldn't have the chance to make it…. I can't say all of them, but the group that I've encountered with, yeah.

There is a depth to E Double's thoughts that makes you listen and pay attention. He talks about not wanting adults thinking "he's just a kid talking crazy," so he thinks about what he says. Take for example the issue of White society and E Double's point of view that they are generally not concerned for the wellbeing of Black youth. He is quick to point out that his principal, who is White, should not be included in that perception.

> Well, he's White, but I don't put his perspective in the perception of the other ones I've encountered because he acts as if he cares…. I can't say if he does or doesn't, but he has a good way of showing he does.

Relationships like the one with Principal Brown and his teacher Ms. Shirley have done more in helping E Double develop an understanding of social justice than any other experience within school. Teachers and staff "practicing what they preach" in terms of supporting students and teaching them how to advocate for themselves in and out of school make the difference for him.

Ed

A senior at Strongtower and a lifetime resident of Meigs, Ed is very eager about the transition from high school to college. He is an aspiring athlete who believes there is little hope in making a collective movement amongst young Black men within his community or society in general.

> I mean, it's not that I'm scared of it, it's just that I don't want to because back in 1960 it would work with Dr. King because that's 1960, but like in this society everybody is just, I mean it's all like every man for himself. Like you try to hold a march, try to make a change, everybody looks at you like why are you trying change everything.

For this reason, Ed focused on himself and his own success. He spent most of his days playing basketball and helping his mom occasionally beautify the blocks so their immediate residence did not resemble the community around them. He believed there was some sort of role for him in social justice, but it was not really a concern for him at the time of our interviews.

For Ed, young people do not have much power to change things because people will not listen to them or support them. He did not see any places where young people have been supported to make change within his community. However, he thought that his school had systems set up for young people to "do things and think." He talked about the town hall meetings where students can share issues that they are having with each other or teachers and they solve problems as a community. The one thing that did not make Ed "feel that good" was that he sees many connections to the Latino population and their issues but believes since there are not many Black students the school does not focus on them as much. It was not a major issue for Ed, who spent his social time at school with an ethnically diverse population, but he did admit maybe it could help Meigs if the school did something.

Nevertheless, he said his school is a place where "everybody is assigned equal justice as everybody else, there is no separation between religion or culture or race, it is just one big family."

Jody

Jody, a junior and an eight-year resident of Meigs, is a self-proclaimed comic who enjoys hanging with his friends, testing the limits in class, and going to church. He described his community as "having a good side and a bad side." Despite the violence, gangs, and drugs, people tried to keep his neighborhood clean to make "us feel like our block is safe." These individuals who are committed to keeping the neighborhoods clean and safe are older Black men and women, who Jody described as community activists.

The community activists are the citizens who are charged with making changes within his community. Jody believed "citizens" hold a responsibility to improving conditions in society. He

explained that the "citizens, people who vote and stuff like that to make a change… need to help

doing, like a strike to help people, like, build more clubs so there'll be less kids on the street."

The notion of social responsibility and citizenship are concepts he credited his teachers

with helping understand. Specifically, he stated that his teachers help him understand that "we

live in a capitalist society" and the lack of opportunity within his community was by design. I

asked him to explain how he saw this unfolding within his community, and he responded,

> Arabs and White people owning the restaurants and gas stations because, like, the Black-owned businesses that was open, like, they'll only be open for like two or three months, and I'll be wondering, "Why do Black people, Black-owned businesses can't be open for a long time?" It seems like Whites are superior… it seems like every time I would go on a job interview, it's like people always say, "Dress like you are White," and I'd be wondering, like, "Why do we have to dress or act different for and things like that?"

While he said he noticed that Black businesses and business owners were not thriving in his

community, it was the classes that talk about capitalism and classism that have helped him to

understand how these issues affect him and his community. I wondered if this informed Jody's

understanding of himself as a citizen.

> I feel like I got to work harder so we can change these stereotypes about Blacks ain't nothing, only thing Black people do is just go to jail and act stupid and all that stuff. So, I go to school to make a difference in the world or at least try to make a difference.

However, making a difference within his community was a frustrating process for Jody. When it

comes to organizing change within the community, he said, "It seems like nothing changes when

everybody come together… and I don't see no change, so I'll leave." He did not see the systems

or structures within his community or a connection from his school back to his community that

can make a change. Likewise, at this stage in his life basketball and college were the things that

Jody felt like he has the greatest chance of having a positive impact on, so he spends his time

cultivating his skills on the court and studying for AP Chemistry.

Rakim

A senior with two months until graduation, Rakim's focus is to "leave Meigs and never look back." He does not understand his family commitment to a violent community and does not feel that he should give back once he graduates.

> I want to leave because I don't see nothing positive that's going on in my neighborhood…. It's like people, my dad, he's in a gang, and it like everybody know so they know me, but I don't want everybody to look at me like, "Oh, your father's in a gang," so they've got me connected to him, and I don't want that.

Rakim's father had a lot of street credibility, something that helped him to stay safe, but it also served as a harsh reality of what he was trying to leave behind.

While he was very adamant about moving forward, having a new life, and hope of meeting new people in college, he admited that he will miss school. The relationships he has built with his friends and teachers made his high school life enjoyable. "You know, the teachers, they, it's like you have a connection with them. It's not like they just give you a lot of work." Rakim felt that the work was intended to develop you as an informed member of the community connected to a greater good than yourself. However, there is such a stark contrast between how the school wanted Rakim to engage in society and how he saw himself. The schools used words like "togetherness, change, and support" when describing how students should connect to their community, while Rakim uses words like "abandonment, escape, and frustration" about his community experiences.

Given the stark contrast, I wanted to understand if Rakim made any connection between his curriculum and his community.

> For some reason, I don't know why, I feel we talk about social justice like race and skin color… it's like in math class, you talk about social justice issues. In history, you talk about the social justice issues and like what's going on in the community… and that's good to talk about it whether it's Black and Mexicans in the same room…. We really feel like we belong in each other's communities.

The social justice curriculum served as topic that fostered good conversation and understanding across race, but in Rakim's words, "I've lived here [Meigs] for so long, I don't want to change my ways of thinking because I know what going on." Perhaps the fact that Rakim himself was a victim of violence within his community or was an 18-year veteran of Meigs has left him too frustrated to be hopeful.

I purposefully introduced my participants in their own words, so that they would "speak" to us and guide our understanding of their process of critical citizenship. I hoped that readers would have an opportunity to connect with each participant individually and immerse themselves within Meigs and Strongtower High School through the eyes of these young men, allowing their narration to give shape to this story. Sinclair (2002) reminded us that "narrative inquiry involves working with people's consciously told stories, recognizing that these rest on deeper stories of which people are often unaware" (p. 209).

The "conscious stories" these young men shared relative to their school's community have yielded five major themes: community experiences, social critique, social justice curriculum, teacher-student interactions, and curriculum in action. In the next chapter, I discuss the emergent themes to gain a deeper understanding of how the process of social justice curriculum promotes both a concept of transformative citizenship while thwarting participants' desire to engage actively in becoming a transformative individual.

Chapter V: Our Experience—Findings

In keeping with the process of narrative inquiry, this chapter explores how themes emerged as a result of the stories shared by my participants. Let us begin our examination with the first of five themes that emerged: community experiences.

Community Experiences

Community is defined in most dictionaries as a group of people living together in one place or practicing a common ownership. When contextualized in a sociological understanding, the definition of community is less descriptive. Bartle (2010) said that community is best understood as a construct in which we think about the interactions between individuals around their beliefs, experiences, values, and shared spaces. In this research study, the young men describe their community as a place "where we hoop," "kick-it," "see girls… where I call home." These young men recognize their block and the entire jurisdiction that is called Meigs as their community.

Meigs, or "M-Town" as they affectionately call it, stirs up a myriad of emotions for these young men. Living within this community, they have developed feelings of rejection against those who pull the community down, frustration with the lack of support systems, and the challenge of trying to resist the urge to be apathetic. At times, they share the sentiments of outsiders to their community, that Meigs is a place full of "violence and drugs," but more often, they speak in defense and loyalty to "M-Town" and the community's potential if people were vested and "cared enough."

Each participant differed in his way to cope with the realities of where they live. Rakim eagerly awaited the opportunity to "leave and never come back," while Neville felt a degree of sadness and frustration with "Black people who just didn't want any better." Rakim and Neville

wanted to reject their communities in two very different ways. For Rakim, his rejection worked

to support his idea that there was no need to be engaged in a community that "cannot change." It

appeared that being a victim of violence himself made his community feel like a burden and the

best thing he could do was to become successful and move away to give the next generation of

his family "a fighting chance." For Neville, rejection of community was taught as a means of

survival. His parents taught him that you don't let anyone run you away from where you live but

cautioned him at every turn that time invested outside the community is his best hope at "being a

successful citizen" and making something of himself.

The feelings of rejection, internalized racism, or self-hatred experienced by these two

participants are not a new concept among Black adolescents. Most commonly, these concepts are

written about in the scholarship of the psychological effects of Black racial identity development

(Cross, 1995; Decuir-Gunby, 2009; Parham, 1989). However, in terms of activism and

citizenship development, how my participants feel about race appears to be a manifestation of

living in Meigs and carrying the burden of improving their communities versus abandoning

them. Consider Rakim's words:

> My mom's been living here for 45 years, so like they don't want to leave. But
> me, I want to leave because I don't see nothing positive that's going on… weed
> spot, drug spot… random stuff… yeah, so if I leave I won't come back.

While the other participants did not hide their frustrations with Meigs, they did not speak

in terms of rejection of community. They generally accepted the state of where they live and

"make the best of it" by filling their time with socializing and playing basketball in an attempt to

retain some of their youth that they felt "the streets" were trying to take away. For them, the lack

of adults invested in the community left them unwilling to be committed as well. These

participants did not hold their neighbors or fellow youth in contempt; they simply described the

sobering reality in which they and their families were left to exist. Q explained why he believes

his community is in this depressed state:

> Drugs and gangs are always going to be there, some of these people you know personally, and they are doing it because they have no other option or no other family members, so that is why they choose the gangs… no one to look after them… they are not able to get jobs… lack of opportunities.

Ed supports Q's frame of thought on how their community has been left abandoned:

> The Alderman, to me that's the government… like put more money in our schools… like my first school only had two air conditioners in the whole school… some lights didn't work… and the other people that need to make a change in our neighborhood is the police! People want to change but… some of them are scared to change.

Ed and Q's thoughts about who is responsible for the resource deprivation and lack of

development within the community promote frustration and ambivalence towards becoming

agents of change. This feeling that their community has been forgotten is one that is shared

across my participants. Without essential support systems in place, it makes mobilizing the

community a daunting task. Even the one organization that the majority of participants

referenced as being consistent at providing an outlet for them in terms of recreation, Brighton

Community Center, was not nor to their recollection had ever led or supported any efforts at

revitalizing the community or equipping young people to do so.

Despite having limited support systems and some of the participants displaying feelings

of rejection towards their community, the young men of Meigs had a keen sense of how

community engagement could benefit their community. Jody talked about how the community

can make a change:

> Actually in our community it's basically the church… like they'll go around giving out flyers, like come eat and play with the people at the church, so you can become inside of the church instead of on the street, and there would be less crime basically.

Given the historical position of the Black church and ministers during the Civil Rights

Movement, it is not uncommon for Black communities to reference the church or its members as

a place or group of change agents. The Black church of the 20th century was the place where

individuals assembled, planned, and prayed against the oppressive segregation of our country.

However, in recent years, this system has not been as prevalent, and research points to a

disconnect between Black youth and Black churches and an increase in crime (Johnson, 2001).

> The unified struggle of the 1960s and 1970s was far in the distance for Ed. He said,
>
> Back in 1960s, it would work with Dr. King because that's 1960, but like in this society everybody just, I mean, it's like every man for himself. Like you try to hold a march, try to make a change, everybody looks at you like why are you trying to change everything? … I don't want to do it.

Ed's words caused me to pause. I began to reflect on my own experiences: the times I struggled

and could not muster up enough courage to speak up on behalf of someone else or even myself.

The young men of Meigs in many ways were in this very place, frustrated with the lack of

leadership within their community and ill-equipped to be its leaders themselves. Tragically, these

young men saw a great disconnect between themselves and the protestors of the 1960s despite

the likeness in age and relevancy of social issues.

I had no judgment against Ed; in fact, his ability to isolate his feelings and draw a larger

connection to the historical nature of protest was inspiring. What I did feel was sorrow and

sadness that adults or organizers had neglected to show up, and that resulted in him and the other

young men of Meigs lacking the desire to be engaged. A sobering thought was that in some way,

I, we, the community prevented them from participating in change by our lack of follow-through.

Hearing these young men share about their community experience revealed that what I

initially regarded as one theme was in fact a multi layered concept that represented notions of

community-relationships, community-rejection, and community-engagement. The understanding

they held about their community was not limited to being physically located in Meigs, but it was also about a "relationship" and feeling a need to protect and advocate for the place where they live. This was true of all participants. Regardless of whether they verbally rejected their community with plans to move away or resisted participating within the community, they still longed for the community to improve and thrive. They all felt individuals needed to invest and commit to improving their community by being authentically engaged in advocating for its development.

These layered understandings of community gave way to what I think were very pointed and insightful thoughts around social critique. We move now to uncover the process of social critique through the eyes of the young men of Meigs.

Social critique. The more these young men shared with me, the more I realized how advanced their concepts of social critique and their role as change agents were. Not that they used these terms specifically, but their understanding and rationale of why some communities or people continue to lack while others thrive was telling. People might expect youth to openly blame this person or that system without any concrete analysis, but not the young men of Meigs. It was obvious that they had carefully analyzed and thoughtfully considered all the elements that affected their community.

I listened and learned as they shared their insight on what larger systems they felt were at work. Malcolm began,

> When you look at our community and see the foreclosure signs… you know it's higher in our community than anywhere else…. That's planned… not by accident, you can buy everything you need for drugs at the gas stations and the corner stores… little kids nine years old… selling…. The police see it… they know it's there; they just drive by.

I asked him why he thought the police ignore what they see, and Malcom replied, "Because they don't care!"

Similarly, in response to the issues in his community, Q added,

We used to hang at a school and have programs like *Community Cares* [an after school program]… but in the community, there is nothing to get involved in…. The block clubs are gone, there is a center on Payton [Street] called CCM [a boys' club], but it's the only one, so it's always crowded… so if we know kids need things to get involved, but there aren't more things to do…. They lack opportunities for the youth in community… and the kids are outside more, and there is violence going around, so they need to make the schools a safe place and educate the kids more…. The alleys, they don't be clean, and things like that… like for us… like the alderman's job is you go to them with the problems in community, right? No! And the police, yeah… I don't think they serve and protect. They more like harass and neglect.

Other participants shared thoughts about "the economy and how people are reacting" based on being forgotten. Their critiques were as straightforward as "the police spending time harassing the wrong people instead of dealing with crime" to a more sophisticated argument of how "schools in Black communities have less resources," implicating the effects of racism on financial distribution to schools.

Social critique that moves beyond unfounded criticism to thoughtful review is a very sophisticated task. It takes little to no effort to loosely complain and blame when one is frustrated and disheartened. Despite the pain and anger that was evident from my participants, these young men resisted the temptation to hurl blame blindly. Instead, each articulated a critique of how power, class, and race work to disadvantage their community.

From their biographies to their own words, the young men of Meigs were able to paint a clear picture of how they undertake the process of social critique. We move now to analyze how these young men experienced participating in social justice curriculum.

Social justice curriculum. I sat wondering if at 17 I myself was thinking about the effects foreclosure would have on my property value or if I was critical in my analysis of crime patterns to deduce that they only existed in places where people where purposefully being oppressed. I wanted to know how these young men came to make connections between

economics and race or theorize that politics play a part in why their community remained

impoverished. One by one, they shared with me how they came to learn these concepts. Rakim

stated,

> We talk about social justice issues like race and skin color… like we talk about social justice issues and, like, what's the issues going on in the community, and we just really sit down and talk about it sometimes… and that's good to talk about the communities and whether its Black and Mexican in the same room… it use to be like, "All the Mexicans are stealing our jobs." …but now we are trying to get together and work together.

To the same point, Malcolm added,

> I've learned about like different problems and how to connect them like to a social matter or like to just stuff that go on… like say like low food supplies and what's happening in the other places… yeah, like environmental. Environmental basically is what's going on outside and like… what's hurting our environment and what is helping… And like, we were learning about like how toxins mix in with the soil, and people don't know how contamination complicates, and they don't know… and that is connected to our outside life because different companies make money, and we don't know because some people just don't say it, and there is stuff going on.

Likewise, Eric surmised, "We are always talking about the struggle." I asked, "What's that?"

Eric replied, "Always pressing forward and not letting anybody keep you down, that's what Mr.

Brown always teaches us."

> Jody elaborated in greater depth about what the purpose of curriculum was:

> We talk about activists who made a difference in this world. They [teachers] know we live in a capitalist society, so social justice is basically coming together as unity, like between the two races coming together, like agreeing on the same thing and making a change in the world because change has to start with somebody.

"What do you mean by capitalist?" I asked. Jody responded:

> Well, what I mean by this is capitalist is like, we live in a society where everybody want to own this and everybody want more of this, so if we all work together, then we all are being on the same level as each other.

"So, you think that is taught in one class?" I continued to probe. He responded:

> No, it's taught all around the school. They showed us that we got to fight for something if we really want it. Like, no one is just going to give it to you! Most of the students don't

really know why the school was built, and so the senior class really touched on that…. I was part of a project, we did interviews…. They showed that they wouldn't give up…. It just motivated me, like at times where you just want to give up and then don't come back to school, but you really see what the school was built for.

I gathered from their comments that selected teachers attempted to frame curriculum around the issues within the community and in some cases the world. There appeared to be certain standards that were present within the classes that had a social justice focus. Students were often challenged to think about how macro-level issues translated into their day-to-day lives, and teachers often talked about strategies to overcome this notion of "struggle" within these classes and school faculty as well.

There were also many references to teachers connecting the concept of "struggle" to past liberatory movements. Again, it appeared that those teachers who were making social justice connections within their curriculum discussed movements like the Civil Rights Movement and ones in Latin America to teach students about the process of protest. Interestingly, the participants were very clear about there being a shift in which teachers taught from a social justice standpoint and those who did not. They felt strongly that all teachers did not teach from a social justice frame.

I share participants' stories about interactions with teachers later in this chapter, but I thought it was important to note that despite the fact that these young men did not describe social justice as being an interconnected frame across the curriculum that all teachers followed, in those classes where the curriculum was taught, students retained the information and connected it to their lives. The next section uncovers the experience the young men of Meigs had with the praxis of social justice.

Curriculum as action. In the previous section, Neville stated that teachers showed him that social justice is about fighting for "something." I wanted these young men to help me

understand what things they deemed worthy of fighting. How could I interpret the curriculum's

influence beyond how they defined social justice? The concept of how curriculum became

actualized within the school was very important to the young men. Not just the marches for

budget, rallies for immigration, or the hunger strike to build the school, but Strongtower's

attempt at providing the students with a voice was very important to these young men.

> I mean like one thing that really blossomed that other people were helping about was the strikeout. I mean not the strikeout, the walkout. The walkout when the [school district] budget cuts had cut a lot of the teachers here and impacted GHT generally, the school you know, the students felt like it was unfair how all of the mentors, the teachers was gone, and how everything was cut down, like how the schedule was changing, basically how the culture of each school changes because of that, and when we did the walkout, it basically gave us just strength, and we was so emotional we felt like we won't know when things with the GHT will change.
>
> We basically went on and told them how we felt and how all these teachers here helped us and how you could cut the teachers that you know… were mentors, so how can you let them go and how we really feel about the whole situation, and I felt like that at that moment, RIGHT THERE, symbolized how we really care about our education to know we really felt about actually making the positive difference that is out there…. We learned that in our town hall meetings.
>
> —Neville

> The Town Hall meeting is basically this, all your school come together, we down, and we take a break and talk about what's going on… and how we are feeling…. It's the students' voice.
>
> —Malcolm

> The students run it because I guess it's what we think matters… when the students run it, the other students can like be like, "Yeah I agree with that," or "I disagree with that" …. Yeah, the student has a voice.
>
> —Jody

Giving students an opportunity to provide feedback on school uniforms and the structure

of the academic day in addition to recommending items for collective action made the young

men of Meigs feel like they were real contributors to their school. In fact, it was a demonstration

of authentic democracy at work.

Learning that "real education is to speak up for yourself" is one of the major benefits that Neville stated he has learned at Strongtower. The other participants supported this thought and credited the teachers and school with understanding how to, as Malcom would say, "challenge the rules." Interestingly, these young men used this very same skill of critique to address how curriculum as action in Strongtower High School fell short relative to them producing action within their community.

When asked about the connections that they see between what they learned and direct action within their community, E Double stated, "But it's like we always focus on Latino stuff!" To which Jody added, "it seems like they built this school for them [Mexicans] and that what we talk about don't matter, so I stay cool and don't say nothing cause I got to get home from here!" Other participants did not have much to add outside of replying that there was "no direct action" as a result of their curriculum.

Action within the school versus the community looked different. Within the school, there were clear systems where students understood who the organizers of protest were, and they outlined the role of students clearly. The young men of Meigs felt engaged and also spoke about how they learned the art of protest as a result of participating in this process at school. In contrast, action within the community was limited to concepts discussed in class, which left my participants informed but frustrated. As they shared with me, learning the curriculum increased their desire to practice or at least be approached about supporting action within their community.

Regardless of the amount of time the participants were enrolled in school, it was clear they learned some very important concepts of equity, justice, and protest. Not only did they themselves use such terminology, but also they were able to define it and speak to how it

becomes actualized. An important component of how that curriculum came to life or, as Neville said, "We are able to live by it," was their relationships with their teachers and administrators.

Meaningful relationships. Countless research has pointed to the importance of teacher-student relationships on the academic success of urban students (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Klem & Connel, 2004). I think the young men of Meigs offered an interesting context that allows us to think about teacher-student connections more than just relationally; it was more about the exchanges that occurred between them relative to their curriculum, relationships with other students, beliefs, and their futures. They credit much of their understanding of social justice to the investment made by their teachers and administrators, who worked to make sure that they connect the curriculum to real-life experience. They speak of how teachers value their "culture" and understand that "you must know your history in order to move forward."

I do not want to paint a false impression of these bright, talented young men. They may not all be top academic scholars, and even during the course of research, some suffered disciplinary action as a result of their behavior, but it didn't change their perceptions of the adults' investment in them. Jody explained as he talked about a situation with his principal:

> Like the teachers here like to help us, but like when I'm mad, like I don't care what's going on, I'm just drop it off on them. Like I had a thing with Mr. Brown, and I took it the wrong way, like I don't feel like doing that. But when I came to my senses and understood and thought about it…. I was going to talk to him…. He did care and wanted to let me know something was important.

They all speak of their principal's investment and are eager to draw out that he does not limit himself even though he is White. For E Double, it is important to share that Mr. Brown is different and "I trust him because he talks about race; that makes him different."

Openly talking about racial difference in terms of power proved to be an important component to building relationships with the young men of Meigs. A few of the participants were members of a male responsibility group started by their dean, Mr. Madison. They acknowledged that as an older Black male figure, he is "harder on us to stay on track," but his investment in them fills the void that many of them feel. "He talks to us on a weekly basis about what we are going thru… promoting unity." Mr. Madison consistently drew on the importance of the young men being unified with one another and unified in their academic pursuits because of the oppression that Black men have historically faced. As they describe it, he reminded them they had a responsibility to understand how systems work to keep them down so they do not "play into that game."

Opportunities to connect to staff proved to reinforce the concepts of social justice that are being taught within the school. Neville spoke specifically about how his teacher, Ms. Shirley, has made a difference in how he thinks of himself:

> African-American and Latin History Studies, like that is the one class I always find most interesting because it is an in-depth history of like African and Latin History…. I think youth today should know more about our history and know what really went on instead of learning from somebody who don't really know a lot of information… if you know your roots, your ancestors… so like people who don't know the history from it, you could teach them about something.

The exchanges also worked to put learning social justice into context. Whether it was Dean Madison, Principal Brown, or the history teacher, Ms. Shirley, my participants reported that conversations about behavior or curriculum were connected to aspects of social justice. As the participants described it, the teachers and administrators were always talking about "the struggle" for social justice, which enabled the participants to understand their role as change agents. From the young men of Meigs's account, these exchanges occurred within not only formal classroom settings but also chance encounters in the hall.

It is clear that exchanges between these young men and their teachers not only had an impact on how they felt about school, but also in some cases made them think more critically about their cultural identities. After exchanges with their teachers, they used terms like "empowered" and "proud" to describe the impact of those encounters. When teachers intentionally and responsibly taught about the Black experience, it increased the participants' belief about the teachers' level of investment in their lives.

Conclusion: Making Sense of the Experience

There is no singular concept that can be drawn from these themes; on the contrary, they work to provide a map to understand the struggle these Black young men undergo as they not only participate in social justice education but also make sense of it. While they hold strong sentiments about their relationships with their teachers and administrators and we see how these positive relationships support their advanced concepts of protest and human agency, this process worked to frustrate them as well.

It was almost as if the process of transformative citizenship education occurred within two separate spaces having two distinctly different outcomes. The first is connected to the school's curriculum, and the second is how the participants connected to the curriculum as result of their relationships with their teachers. However, when they shared about the curriculum or teachers connecting to their communities, the same process of social justice seemed purposeless. Participants unanimously felt the anger of not being able to make concrete changes within their communities, but the young men who have at least one more year to complete are slightly more optimistic that the school may ultimately make connections within their community.

The five emergent themes that are presented in this chapter provide a very rich context in which to examine transformative citizenship. The themes varied across the participants'

schooling experiences, community life, and relationships, speaking to the overlapping nature of what occurs as my participants make sense of their participation with social justice curriculum. In analyzing the emergent themes, there was a parallel being drawn by the young men of Meigs about what happens when learning social justice curriculum and how it affects the decision to participate in protest and the reasons why.

The next chapter delves deeper into the discussion of the transformative dimensions in order to distill what occurred for the young men of Meigs in the process of learning to be transformative citizens.

Chapter VI: Informed but not Empowered—Analysis and Discussion

In this section, I wanted to more deeply explore the concept of citizenship and curricular protest within the broader frame of learning to live and the process of conscientization (Friere, 1973) relative to the young men of Meigs. I juxtapose the emergent themes of the previous chapter, using Banks's (2008) dimensions as *a priori* codes, to understand if and how transformative citizenship unfolds as a result of engaging with curriculum as protest. What is revealed through this analysis is a broader conceptual theme of hopelessness and frustration. I explore how participants' involvement with transformative citizenship curriculum and its process made them question the relevancy of a process they initially believed held prominence. The following analysis/discussion pulls together the main findings' themes analytically along with Banks's (2008) transformative citizenship dimensions to reveal new insight on what these concepts mean in terms of preparing urban Black male youth to participate in the social reconstruction of society.

Unpacking Dimensions of Transformative Citizenship

As explored in Chapter II, much of what drove Black curricular protestors of the 20th century to design their own curriculum was the need for curriculum to result in an authentically equitable and engaged citizenry for Black America. I examined Banks's (2008) transformative citizenship typology as a proposed model to understand how the critical consciousness is awakened.

From the original emergent themes, it was clear that the young men of Meigs were being taught social critique as an integral part of education. What would be revealed is that failure to see the action or *praxis* to deepen their understanding of "the dialectical relationship between education and liberation" (Watkins, 2005, p. 6) left them hopeless. From their standpoint, it

appeared that the curricular exploration did not delve into action with any level of intentionality on the part of their teachers, resulting in a disconnected process for the young men of Meigs.

I revisited Banks's (2008) four dimensions, the civil, political, social, and cultural, to see along what dimension my participants' disconnect between curriculum as protest and development of their critical consciousness occurred. While Banks offered a frame to understand the process of transformative citizenship, I found that attempting to ground the four dimensions in the process of conscientization of my participants needed a more thorough definition of each one than what Banks offered. However, what Banks stated in explaining the transformative citizenship typology gave a more solid definition of transformative citizenship education than the aforementioned dimensions that assist us in assessing how process of transformation citizenship becomes operationalized as result of curriculum:

> Transformative citizenship education… is rooted in transformative knowledge and enables students to acquire the information, skills and values needed to challenge inequality within their communities…to take action to create just and democratic multicultural communities and societies…transformative citizenship helps students to develop the decision making and social action skills that are needed to identify problems in society, acquire knowledge related to their homes and community cultures…identify and clarify their values, and take thoughtful individual and collective action. (Banks 2008, p. 135)

More than just naming dimensions with multiple dimensions, the above statement speaks very clearly about the outcomes of transformative citizenship. Namely, the role of acquiring knowledge that promotes transformation, teaching one to take action, understanding one's

community, and the need to be both individually and collectively invested in the development of socially just communities.

In flushing out transformative education in its entirety, Banks (2008) distilled what I believe he only broadly referenced in the four dimensions. The overarching themes of knowledge, action, community, and personal investment provide a stronger context to discuss transformative citizenship and curricular protest and help us to understand the experience of the young men of Meigs.

Whose protest is it anyway? The frustration amongst participants centered on two major points. First, that their personal or community issues were not enacted as a result of curriculum. Secondly, seeing curriculum result in action for their Latino counterparts while their issues were merely researched made them question the applicability of curriculum for protest in their own lives.

So much of my participants' experience of learning how to authentically live occurred in a compartmentalized fashion, preventing the process of transformative citizenship from unfolding. The driving point of Black protest was that "oppression and protest are inextricably linked" (Watkins, 2005, p. 2). If we teach individuals that to be free and liberate themselves must be advocated for, then it is fair to deduce that transformation of oneself or community cannot be achieved without protest. "Education is about ideas and contested social knowledge…. Ideas translate into *action*" (Watkins, 2005, p. 3). The missed opportunity to have the young men of Meigs learn by doing within their own community hampered their transformative development and left them feeling ill equipped to speak up for themselves within their community.

Q speaks to this very point when he says: "What we learn in classes, I don't feel like they take that and apply it to what is happening in the real world outside of the school…. When they

ask us about it, like when they want to talk about our community… it's just gangs and drugs, nothing new." Grant (2011) advocated for a curriculum that "includes the Black man's struggle for self-determination and social justice" or otherwise it "remains oppressive" (p. 45). Participants defined Strongtower as a school where they learned and retained things they would not otherwise have considered: how corporate interests effect schools, how city politics works to keep impoverished neighborhoods from growing, or "how moving poor people out rather than fixing up the neighborhood for rich people" doesn't have to happen if the people fight; however, they remained oppressed by not being organized around their issues.

Freire (1970) stated that true praxis makes dialogue possible, resisting the inclination to take action for action's sake (p. 88). Hence, Freire argued for authentic dialogue where action becomes a focal point. Here, Q's frustrations, which mirror those of his counterparts, was a result of the "dialogue" at Strongtower emanating from the position of the teachers and not from the students. It is unclear if the lack of connection between Q's classes and community are to blame for Q's resistance towards practicing his own individual rights, but it is clear that Strongtower did not foster spaces for him to engage in the development of his community.

While Strongtower boasted a social justice curriculum, and at first glance, students agreed with such a stance, the level to which students engaged in curriculum that is rooted in action against oppressive systems varies. In Chapter IV, Eric, Jody, and Neville spoke about learning how unfair housing practices and corporate interests on the environment affected communities. However, all of them also contended that when it came to practicing or enacting curriculum within their respective communities, there were not any opportunities to do so for the Black students. They referenced how Latino issues within the school sparked community engagement while the concerns for Black students and their communities did not get much

attention. For them, the acts of emancipation, marching for immigrant rights and school budget, were valuable, but issues were detached from who they are and where they live; these social justice "events," therefore, lost their importance. From the participants' standpoint, protest was articulated and advocated for by Strongtower, which reviewed oppression across many races but "favored" the Latino population because, as Rakim noted, there were so "many activities" relative to their issues.

Banks (2008) called for transformative curriculum to result in citizens who are able to move beyond "superficial and limited" understandings of culture to be engaged locally and nationally on issues that are of a global concern. To Banks's point, the young men of Meigs were engaged in such a process. However, there was a contrasting component that Q, Jody, and E Double brought to light. Strongtower's omission of examination and protest on issues relative the young Black men of Meigs fostered a disconnect between them and the concept of protest.

One of the major contentions in arguing for how we educate students for transformative citizenship is that we must move from the "superficial and limited" levels of citizenship education to "help students understand their complex identities" (Banks, 2008, p. 135). One might argue that while Strongtower's curriculum was not superficial, it was limited in its connectedness to the lives of the young men of Meigs and students like them. Telling students the benefits of civil disobedience without providing the necessary opportunities to drive the process of social action or practice it in a way that is relevant to them limits curriculum's ability to be liberatory. In the case of the young men of Meigs, who feel as urban Black male youth they represent a silenced population, learning how to use their voices as a tool of protest was something they admitted having insecurities about. Feeling little confidence to speak up about

issues within their communities and lacking support to do so robbed the young men of Meigs of any opportunity to learn self or community advocacy.

Allowing young people to decide what is important to them and supporting their quest for equality is very important during adolescence (Youniss & Yates, 1997). The young men of Meigs attested to learning about becoming political and taking action at Strongtower as they talked about participating in various political processes such as marching, voting, and voicing their opinion on school matters. As the young men of Meigs described it, they learned that struggle is both a concept of freedom and a form of practicing how to maintain it. Ed said, "From the first day of high school, they teach you are in the struggle… your first day, your first year of high school, you have to learn how to struggle." Q adds, "Just like the hunger strikers' mission and how people did not want this school built… we have a struggle too."

Speaking out or against was talked about as a rite of passage by some teachers and administrators at Strongtower. Being taught they have the right to challenge authority was a new concept for these young men, and one they revered. Protesting budget changes, marching alongside their Latino classmates for changes in immigration policies, or being a part of history and rallying people to vote for President Barak Obama brought the concept of struggle alive, but it also left them wanting more, a deeper, more personal connection to their own concerns, which seems to have been highlighted in classroom discussions but not acted upon in formal protest. As stated by the participants and in Chapter V, the stated mission of the school, to be a place that prepares students to act, was not always reflected in the curricular focus.

While the process of becoming political was intriguing, Q, like many of the participants, desired a more personal or authentic connection between the curriculum and his lived experience—something they could own. Being equipped to take action must not only involve a

process of learning the skill but also allow the participants to select, organize, and facilitate their emancipatory processes. What is often referenced as the most powerful components of the historical trajectory of the Black liberatory movement is the notion that "the people" decided what to fight for, how it would be done, and who would be involved. Essentially, we outlined our own process for our own freedom.

Not allowing or limiting the opportunity for the young men of Meigs to decide on what issues they would develop their political identity around was detrimental on two important fronts. First, because participants felt that Strongtower limited their opportunities to exercise their political selves on issues connected to the school, their political identity remained connected to the school and was not actualized. Second, some participants came to have conflicting feelings about developing their political selves. On one hand, they enjoyed participating in political activities that allowed them to connect with their teachers and feel valued as youth, but upon reflection, they failed to see the relevancy of this practice in their daily lives, and that led to feelings of resentment and disappointment.

Freire (1998) himself cautioned liberators to be "mindful" and allow for the transformative process to be driven by the oppressed. Based on students' comments about the administration and staff at Strongtower, it does not appear that the goal of their curriculum was to further oppress their students. On the contrary, as conveyed by participants, it appears their intention was to allow students to engage in processes as a way to prepare for the future. Unfortunately, for the young men of Meigs, there needed to be a stronger connection between their lived experience and the process of becoming political.

Fed up with hope and waiting. The process of education for liberation is one that rests on a collective hope—hope and belief that the systems and structures that restrict our most

vulnerable populations can and will change. Freire (2000) himself said, "dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not a cause for despair, but for hope" (p. 72), and he went on to say that "dialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness" (p. 73). It is clear that the young men of Meigs feel strongly about the importance of knowing you have a right to speak against systems of power and oppression or "things that weren't right" and that "if you were going to be a citizen, it's something you will need to do," but tragically, participating in protest based on a teacher or administrator's concern created a sense of hopelessness amongst my participants.

For Q and E Double, their hopelessness resulted in an undeniable sense of anger; at times, they did not understand why their concerns were not a more intentional focus of Strongtower's curriculum. These young men entered Strongtower's student body freshman year, and one of them was preparing to graduate. There were no real differentiations amongst the young men relative to how long they had been students at Strongtower and how much they learned or experienced. However, I found that those who had participated longer were less hopeful about being engaged as change agents in the future, as if the more time they were exposed to curriculum without outcomes or connections that they deemed relevant, the more hopeless they became.

Perhaps the phenomenon put forth by both Ellsworth (1989) and Fischman and Haas (2009) in addressing the challenge of teaching critical pedagogy offers a lens through which we might understand what the young men of Meigs were facing. Ellsworth (1989) talked about the need to move from utopian views of giving students voice (p. 298), while Fischman and Hass (2009) contended that the "narrative redemption" (p. 547) of being a teacher who can change the world by just engaging in critical pedagogy is the biggest tragedy of social justice curriculum. In

many ways, my participants fell susceptible to both frames. The curriculum as they described it often romanticized the process of social critique. The young men felt teachers or the school's mission conveyed that *learning about* social justice *equips you to challenge* social, political, environmental, and racial inequities, but they never fully experienced such an outcome. Learning about how to change power does not necessarily translate into having the desire or feeling equipped to do so. I think they were looking for this opportunity to put into practice their voice and participate in *struggle* as their teachers and administrators had taught them. However, when that opportunity never fully revealed itself, as in this study, frustration, hopelessness, and anger ensued.

Freire (1998) repeatedly cautioned that the "sacrifice of action is verbalism" (p. 88). I believe that my participants possessed a real yearning to connect to the process of transformation. Their concern for their communities is real. Even in instances where they openly stated they were not ready to be viewed as change agents or carry the obligation of being Meigs freedom fighters, if they could have been connected to someone who was orchestrating a cause, I believe their outlook might have been different.

I believe the young men of Meigs conveyed that there are real human consequences when curriculum falls short of authentically engaging people in action, particularly within this important stage of adolescent development, where one is forming one's opinions and impressions of the world and how he will engage in it. I am reminded of when Rakim emphatically stated, "I'm leaving, I'm not interested in coming back," with his hands thrown up, gesturing to move on from this talk of being a change agent. For me, it signaled an opportunity was lost.

To what degree Rakim's or any of the young men's resistance to becoming a transformative citizen was solely a result of his experiences at Strongtower cannot be completely assessed. This pervasive hopelessness, while largely connected to the curricular process at Strongtower by my participants, had implications for the community as well. Meigs was not only where they saw "girls," spent time "hooping" or supporting their families' attempts to beautify vacant lots; it was also a place where they longed to have investment from community leaders and more opportunities to engage in the types of protest they learned at Strongtower.

What I initially perceived as frustrations was really their internalization that the problems within their communities were ignored because they maybe were insurmountable. From their standpoint, the liberation that was talked about or even historically fought for and obtained might not be powerful enough to transform their communities. Without curriculum with an intentional focus on Black youth and their communities that allowed them to experience that process, participants doubted transformation for themselves or their communities, subsequently doubting their ability to change their city or the world.

Conclusion: Can We Build a New Social Order?

Almost a century later, we revisit Counts's (1932) call for schools to be places that prepare students to dismantle social stratification and argue "that if education of individuals is appropriately revitalized, schools can lead to social transformation" (Schiro, 2008, p. 134). There is no single traceable connection between a specific type of experience (staff-student relationship, curriculum, or students participating in protest) and my participants' transformative selves. The young men of Meigs acquired social, political, cultural, and civic understandings that occurred in tandem as a result of participating within Strongtower's curriculum. For example, when teachers examined inequitable distribution of funding for school districts, its effect on

Strongtower and organized protest and identity development occurred on multiple fronts. Engaging in protest and debate at board meetings allowed them to participate in a political process while practicing freedom of speech, but it did not promote their personal investment in becoming change agents.

The lack of praxis made them question the relevancy of learning for social critique. Hence, they were unable to grasp the concept of the curriculum having any bearing on how they as individuals would engage in society. In terms of curricular protest (Watkins, 2005), despite not being consistently engaged in social critique across their classes, the young men of Meigs had a keen understanding of learning for protest. Yet being political and acquiring transformative knowledge were seen as separate activities.

Historically, if we look at the gains made in Black America, there has been a very deliberate trajectory forward framing a curriculum that results in our social, cultural, political, and academic development (Watkins, 1993). In recent years, social justice education has been popularized as the premier, all-encompassing attempt at equity education and the net was cast widely in terms of how we educate for liberation. Equity, activism, and social literacy are a few of the central tenets espoused as being able to equip students to change society (Anyon, 2005). While there still exists a need to review how these tenets are theorized, developed, and taught in the name of social justice education (Williamson et al., 2007), the concept of learning to position oneself in society has merit.

Critical pedagogues (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell; 2008; Giroux, 2003) extended social reconstructionist theory, challenged a romanticized notion of education for participation, and proposed a more critical notion of liberation education in theory and praxis. I contend that the curriculum framing and theorizing (Watkins, 1993) of seminal Black curricularists should be

prominently positioned to contribute to the important scholarship on how our urban Black males are prepared for societal positioning.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

The young men of Meigs's engagement with social justice curriculum without praxis resulted in them experiencing the "alienating blah" of transformative education chatter (Freire, 2000). The issues they raised were often simply discussed, and subsequently, "deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism…" (Freire, 2000, p. 87). Individuals must resist the tendency to restrict the transformation process to words of the oppressed that are limited to reflection, examination, and critique. Praxis is an essential component that follows dialogue in order to prevent the dehumanization of the oppressed, which when omitted, prevents the process from operating in its most authentic form. However, Freire (2000) cautioned us not to over-emphasize the role of action to the detriment of reflection, thereby "reverting the word into activism" (p. 88), as it denies the oppressed the opportunity to take charge in the naming of their world.

The evident research story rests on what happens when the process of transformative citizenship becomes isolated rituals of critical pedagogy that do not result in action. From the emergent themes, these young men had clear understandings that they were engaged in social justice curriculum and that this curriculum directed their teachers to help them learn social critique and protest. Missed was the opportunity for curriculum to be more fully actualized, casting doubt on its relevancy for the young men of Meigs. I do not think my participants were expecting that a march in their community or protest at the gas station Malcolm referenced that sold drug paraphernalia would change anything immediately. I do believe that it would alleviate the burden these young men carry about the prospect of hoping things could in fact start to change if only they were supported in the development of their transformative selves.

Stunted protest, internal cultural challenges, and hopelessness are the results of an unbalanced transformative process. To some degree, I believe teaching the participants protest made them want to be authentically engaged in protest. I carefully use the word *engage* versus *developed* because while they participated in protest, the school decided what was protest worthy, and the students did not develop a critical understanding of protest. Practicing or learning how to authentically engage within society does not occur in a silo. There is a need for the overarching concept of transformative education to be more intricately connected to the processes of developing citizens to ensure an ebb and flow between learning and doing transformative citizenship.

Returning to the Research Questions

We move now to explicitly answering my research question, beginning with the central question, followed by the two sub-questions.

How does their participation with curriculum as a form of social critique develop urban Black male youths' social, political, civic, and cultural identities? When students are taught to *identify*, *develop,* and *clarify* their positions or experiences as members of our society, the result is engaged and empowered individuals, who are confident in their ability to participate and do so with resolve. Participating in social justice curriculum that results in the transformation of one's identity is about wrestling with who we are, what we stand for, what we are against, and how we develop our voice to advocate for our position and for others. When participants described how examining racism, classism, and oppression as a part of school made them question how individuals in society are afforded housing, schools, and jobs and how they must "do something" to change it, we see that the transformative curriculum did contribute to the development of their transformative identities. Not all of the aforementioned concepts—racism,

classism, and gender oppression—were mentioned by each participant, but this list represents issues and concepts they collectively shared with me, substantiating they each participated in the process of social critique. However, the research question is not limited to if they participated but to the scope of that participation and the effect it had on their process of developing as transformative citizens.

The concept *development* (in the research question) needs further clarification in order to appropriately respond. In terms of being transformative, development rests on individuals' abilities to "interact and deliberate" (Banks, 2008, p. 135) in hopes that they "take action to actualize social justice" (p. 137) through critique and protest. E Double, Rakim, Q, Neville, Malcom, and Jody were clear that as citizens they see themselves as "alone," "frustrated," "tired," "not heard," and due to their feelings, "unwilling" to take action. The fragmented process of developing transformative identities left them with very different takes on social justice curriculum as espoused by Strongtower.

While they experienced some of the key elements of transformative citizenship education (acquiring transformative knowledge, engaging in social action, and becoming aware of divergent issues for other cultures), without action, this experience did not lead to transformative citizenship. Therefore, for the young men of Meigs, transformative citizenship only happens when there is support. Their sentiment is that without support systems or people being vested in your cause, you can't effectively be involved in change. Recall Neville's despair when he and young men like him did not engage in protest because they had "no help."

Fischmann and Haas' (2009) challenge to teachers speaks to why Neville might feel such despair:

Some of the important challenges for teachers and teacher educators who

want to use critical pedagogy become how to work on identifying and

analyzing the effects of "naturalized" and oppressive dynamics (embedding

capitalism, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression) on schooling,

without instilling a sense of hopelessness and loss of agency. (p. 546)

There exists an important process of teaching, identifying, assessing, and acting against

oppression that must be consciously undertaken if curriculum is to be transformative. Engaging

in this process is not at all linear. Teachers should move back and forth in a question-posing

frame, taking pause to evaluate the process.

How do urban Black male youth who participate in curriculum as a form of social

critique understand the notion of citizenship, and how does their understanding of

citizenship assist them in mediating their lived experiences within the community?

Engaging in Strongtower's curriculum did help the participants think about social issues in a way

they hadn't before. That is to say, they engaged in social critique and contributed their thoughts

on what an engaged citizen does. Their assessments and observations about unemployment, gang

activity, housing, and schools within their community were always conducted in a frame that

examined the dynamics of power, race, and class. Notably, their examinations were far from

elementary. When Jody discussed "capitalism" and how it works to "keep his community" down,

or when Neville talked about urban schools and how their lack of resources are a deliberate act to

"dumb down education for minorities" and promote the growing labor class, they weren't simply

repeating these terms. They spoke and reflected very carefully on what these terms meant and

how they became manifested in their lives. They clearly articulated that the school practiced:

"teaching us about political matters… so we can stand up for what we believe."

According to Freire (1985), "Consciousness of and action upon reality are therefore inseparable constituents of the transforming act by which men become beings" (p. 68). Understanding social critique alone will not result in a transformative citizen. Urban young Black men are not without ideas on how to turn their communities around and how they as citizens could make changes. Examples include forcing aldermen to provide more activities for young Black boys and men to avoid violence and having a hunger strike until vacant lots become parks or abandoned houses are torn down. Perhaps if these ideas were supported by teachers, curricularists, and community organizers, we could see how social justice can be actualized. For now, they remain citizens, clear about how social inequity occurs, knowledgeable on the process of critique, but lacking the support and desire to be heard and to become.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Proponents of curriculum aimed at increasing the human agency of marginalized groups contend that schools, which educate participants about the cause of systemic oppression and how to take action against it, hold the most promise for restructuring society and developing a transformative citizen. While I truly believe in this curriculum and its promise, I am haunted by Freire's (1998) caution to avoid making the dialogue of resistance an "alienating blah" because we limit the process to words without action.

As previously discussed in this study, the current social, economic, and academic positioning of urban Black male youth dictates the need to construct an educational process that has transformative citizenship as its goal. More directly, a process that fully flushes out the transformative citizenship dimensions prior to embarking on a journey with the oppressed would have the process of a truly engaged citizenry. Critical praxis has historically been central in the

education for liberation movement within Black America. Organizing and educating for protest is a process that intersects our racial/ethnic existence, social, and political needs.

Schools that educate participants on the cause of systemic oppression and teach them how to take action against it contend that they hold the most promise of restructuring society and developing a transformative citizen. Much work has been done to outline what the process of transformative citizenship entails and how it benefits those who undertake such a process. While the concept of equipping individuals to be protestors that reconstruct society is a necessary shift to empower our urban students, we need to allow those whom we seek to liberate to contribute to the dialogue and praxis so that we avoid becoming "sub-oppressors" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008) who unintentionally create ill-prescribed socially just curriculum.

Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) advocated for "critical counter cultural communities of practice (4Cs), to develop a critical and engaged citizenry with a democratic sensibility that critiques and acts against all forms of inequality" (p. 10). Like historic curricular protestors who theorized Black curriculum to promote authentic citizenship, this practice calls for a communal approach towards addressing social issues and engaging urban youth. Transformative education is about creating a "critical praxis that involves a continued action for social justice" (p. 13). Learning how to critique and organize around issues for a collective end provides individuals with a real opportunity to counteract static notions of participating in society.

There is much that the forefathers of curricular protest can lend to the conversation of creating transformative citizenship education for urban Black male youth. Whether it is the Black progressive movement, which challenged the meaning of democracy, or Black Panther curriculum writers, who took into account the economic, social, civic, and political development of Black America, there is much to be said about how to develop curriculum as protest. In order

for it to result in the transformative Black male youth who are indeed empowered, the young men of Meigs and other young men like them are in need of the visible support and solidarity.

Implications for Practice

According to Greene (1995), "The young can be empowered to view themselves as conscious, reflective namers and speakers if their particular standpoints are acknowledged, if interpretive dialogues are encouraged, if interrogation is kept alive" (p. 57). Keeping interrogation alive means that we do not simply revere what curricular protestors have taught us in a nostalgic frame, as that relies on stories. To the contrary, the transformative identity process does not rest on acquiring protest as a skill but embodying it as process that yields action. The young men of Meigs have taught us that partnering with young people and teaching protest is only a partial investment. We must step back from our roles as teachers, researchers, advocates, or activists to make sure that our work always results in action.

The levels at which individuals engage in the promotion of transformative citizenship vary. Your role as a formal practitioner, community member, or activist may control the frequency of your interaction but not the depth. To assure that our processes remain emancipatory in nature, first we must understand that the promotion and sustaining of a transformative curriculum is multi-faceted. Second, authentically engaging in curriculum for a transformative citizenship involves both learning and doing. Last, there is a deeply personal and interpersonal nature to the process of liberation that co-laborers of the oppressed should not take for granted.

Payne (1995) talked about the process of acquiring freedom for othered people:

> [S]ome people in this history have thought of struggle as three fold: a battle against structures of inequality, a battle to develop oneself and overcome one's baggage, and a battle for supportive and principled relations among comrades. (p. 5)

Solidarity itself is as much a part of our liberation as the concept of protest. We boast of movements started by one individual, but in order to be maintained, there have to be individuals ready to walk alongside you and co-labor in the struggle for freedom. We cannot afford to simply be enamored by social justice curriculum or its implied shift from traditional curriculum. We must ask educators, curricularists, and participants alike to compare what we believe is emancipatory against what we do in the name of becoming emancipatory. In this way, educators and participants alike avoid romanticizing the idea of being a transformative citizen and start to wrestle with process, fully aware that it is much less a destination and more a progression of ideas and concepts that must be challenged at each interval to assure true transparency and integrity. This can be accomplished by allowing students to contribute to curricular foci, protest decisions, and be more intentional about curricular unit outcomes related to their homes and communities.

Future Research Considerations

There are many ways in which future research can add to the understanding of process or transformative citizenship. First, the concept of conflict amongst my participants relative to identity was not fully explored. How the transformative dimensions develop in tandem with racial identity would contribute greatly towards understanding citizenship development. Second, in order to for there to be a collective movement towards justice amongst our Black male youth, a qualitative study that explores how urban and suburban Black male youth undertake the

process of transformative citizenship would add the dynamic of social class for consideration on Black males, outlining a collective movement.

Third, much of what my participants shared in terms of missing components had implications about the setting where they engaged in learning for critique. A comparative analysis between schools that engage in teaching for justice and social justice programs would allow us to explore how different settings construct the process of transformative citizenship. Since schools must contend with policy that community programs do not, we may learn how setting contributes to social justice curriculum. Lastly, in terms of methods, participatory action research would provide an opportunity for the oppressed to lead the inquiry of what real transformative education is and allow them to "impregnate the world with [their] curious and inventive presence, imprinting it with the trace of [their] works" (Freire, 1988, p. 40; also see Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

There is much to do in terms of creating a space in which young people can engage in a liberatory education. Learning to live should be a process by which individuals are free to discover not only how they will live in the world but also be supported to challenge any form of inequity or oppression when their *living* has been reduced to merely existing within society. "Transformative citizenship education helps students to develop the decision-making and social action skills that are needed to identify problems in society, acquire knowledge related to their homes and community cultures and languages, identify and clarify their values" (Banks, 2004, p. 12). And so we, co-laborers of what is honest and just, must promote freedom, continue to work and fight for those who have been forgotten and honor their voices as they direct us on how to support them to authentically live.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board, Final Report

DEPAUL
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
1 East Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604-2201
312-362-7593
Fax: 312-362-7574

Research Involving Human Subjects
NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

To: Colette Thelemaque-Collier, Graduate Student, School of Education
Karen Monkman, Ph.D., Faculty Sponsor, School of Education

Date: **March 12, 2012**

Re: Research Protocol #CT120310EDU-FR
"Learning to Live: Urban Black Male Youth, Curriculum Protest and Critical Citizenship"

Please review the following important information about the review of your proposed research activity.

Previous Approval Details
☐ Full Committee Review ☒ Expedited Review, under 45 CFR 46.110 ☐ Exemption Determination
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Category: 6, 7　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Category:

Current submission
☒ Final report

Current Review Details

☐ Full Committee Review ☒ Expedited Review, under 45 CFR 46.110 ☐ Exemption Review

Approval Details
☒ Approved ☐ Approved (Previous contingencies have been resolved.)

Review Date: March 12, 2012

Reminders
- The Board would like to thank you for complying with the DePaul Institutional Review Board policies for submitting a final closure report for your research project. If you intend to use the data collected for this research in another study you may require IRB review and approval for this additional use of the data collected for this project. Please review our guidance on non-reviewable research to determine whether additional IRB review would be required at that time or contact our office for help.

- As per the federal regulations, you should retain all study-related records for 3 years after the date of closure of the study.

The Board would like to thank you for your efforts and cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me by telephone at (312) 362-7497 or by email at jordman@depaul.edu.

For the Board,

Jennifer Ordman
Assistant Director, Research Compliance

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview I

Describe the community where you live?
How do people who live outside your community describe it?

How long have you lived there?

Describe for me a typical day/week…walk me thru the typical types of activities you do.

What are the types of things do you do in your community?

> *Are you involved in community block clubs, church, community service, and sports?*
>
> *Are your activities similar or different from other young men your age who live in your community?*

Describe what you think makes a community strong or successful. Does your community possess those things? If so, who helps to maintain those systems? If not, why do you think your community is lacking those structures?

Describe the schools, types of businesses and civic organizations or youth groups in your community?

What types of things do they do in your community?

> *Do any of those activities connect to issues within your community, city, nation or world? How so?*

What type of government structures are in your community (CAPS, Alderman's Office, etc)?

Do you participate in any of these organizations? If so, to what degree? If not, why not?

> *What type of activities or events do people participate in or organize within your community?*

How would you describe the level of involvement government agencies have within your community? Are the agencies considered helpful?

How do people outside your community, describe your community and its members?

What are some things that people who live outside of your community do not know or understand about where you live? (Possible misconceptions they have about your community.)

POSSIBLE PROBING QUESTIONS:*

Interview II

Walk me through a typical day at (Strongtower H.S).

What are your classes like? What types of topics or issues that are discussed? What is the format of the class? Who decides the topics? What are the classes and or topics you like? Why?

What programs or experiences can you share with me that you have participated in while at your school or a program that you felt had value? What specifically about the program or experience was meaningful to you?

Did your experience make you think about your community? If so, in what way?

You program/school states that it prepares young people to be active in society? What does that mean to you? How have you seen this happening?

What do you think are the most important things you have learned in this program/school?

Interview III

Now that you have talked about what the program is like, I would like you to share with me your thoughts about your role in society, your community, or your block before and after participating in this program/school.

Are those roles similar or different now that you are participating in the program? If so, how?

Describe what you feel are the most important tools you have taken away as a result of participation in this program?

Do you plan to use those tools, and if so how?

How does the type of learning you experience in this program compare to what you experience in other places? School or other programs?

Have you shared the things that you have learned with people in your family, in your community or with your peers? What was their reaction?

What are your thoughts about protest or social action as a goal of learning? Do you think learning protest or social action is an important tool for young Black men who come from communities like yours? If so, why?

What are issues that you face in your community or as a young Black man growing up in an urban setting that you feel "protest" makes or could make the difference?

Does the program make you think about your community? In what ways?

Considering your experience in the program and what you've learned, is there anything that was not covered that you felt needed to be? If so, what and why?

Interview IV

Over the past few interviews, we have discussed your experiences thoughts about your community and school/program.

I wanted to share some of our responses with you, and explain how I see them to make sure I have understood you correctly.

Is there anything else that we have not touched on that you would like to add?