“YOU CAN’T JUST WORK IN ROOM 15 ANYMORE”: FRAMING TEACHER ACTIVISM

A Dissertation Submitted to

The Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Monica Lynn Clark

December 2020

Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Maia Cucchiara, Advisory Chair, Urban Education

Dr. Will Jordan, Urban Education

Dr. Sharon Ravitch, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education

Dr. Christine Woyshner, Teaching and Learning

ABSTRACT

"You Can't Just Work in Room 15 Anymore":

Framing Teacher Activism

Monica Lynn Clark

Doctor of Philosophy

Temple University, 2020

Maia Cucchiara, Chair

Given the trends of increased teacher activism and civic engagement, and the implications of this shift for teachers and schools in general, we need a better understanding of how teacher activism connects to teachers' views on professionalism. The purpose of this study, then, is to better understand the current growth of politically engaged, activist teachers and the connections they draw between their activism and their role as educators. This study addresses an identified gap in the education reform scholarship around the relationship between teacher activism and teacher professionalism. Education research has looked at teacher activism and a number of different interconnected issues, such as identity (Picower, 2012); unionism (Weiner, 2013); leadership (Little, 2003); and online social networking (Baker-Doyle, 2017), but very few studies have explored teacher activism as it connects to professionalism. Yet without this research, we are left with an insufficient understanding of both what it means to be a teacher in the 21st century U.S. and the ways in which teachers themselves can be agents of social and educational change. Drawing on semi-structured interviews, twelve-months of observations and document analysis this qualitative study explores the experiences of twenty-five teacher activists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people whom I would like to acknowledge for their support in making this dissertation and my graduate work possible. This includes my participants, Temple University faculty members, colleagues and networks I have found beyond Temple, fellow graduate students, and friends and family. Each individual made a unique contribution and I would not have been able to accomplish what I have without each and every one of them.

To my advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Maia Cucchiara, thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow with you. I am eternally grateful for your wise words of advice, your patience and your pushing. To Dr. Will Jordan, thank you for always reminding me that “reasonable people disagree” this was a thought that I held onto throughout my time in the field and then again during my writing process. To my other committee members, Dr. Sharon Ravitch and Dr. Christine Woyshner, I am sincerely grateful for your time, eyes and insight.

To my graduate school colleagues-turned-friends, I truly would not have made it through this journey without you all. I owe a special debt to my friend and fellow grad student, Dr. Danielle Sutherland. For over three years, we took turns reassuring one another that our proposals would be completed, people would participate in our studies, our interviews would contain relevant information, and we could eventually transcribe our many hours of interviews and field notes. I cannot thank Danielle enough for pushing and pulling me through this process. Here’s to looking forward to many more collaborations in the future and our writing retreat in Maine, Summer 2021. I also must thank Dr. Marc Freeman for being my guardian angel of grad school, for never giving up on me and constantly checking in (even apologizing for it because he did not want to risk “bothering” me) via text and giving me all of the advice, tips and tricks to “get the thing done”. I also am grateful for my friendship with my graduate school colleague and

old office-mate Dr. Shondricka Burrell – thank you for always being a helpful sounding-board and for all of the timely words of encouragement and relevant scripture text messages. Lastly, I will always be indebted to A.G. and C.B. for sending me the clear message that "the time is now".

Finally, I must thank my family for their ceaseless encouragement and support. This includes too many to name here, but I must say that obviously none of this would be possible without my Mom. Thank you for listening when it may have seemed like a foreign language to you, never ever, ever permitting me to doubt myself or use negative self-talk, and always reminding me that I can do hard things. Your faith is different than mine, but you always do a perfect job reminding me that I do have it. Lastly, and definitely not least, to my life partner, my constant – Jason Stewart– thank you for never doubting me, always pushing me and having the most patience of all. You are the antidote to my imposter syndrome and I love you so.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT......ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS......iii

LIST OF TABLES......vii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION......1

Introduction......1
Context......2
Statement of the Problem......6
Theoretical Framework......14
Significance......20
Research Questions......21
Conclusion......21

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE......23

Contested Conceptions of the Teachers' Role......23
Teacher Activism & Agency......35
Activism & Professionalism......45

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY......48

Overview......48
Introducing the Focal Organizations......49
Study Design......51
Ethnographic Methods......52
Data Collection......53
Data Analysis......64
Role of the Researcher......66
Limitations......68

CHAPTER 4: FRAMING TEACHER ACTIVISM......70

The Political is Professional & the Professional is Political 70
Teachers Running for Office......84
"My Existence is an Act of Resistance"......85

CHAPTER 5: COALITION BUILDING......101

Building Power: The Importance of Coalitions......101
Coalition Building Challenges to Consider......115

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS..123

Summary of Findings..123
Implications...126
Future Research...128

REFERENCES CITED……………………………………………………………….....132

APPENDIX A: TOP 10 TEP MISSION STATEMENTS……………………......................140

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT CALL DOCUMENT……………………….……….........143

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL...144

APPENDIX D: CODEBOOK...145

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 2.1: SCHWANDT'S 2 MODELS OF THE TEACHER PRACTITIONER............34

TABLE 3.1. BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS...................................61

TABLE 3.2. INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN...66

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the United States, the teachers' role has been defined in varied ways during different waves of educational reform and change. Namely, since the 19th century trends in education policy have impacted how teacher professionalism comes to be understood and operationalized (Au, 2011; Day, 2002; Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003; Mehta, 2013). Moreover, from the early days of public education in the United States, the status of teachers has been a topic for debate. The role of the teacher and the possibility for the development of the professional teacher has been contested since the emergence of compulsory schooling. This has led to educational stakeholders defining the teachers' role in competing ways, inadvertently impacting the potential that the concept can hold for teachers. Are teachers professionals, like doctors or lawyers, deserving of the same degree of professional respect, autonomy and prestige? Is teaching a career that requires advanced professional training and the development of expertise based on a shared body of knowledge or is it more akin to the role of a trained worker, like a childcare provider? Should it be work for someone in transition, who teaches for a short-time to use the experience to build their resume or should educators be cultivated to become career master teachers who are leaders and mentors to novice teachers in their schools? Questions such as these, regarding the role teachers fill in society, continue to be debated.

In recent years, and in response to contemporary market-based, austerity-driven school reforms and a popular discourse that often views teachers as a-political, technicians, some scholars have theorized an expanded vision of teacher professionalism, one that views the teacher's role as more active and politically and socially engaged, especially in advocating for public education (Larson, 2014; McNeil, 2002; Sachs, 2003). Indeed, the disengagement of the

public from public institutions has become a growing concern of historians, political scientists, sociologists, and education researchers who see the waning of public engagement to be a threat to the legitimacy of such institutions (Gutmann, 1999; McNeil, 2002; Putnam, 2000). Writing nearly 20 years ago, McNeil (2002) argued that teachers, as professionals, need to play an active and engaged role in pushing for equitable public education reform. She explained, “there has perhaps been no time in our history when the links between public education and democracy have been so tenuous as they are right now” (p. 243). Thus, researchers like McNeil, and others who have written more recently, call for educators to become more civically engaged and active in influencing and shaping education reform and pushing for the preservation of public institutions (Larson, 2014; Weiner, 2013; Sachs, 2003).

However, little empirical research has looked at what happens when educators take up this call to be more civically engaged and how they experience their activism. In particular, few studies have explored the connections between the varied conceptions of teacher professionalism in circulation and teachers’ civic engagement (Sachs, 2003; Tarlau, 2009). Moreover, no empirical studies have explored the connection between teacher activism and professionalism in the U.S. context. This study uses sociological work on “framing”—a theoretical tool that highlights the meaning-making processes involved in social movements as well as everyday life (Benford & Snow, 2000; Colburn, 2006; Goffman, 1974)—to examine teacher activism and its relationship with teachers’ beliefs regarding their role as educators.

Context

Trends in Education Reform in the U.S.

The dominant education reform discourse in the U.S., over the last few decades, has framed public education as failing and as something that needs to be measured, policed and

regulated. In many ways as a response to the "A Nation at Risk" report (U.S. National Commission on Excellence and Education, 1983), as well as the introduction of international-benchmark exams[1], the U.S. began to focus on education reform at the federal level, introducing market-based reform mechanisms to an unprecedented degree. In their comparative analysis of education policy changes in China and the U.S., Zhao (2013), explains, "Education reform efforts in the United States over the last few decades have been moving toward centralization, standardization, and [a] reliance on testing" (p. 16). The introduction of market-based reform mechanisms directly connects to the establishment of federal accountability policies, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTT), which mandate outcomes-based reform initiatives that measure schools' performance via test-scores and link federal funding to outputs (Au, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ravitch, 2010). In the U.S., market-based reform has come to dominate the education policy reform landscape, particularly in high-poverty, urban schools.

Contemporary Reform Debates and the Status of Teacher

While the role and status of teachers has always been a topic of debate in the U.S., recent trends in education reform have intensified these conversations. Ingersoll (2003) notes, "Since the advent of the American public school system, important and fundamental issues, such as who controls the work of teachers, have periodically surfaced as subjects of intense concern – and intense disagreement... This tension seems to have become the center of both increasing debate and decreasing consensus" (p. 8). As Goldstein (2014) further details, "Americans have debated who should teach public school; what should get taught; and how teachers should be educated, trained, hired, paid, evaluated, and fired. Though we've been arguing about these questions for

[1] Such as the OECD's PISA exam (see the critique by Carnoy & Rothstein, 2013).

two centuries, very little consensus has developed" (p. 5). There remains little agreement regarding the role teachers are to fill in schools and society.

Debates regarding the organization of teachers' work are also ongoing. Some educational researchers have explored the development of high-quality teachers and the organization of teachers' work, connecting it to the need to establish education as a profession (Darling-Hammond, 2005, 2010a, 2010b; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016; Ingersoll, 2003; Mehta, 2013). Researchers who have looked at teacher *professionalism*—and tried to argue that teaching should be treated as an autonomous profession—have examined some elements of teachers' work, such as the need to be reflective and innovative to adapt to unique educational situations, arguing that teachers indeed need to be trained as experts and supported as professionals (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Mehta, 2013; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010). Alternatively, other researchers, policymakers, and journalists have argued that teachers' work needs to be more tightly controlled and regulated to improve efficiency and achievement standards (Moe, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2002; Tough, 2012).

The introduction of market-based, austerity reforms over the last few decades has had a direct impact on the role teachers play in school districts across the U.S. As Darling-Hammond (2010b) noted, "The view that students are raw materials to be 'processed' by schools according to standard specifications has led to a resurgence of policies in many states that seek to drive teaching through standardized tests that are externally developed and scored and tied to tightly scripted teaching materials" (p. 510). While teachers have historically had a contested role in schools, generally connected to the amount of control or input they are afforded to respond to policy initiatives, this has become exacerbated as a result of top-down, market-based reform initiatives. Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, and Cribb (2009) noted, "As the influence of these

alternative modes of coordination has increased, so, in many national settings, the scope for professional influence on policy and practice has diminished" (p. 5). Ingersoll (2003) has aptly termed the perspective of those critical of top-down, centralized market-based reform approaches "the teacher disempowerment perspective"[2] (p. 7).

Researchers critical of the development of educators as *bureaucratic technicians* stress that the ideology of market-based reforms shift the purposes of schooling and impact teachers' work and role. The concern is that the dominance of this reform approach makes education about individual choices, economic development and global competition as opposed to civic cooperation, social justice or a common, public good (Ball, 2003; Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, and Cribb, 2009; Lipman, 2011; Lubienski, 2001). In many ways it fundamentally and philosophically shifts the purposes and responsibilities of schooling from a public good essential for developing a robust democracy to a private good or an individual, consumer issue.

Labaree (1997) explores this issue noting the reason education reform is unsuccessful is not because we do not know what the problem is, rather it lies in the fact that in the U.S. there is no consensus regarding the purposes of education. Thus, reform falters because solutions and mandates are all too often ideological and political, tied to different philosophical goals for mass education. It is not that we do not know that there is a problem, rather, in our country there is no consensus about the approach needed to address the problem. Labaree outlines three main competing goals for the purposes of education: "democratic equality", where schools and education reform focus on developing civic virtue and an active citizenry; "Social efficiency", which positions the primary purpose of schooling to be the development of competitive workers

[2] Ingersoll's "Teacher Disempowerment Perspective" is discussed at more length in Chapter 2.

to contribute to the economy; and “social mobility”, the goal being to prepare individuals to compete for social positions or status. He states that these goals connect to different stakeholders’ perspectives regarding the purposes of schooling, namely: “the citizen” connects with the “democratic equality” perspective, “the taxpayer” with the “social efficiency” goal and “the consumer” links to the “social mobility” approach.

However, the issue is not the fact that there are competing goals, as this has always been the case and can be useful in pushing us forward in a balanced way. As Labaree explains,

> The biggest problem facing American schools is not the conflict, contradiction, and compromise that arise from trying to keep a balance among educational goals. Instead, the main threat comes from the growing dominance of the social mobility goal over the others. Although this goal (in coalition with the democratic equality goal) has been a major factor in motivating a progressive politics of education over the years, the increasing hegemony of the mobility goal and its narrow consumer-based approach to education have led to the reconceptualization of education as a purely private good. (p. 73)

This study explores the ways that teacher activists are responding to the tensions that Labaree outlines regarding the contentious goals of education and how reform policies are developed that connect to specific ideologies.

Statement of the Problem

The Contested Role of the Teacher

There are competing discourses in the education literature regarding the role and status of teachers. There has been a lack of consensus regarding the teachers’ role and what qualities and skills an educational practitioner should have, with some arguing for the development of teachers as *professionals* and others calling for training and supervision more consistent with that of *bureaucratic technicians*. Historically, a *profession*[3] was distinguished from the work of trades

[3] Literature on the development of the professions in the U.S. is discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

or skilled laborers by a number of defining characteristics, including: the nature of the work is skilled versus routine; skills are recognized through training and professional licensing; authority is granted based on one's deep knowledge of the work; and practitioners have autonomy to exercise judgment and discretion in reflection of the profession's set standards and body of knowledge (Mehta, 2013). The lack of consensus regarding the role of teachers is rooted in the historical designation of teaching being a "semi-profession", which regards educators as somewhere in between professionals and techno-bureaucrats.

The semi-professions are marked by shorter training; a less legitimate occupational status; lack of a cohesive, specialized body of knowledge; and less autonomy than 'the professions', such as medicine or law, are afforded (Etizioni, 1969). Lortie's (1975) seminal sociological study – based upon interviews with almost one hundred teachers in five towns in the Boston Metropolitan area in the 1960s - looked specifically at the organization of teachers' work and how teachers understand it. Lortie identified three characteristics of the culture of teaching: presentism; conservatism; and individualism. Presentism highlights that teachers' work focuses on the immediate, short-term issues that arise in their classroom. Conservatism stresses that teachers focus on smaller scale issues that are hyper-local to their classroom rather than larger, whole-school changes or needs. Lastly, individualism emphasizes that teachers' work is predominately done alone in isolation from other teachers. These findings positioned teachers as not operating as an organized or cohesive profession. It also viewed educators as being more isolated and passive as opposed to being active or engaged in broader educational or social issues.

Market-based reform approaches that focus on training teachers to be efficient in keeping records, strict in managing classroom behavior, and to prepare students for standardized tests are

anchored in the *bureaucratic technician approach* to teachers' work (Moe, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2002; Tough, 2012). Teacher preparation textbooks such as Lemov's (2010) *Teach Like a Champion* or Archer & Hughes (2011) *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching* are rooted in the technocratic educator perspective, providing teachers with a step-by-step guide or manual to follow for classroom instruction. According to Archer & Hughes (2011), "In the quest to maximize students' academic growth, one of the best tools available to educators is explicit instruction, a structured, systematic and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery approaches" (p. 1). The market-based reform paradigm aims to train educators as facilitators or technicians who follow prescribed curricula and maintain data collection to fulfill reform mandates. Alternative teacher programs linked to this perspective have also emerged out of the *bureaucratic* approach to teachers' work, complicating current debates regarding the role teachers should fill and who should have responsibility for training them to enter the field. Programs such as Teach for America™ and The New Teacher Project™, focus on the recruitment of individuals from other fields or those fresh out of college, who often have no prior education training, so that they can mold them into educators that are willing to take direction and follow market-based reform mandates (Au, 2011).

Alternatively, another camp calls for the development of teachers as *professional* practitioners (Darling-Hammond, 2010a, 2010b; Mehta, 2103). Defining characteristics of a professional educator include having: a monopoly on the knowledge of the field and controlling the parameters around knowledge construction; ongoing training & professional development throughout the career; autonomy as an expert, intellectual; being afforded a degree of respect that is not given other occupations or trades (Larson, 2014; Mehta, 2013). This has been critiqued as

a problem in teacher education, as consensus or uniformity has never been achieved because establishing a common body of knowledge for educators has always been political and contentious. Thus, these educational reform researchers call for the development of high-quality teachers as *professionals* who go through rigorous training and advanced schooling to be prepared as experts equipped to be innovative and flexible to respond to the myriad questions and complex issues that arise in the classroom daily. This research stresses the need for autonomous and ethical teachers prepared to interrogate the social inequities impacting their classroom and be reflective of the social, political and economic contexts that affect their students (Darling-Hammond, 2005, 2010a, 2010b; Mehta, 2013).

An examination of the mission statements for the top ten schools of education in the U.S. (U.S. News & World Reports, 2017) illustrates that it has become normative for teacher education programs to be rooted in this perspective, explicitly focusing their missions on the development of teachers as change agents or socially justice-minded professionals (see Appendix A). Additionally, education research in this perspective has stressed the important role that teachers play in leveraging student success and pushing system-wide school improvement (Darling-Hammond, 2005, 2010a, 2010b; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016; Mehta, 2013; Sahlberg, 2011). As Darling-Hammond (2010b) stressed, "In contrast to the assumptions underlying the factory model, a growing body of research suggests that highly skilled teachers are essential to this task, and that perhaps the greatest school influence on student learning is the quality of the teacher… Indeed, expert teachers are the most fundamental resource for improving education" (p. 507). The high-quality teacher is viewed as a *professional* rather than a *bureaucrat*; a scholar rather than a technocrat. High-quality professional teachers are seen as public intellectuals or experts who come into the field with a rich and robust knowledge base that informs their

teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2010a, 2010b; Mehta, 2013). They are not merely workers to be managed, but should rather be prepared and respected as experts.

According to this school of thought, the traits of the high-quality teacher include being reflective, contextually and culturally responsive, praxis oriented, and equity focused (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). However, the dominant education reform policy environment in the U.S., particularly in high-poverty urban schools, does not provide a space for this kind of teacher. Rather teachers are being provided little autonomy as experts. Teachers in urban school districts are often expected to teach a scripted curriculum, which is contextually and culturally impoverished and geared narrowly towards assessing the few subjects highlighted on standardized tests (Au, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010a, 2010b, Ravitch, 2010). Much of teacher education, with its focus on the need for the development of high-quality, social-justice-minded teachers, is in direct contradiction with the context of teachers' work in many schools today, which actually provides for little autonomy. Scholarship calling for the development of teachers as professional practitioners calls for preparing teachers to consider the complexities of the social context. From this perspective teachers should root themselves in working towards social justice aims inside and outside of the classroom. It encourages teachers to meet their students where they are, recognizing the diversity of learners in schools and the complexities involved in ensuring all students have an equitable opportunity to learn (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Ladson-Billings, 2006). However, often teachers are restricted from focusing on these aims after they enter the classroom due to various constraints, policy mandates, and day-to-day concerns. This tension of the contemporary teachers' dilemma has been under-researched.

Education researchers studying the organization of schools and the control of teachers' work acknowledge that the role of the teacher has been contested since the spread of compulsory

education. Moreover, conceptions of the teachers' role shift and change over time and in response to the social, political and economic contexts. However, scholars have noted that the trend over the last few decades has been towards a more centralized, top-down approach to the organization of schools and teachers' work, reducing professionalism to an over emphasis on bureaucratic, managerial approaches (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Day, 2002; Ingersoll, 2003; Mehta, 2013; Osmond-Johnson, 2014; Sahlberg, 2011, 2013; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). This shift is aligned with a larger shift in the philosophical underpinnings of the purposes of education and specifically the development of education policy reform in the U.S. and globally. Market-based principles of accountability, efficiency and the consumer/client model have been introduced to reform public institutions. Day (2002) connected this phenomenon to larger socio-political changes taking place in the 21st century, noting:

> Supported by claims of failing standards relative to those in competitor nations which are deemed to be incompatible with the need to increase economic competitiveness and social cohesion, successive governments have attempted to reorientate the strong liberal-humanist traditions of schooling, characterized by a belief in the intrinsic, non-instrumental value of education, towards a more functional view characterized by competency based, results driven teaching, payment by results and forms of indirect rule from the centre. It is important to recognize that what has happened to education is one outcome of a larger ideological debate on the costs and management of the public services in general. (p. 677)

Shifts in education policy and governance have led to a greater focus on the teachers' role being defined, often by those outside of the classroom and the school, as the work of a bureaucratic, technician (Mehta, 2013). How this shift impacts schools' holistically and students' equitable opportunity to learn is in need of greater attention in education research.

A number of education scholars have described the current professional climate for educators as a time of "post-professionalism", where increasingly teachers' work is being defined and controlled by others and their professional autonomy and expertise is not included in

policy considerations (Ball, 2003; Fullan and Hargreaves, 2016). Day (2002) stressed, "The 'ethical-professional' identities that were dominant in schools are being replaced by 'entrepreneurial-competitive' identities" (p. 682). Pitman (2012) furthered, "The profession of teaching has spent an inordinate amount of time on the managerial technical rational aspects of professionalization. I contend that accountability should not be at the expense or exclusion of attention to professional judgment in context – phronesis" (p. 144). These education scholars call for a balancing of aims or for the education policy pendulum to swing back towards the center where the reflective, ethical professional focused on wise practice and practical rationality is also provided a space. An overreliance on the rigid structure of the bureaucratic approach has had an impact on teachers' professional autonomy; ability to innovate and make changes reflective of diverse student needs; and motivation and commitment (Day, 2002; Ingersoll, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

The Rise of Teacher Activism in the 21st Century

Running parallel, over the last few decades there has been notable growth in the number of teacher activist and education-related social movement organizations across the U.S. Some scholars argue that the growth of education related social movement organizations throughout the US is a response to the top-down, market-based education reform model (Picower, 2012; Weiner, 2013). Teachers involved in such organizations are seeking a space to voice their concerns outside of the traditional routes, seeing that they are not afforded the space or authority within the school system. The growth of education activist organizations has been most notable in urban areas, which have been the primary target for the introduction of market-based mechanisms to reform high-poverty urban schools, as is the case in places like Oakland, Camden, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia.

Over the last decade the national Teacher Activist Groups (TAG) emerged as a coalition of national grassroots teacher organizing focusing on preserving and promoting equitable public education. Its national coalition has grown to include 12 regional groups (Teacher Activist Groups, 2017). The Badass Teachers Association (BATs) is another national coalition of teacher activists focused on promoting equitable public education, which originally began as a virtual community through Facebook and has since grown to have groups represented in nearly all 50 states (Badass Teachers Organization, 2017). A final example of a growing education-related social movement is United Opt Out National (UOO), which started in 2011 also as a national coalition focused on critiquing and resisting high-stakes testing and other market-based reform policies that measure outputs without providing inputs. UOO has since broadened its mission to focus on "the acquisition and the restoration of the civil and human rights for our public school communities" (United Opt Out National, 2017). While these examples are not exhaustive of the recent developments, they illustrate the growth of teacher civic engagement and activism in the early 21st century.

Though teacher activism is not an entirely new phenomenon in the U.S.,[4] the growth of activism in the 21st century is noteworthy. Historically, scholars have viewed teachers as primarily apolitical or at least not as exhibiting strong political agency or worldly, intellectual dispositions (Lortie, 1975; Waller, 1965). The current reform environment has marked a shift, in which teachers are becoming more civically engaged, active and political (Little, 2003; Picower, 2012; Larson, 2009; Weiner, 2013). As Little (2003) noted, from her longitudinal study analyzing three bodies of data on teacher interviews that spanned 14 years and 3 different policy moments:

[4] I discuss historical examples of teacher activism in Chapter 2.

> The current accountability movement has arguably produced the intensified and overtly politicized role. In ways that Lortie's (1975) earlier portrayal of a largely apolitical teaching occupation would not have anticipated, teacher leadership displays a growing political orientation and links to social justice movements and debates. In this policy moment, teachers are much more likely to position themselves in relation to external movements and interests as well as to the specific policy instruments employed by the state or the district. (p. 411)

Given the trends of increased teacher activism and civic engagement, and the implications of this shift for teachers and schools in general, we need a better understanding of how teacher activism connects to professionalism. The purpose of this study, then, is to better understand the current growth of politically engaged, activist teachers and the connections they draw between their activism and their role as educators.

Theoretical Framework

Since learning and schooling do not occur in a vacuum and are not static, it is important to attend to the social contexts where educational processes and reforms are initiated. Drawing on the interactionist theoretical paradigm, this study assumes that schools are social worlds and that the reality of those involved - from administrators to policymakers to students and teachers - is created and recreated through social interaction (Schwandt, 2007).

Both schooling and school reform operate as social activities that are impacted by the interactions of the people involved rather than being sterile, isolated events that can be manipulated and studied in a vacuum. The interactionist theoretical paradigm is built on three basic premises: human beings act toward people and objects based on the information or the meanings they have for them; the meanings people attach come from social interactions; and meanings are developed through an interpretive process by the individual (Blumer, 1969). Utilizing this overarching paradigm is particularly useful in studying teachers and how they make sense of their activism.

With its roots in the interactionist paradigm and Goffman's (1974) early work on frame analysis, frame theory has been used by a growing number of scholars in various social science disciplines, including sociology (Benford & Snow, 2000), communications, linguistics, and education (Coburn, 2006; Hand, Penuel, & Gutierrez, 2012; Lindahl, 2010; Vermeir, Kelchtermans, and März, 2017). Goffman's objective was to better understand the interactional nature of social life and identity formation. Goffman (1974) explains, "Social frameworks provide background understanding for events that incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being" (p. 22).

Goffman turns to the case of a chess match to illuminate how frames are used. In a match, each player's actions are based on how they frame their situation. While we may have a normative picture of the chess game in our head, there are many different ways or frames in which any particular chess game can be conceptualized. These in turn impact how participants make sense of their participation. For example, participants will frame their motives, experiences and even moves dependent on whether the game is an informal match played for fun in person in a park; a professional, national competition; a match where money is on the line; or a team match with multiple people involved on each side. The way the game is framed will impact peoples' experience and how they make sense of the situation:

> There is a relation between persons and role. But the relationship answers to the interactive system—to the frame—in which the role is performed and the self of the performer is glimpsed. Self, then, is not an entity half-concealed behind events but a changeable formula for managing oneself during them. Just as the current situation prescribes the official guise behind which we will conceal ourselves, so it provides for where and how we will show through, the culture itself prescribing what sort of entity we must believe ourselves to be in order to have something to show through in this manner. (p. 574)

Frame analysis provides a tool for unpacking the various ways that people think about social interactions and make sense of their experiences. Hand, Penuel and Gutierrez (2012) explain,

“Frames both define the activity within the scene and help guide it further. Frames are not given for a particular situation; instead, actors reflexively and collectively constitute them as they name and draw upon resources to organize their joint activity” (p. 252). Frame theory acknowledges that reality is not something that can be understood objectively, apart from human behavior; rather it is wholly dependent on humans and their interactions.

Frame theory has been used in sociology and other fields to study the growth and evolution of social movements, particularly attending to how participants frame their actions and involvement in myriad, complex, at times overlapping and at times contested, ways. According to Benford and Snow (2000), “collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (p. 614). In their theorizing they outline three core tasks of framing, 1) “diagnostic framing”, where the problem is first identified; 2) “prognostic framing”, which focuses on identifying solutions to the issue, and 3) “motivational framing”, in which calls for action and a collective response are detailed. In social movements, diagnostic framing has often centered around naming an injustice that was done to a group (Benford & Snow, 2000). However, as Benford (1987) notes in his study of the 1980s nuclear disarmament movement, often diagnostic framing can lead to contentious arguments within social movements. This was as evidenced as the disarmament movement was unable to come to a consensus on the most significant cause of the nuclear threat with some arguing it was runaway technology, others claiming it was capitalism, the defense industry, the United States, the Soviet Union or both; consensus was not reached. Prognostic framing is often linked closely to the diagnostic frame and similarly there often are divisions within a social movement regarding which approach to the problem is most effective. This was exemplified by the US anti-death penalty movement, where as the movement

evolved two different factions emerged focusing on divergent prognostic frames: *abolitionists*, who focus on fully abolishing the death penalty and *litigators,* who concentrate on individual cases, fighting to save lives one-by-one (Haines, 1996 in Benford & Snow, 2000). Motivational framing is directly connected to participants' utilization of agency to respond to the problem. In their research they found that a social movement's framing is active, emergent and constantly evolving in response to the introduction of "counter-framings" by opposing groups or factions. Opponents of social movements (e.g. often government officials, policymakers or other representatives of the dominant culture) present opposing frames providing a counter discourse or narrative in an effort to contradict and delegitimize the social movements. Thus, the social movement must be prepared to respond by being flexible and willing to adapt their frames.

Social movement participants must be savvy and innovative in revising, updating and adjusting their frames in response to "counter-framings" that come from outside opposing groups in order to protect the social movements' resonance and validity. Zuo & Benford present the case of the 1989 Chinese democracy movement as an example, where "students accurately anticipated the state 'counter-framings' of the student movement as 'counterrevolutionary', 'turmoil' and 'upheaval'. To deflect these counter-framings, the students carefully fashioned and articulated reformist prognoses and employed a tactical repertoire that was consistent with traditional Chinese cultural narrations of community devotion and self-sacrifice" (Zuo & Benford, 1995 in Benford & Snow, 2000, p.617). This reciprocal dynamic of framing and "counter-framing" was useful in exploring how teacher activists frame their motivations and participation in education activism and how they relate to outside forces.

Frame theory acknowledges that even within social organizations and movements focused on singular issues, there are often many different ways that participants make sense of

the world around them and construct meaning. Greeno (2009) explained, “every participant in a situation has a framing that may or may not be aligned with framings of other participants” (p. 270). Thus, I use frame theory to uncover the varied ways that teacher activists frame their participation and goals. The social context is a particularly important element impacting the “definition of the situation” and the ways in which teacher activists frame the impact of dominant education reform policies and how they organize their responses. Benford and Snow (2000) detail the impact that frames can have noting, “collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate alternative sets of arrangements and urge others to act in concert to affect change” (p. 615). This was important to attend to in analyzing the teachers’ participation in education activist organizations and how they frame their participation, motivations and particularly how their framings do or do not overlap.

Coburn (2006) uses frame theory in her year-long interview-based study exploring how multiple stakeholders in one urban California elementary school responded to the new state reading policy initiative, attending particularly to how they set the agenda for school improvement through collaborative and collective problem framing. The study is particularly relevant to this study design because the researchers note that framing in education has primarily looked at the macro level, attending to how policy makers define problems and frame them, but little attention has been given to the local actors that are actually responsible for reform implementation. Coburn asserts that frame theory is a useful tool to explore how local actors respond to and frame issues of new policy implementation and the impact that different framings have on the successful implementation of reform mandates.

Coburn (2006) found that different stakeholders often frame the issue in competing ways which ultimately impact whether the policy is adopted and how well it is implemented. For example, the diagnostic framings that were developed to explain the problem of reading comprehension in the school varied greatly including, family background, organizational issues, lack of phonics in the early grades, and problems with instructional approaches in the upper grades. The study concludes that developing frames or messages that resonate with multiple stakeholders was essential to organize action for successful implementation of the reforms.

Frame analysis is an effective tool for unearthing and analyzing the various messages that were used to reshape power dynamics and influence teachers' "sense making and practices" regarding the reform initiative. This helps explain why some approaches attract adherents and others do not. As Coburn (2006) states "collective frames are able to motivate and coordinate only to the degree that they have empirical credibility – the claims are believable – with the population one is attempting to motivate" (p. 359). As the principal was able to use diagnostic framing to explain the reading comprehension issue in a way that had the greatest resonance with the school population—namely that it was a problem of teacher instruction that could be remedied by implementing the new instructional reform strategies that the teachers were familiar with because they had used them for math instruction—the issue was able to take precedence and teachers were motivated to implement the reform. The principal did this in strategic ways by connecting with lead teachers and other teachers who had influence over their peers in order to build collective resonance and bring all on board with the reform implementation.

I utilized frame theory to investigate teachers' participation in activist organizations in order to better understand how they conceptualize their activism and the different ways they frame and discuss notions of teacher professionalism and agency as they relate to 21st century

education reform. In using frame theory, the goal was to unearth the "vocabularies of motive" (Benford & Snow, 2000) utilized by participants in education-related social movement organizations. As Benford and Snow (2000) detailed, "These socially constructed vocabularies provided adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and for sustaining their participation" (p. 617). The literature review in chapter two will provide a more detailed discussion of the different preexisting conceptions of professionalism, highlighting their varied epistemological underpinnings.

Significance

The aim of this study is to better understand the current phenomenon of politically engaged teacher activists and the connections between teacher activism and particular notions of professionalism. This study explores the growth of teacher activism and teacher activist groups in the beginning of the 21st century in the U.S., attending to how this new phenomenon connects to larger, macro socio-political changes. It further examines how participation in activism is affecting teachers and how their activism connects to conceptions of professionalism and vocational duty.

This study addresses an identified gap in the education reform scholarship around the relationship between teacher activism and teacher professionalism. Education research has looked at teacher activism and a number of different interconnected issues, such as identity (Picower, 2012); unionism (Weiner, 2013); leadership (Little, 2003); and online social networking (Baker-Doyle, 2017), but very few studies have explored teacher activism as it connects to professionalism.[5] Additionally, Lipman (2011) has discussed the connection, but she

[5] Tarlau's (2009) work, which looks at how professionalism and educational activism connect in Brazil, is an exception.

has focused on theorizing and conceptualizing the issue, not conducting empirical research. There has been little to no research investigating how teacher activism connects with notions of teacher professionalism in the U.S. Yet without this research, we are left with an insufficient understanding of both what it means to be a teacher in the 21st century U.S. and the ways in which teachers themselves can be agents of social and educational change.

Research Questions

Situated in the literature on teacher activism and professionalism, and drawing on sociological theories of framing, this qualitative study explores the varied ways teachers frame their participation in activism. Specifically, I ask:

1. How do teachers experience and understand their activism?
   - How do they frame their involvement?
   - What are their motivations and goals?
   - What are their strategies for action and how do they connect with particular ways of framing activism?
   - What underlying assumptions about the purposes of education, democracy, or other issues shape their activism?
2. To what extent and how do educators frame their activism as being connected to professionalism?

Conclusion

There are multiple ways of thinking about teacher professionalism. The purpose of this study is to unpack the varied ways teacher activists frame their activism, particularly attending to the connections they draw between their activism and professionalism. My goal is to inform policy makers, teacher education programs, and education scholars about how teachers are

responding to the current educational reform context and how they conceptualize professionalism as it relates to their activism. In the chapters that follow, I first discuss extant literature on teacher professionalism and activism in chapter 2. Then, in chapter 3, I describe my methodology. In chapters 4 and 5, I share my findings, showing that teacher activists employ different frames to understand and enact their activism and that coalition building is a primary organizing strategy of the teacher activists, which involves a number of challenges. Chapter six concludes with implications and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The research questions for this study focus on how educators make meaning of their experience as teacher activists and the connections they draw between their activism and their beliefs regarding the role teachers play in school and society. In this review of the literature, I first unpack the dichotomous conceptions of the teachers' role that are present in the literature; next, I review the literature on teacher activism in the U.S.; lastly, I review the scant literature there is available on the connections between activism and professionalism.

Contested Conceptions of the Teachers' Role

Since the 19th century the professionalism project in the U.S. has established some occupations as esteemed professions (e.g. medicine and law), while debates regarding whether other occupations (including teachers) fit the professionalism model have raged (Ingersoll, 2003; Larson, 2014). Meanwhile, what it means to be a professional educator has changed over time. During the early days of compulsory education in the U.S., teaching, especially at the elementary level, was considered women's work. The teacher was more akin to being viewed as a mother-figure or care-taker who was primarily responsible for ensuring the development of a moral, protestant-ethos in citizens (Goldstein, 2014). Teachers were not afforded the title of professionals (Ingersoll, 2003; Larson, 2014). In the 21st century the work of teachers has become increasingly more complex and is radically different than it was in the 19th century (Gardner, 2004; Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). However, there are competing discourses in the literature regarding the role teachers are to fill and whether or not teaching should be considered a profession and developed as such.

Historical Development of the Concept of Professions

In its most general sense, a profession differs from a job or a trade. Professionals have expert or specialized knowledge attained through a standardized course of study (developed by the profession's credentialing body) and receive licensing as a signifier of status (Ingersoll, 2003; Lortie, 1975; Mehta, 2013; Larson, 2014). Having received the license or credential from the professional organization, professionals are afforded a level of autonomy and respect that is particular to their position and unique from the status afforded the "semi-professions" or other workers (Etzioni, 1969; Hearn, 1982), whose working conditions are usually much more tightly monitored and managed. According to Larson (2014), a profession is defined by a specific set of criteria:

> A widespread, if not universal need for the profession's expertise; a service dispensed in private and not embodied in physical objects (easy to regulate or replicate); a clientele that is not organized; a market that is independent from capital and goods markets; the state's interest in the functions served by the profession; and last but not least, effective institutions for the production of producers and a well-defined cognitive basis (p. 10).

In contrast, the semi-professions are defined as having the following traits: "their training is shorter, their status is less legitimate, there is less of a specialized body of knowledge, and they have less autonomy from supervision or societal control than 'the' professions" (Etzioni, 1969, p. v). The occupations that made a concerted and successful effort to establish themselves as professions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were medicine and law. Today they are still seen as the gold standard defining what a profession is.

This process of professionalization afforded powers to certain occupations and was reflective of the social norms and inequities of the times. Namely, as the status of "professional" emerged and developed in medicine and law, opportunity and membership was strictly open to white men, usually from the upper-classes (Hearn, 1982; Larson, 2014). Those occupations

dominated by white, upper class men were considered professions while others were designated as non or semi-professional. Additionally, the work done by those of working-class backgrounds and in myriad occupations was precluded from the professional designation. Larson's (2014) work looks at how both the push for reforms and the drive for power in the burgeoning capitalist structure were motivators for certain occupations to develop into organized, esteemed "professions" (e.g. medicine and law), compared to semi-professions (e.g. teachers, librarians, social workers, pharmacists, architects, etc.) noting:

> Extracting structural change from the history of reform movements enabled me to see professionalization as a project that aimed at translating one order of scarce resources into another. As a *historically specific* form of organizing work, professions depended on establishing structural links between relatively high levels of formal education and relatively desirable positions or rewards in the social division of labor. On the one hand, we have what we now call credentials, formal, certifiable, and certified education under professional control; on the other hand, we have market positions that guarantee a respectable social status, a relatively decent living, and a measure of autonomy at work. Credentials are also market shelters because the excesses of unregulated competition were the main incentive for reform. (p. 8)

The development of the professions was tied to the growth of global capitalist structures and equated to certain occupations' desire to establish power in this new, post-industrial, modern market organization.

In his famous sociological study on teachers' work, Lortie (1975) noted that there have been few changes in the roles that teachers fill since the turn of the century and more importantly there has been little evidence of educators evolving into an organized and identifiable profession. His research stressed that a common, specialized knowledge base was necessary to define and establish a profession, and educators' pre-service experience is so varied that it does not equip them with what they actually need to know as a united profession. Additionally, teachers are seen as being isolated as opposed to being organized to collaborate or experience a sense of

collegiality. Lastly, teaching as an occupation has not developed strong work values or ethics that are collectively shared by teachers in common (e.g., the Hippocratic oath in medicine).

The Contested "Ideal Type" of Teacher

Currently two divergent conceptualizations of teachers' work exist in the literature, presenting a dichotomy of two ideal types of teacher. The notion of the ideal type was developed by the sociologist Max Weber (1969) in his effort to try to understand complex historical institutions and what makes them successful or unsuccessful. He came up with the concept of the ideal type to explore what a bureaucracy is and what it should be in the 20th century[6]. The ideal type is not rooted in reality, but rather is a conceptualization of the perfect type or form that can then be used as a measuring stick to analyze the social situation and assess reality. It is important to note that these divergent conceptions of the teachers' role are not exhaustive of what teachers' work means to educators and others. Moreover, teachers may identify with different aspects of each conception during varying times of their career and may also identify as a hybrid of the two conceptions of professionalism from time-to-time. I recognize that these conceptions represent two poles of a continuum of how teachers' work and responsibilities can be understood, but I present them because they have become the two dominant ways that teachers' role is discussed and debated in the education literature.

In presenting the two ideal types of the teacher present in the literature, I am building on insights developed by Schwandt (2005) in his two models of the educational practitioner. Schwandt outlines two divergent models, or ideal types, of the teacher practitioner that currently dominate debates (see Table 1 below). He defines the *model one* teacher as being the more traditional model of practice, which is advocated by market-based reforms. It is most directly

[6] Weber outlined six characteristics of an ideal type bureaucracy from his research.

aligned with a positivistic, scientific-managerial approach to teaching and school organization. In the *model one* conceptualization of practice the development of knowledge is seen as being held separate from everyday practice or the moment-to-moment experiences and decisions that occur in the classroom. The parameters and procedures that the professional must carry out are handed down by one's superiors or outside educational consultants. In the *model one* conception of the professional, teachers are viewed as being far removed from the decision-making processes.

Alternatively, the second model presents the reflective, phronetic professional model of the teacher practitioner. Schwandt's *model two* teacher practitioner puts forward a radically different vision of the practitioner than what is provided for in *model one* and in the dominant market-based policy reform model. The *model two* professional rejects the notion that knowledge production and practice should be held as separate entities. Instead this practitioner focuses on the need to link theory and research with action and wise practice that is reflective of ethical parameters.

Table 2.1: Schwandt's 2 Models of the Teacher Practitioner

Model 1 - Traditional	Model 2 - Phronetic
Inquiry is narrowly focused on quantitative assessments to enlighten & improve practice	*Inquiry* supports practical deliberation of both the means & ends for improvement
Practice is instrumental - scientifically & autocratically-managed & socially efficient (influenced by capitalism and utilitarianism)	*Practice* is contingent, socially enacted, constitutive of self & other
Learning is principally cognitive e.g. takes place inside the mind	*Learning* is situated, active & constructionist
Knowledge = propositional & declarative, to be applied in practice (unidirectional, e.g. "banking method")	*Knowledge* is embodied in action, equity and wise Judgement; it is iterative with practice
Certainty, lack of ambiguity, order are *normative*	Disorder, ambiguity, uncertainty are *normative* & embraced

In the two sections that follow I draw from the literature to further explore these two competing "ideal types" of the teacher further. These alternative views represent the two most common ways that teachers' work has been conceptualized in the teacher education literature. I unpack these dichotomous conceptions of the teachers' role first drawing on the literature that frames teachers work more aligned with Schwandt's *model one* practitioner, which I call the bureaucratic, teacher as *do-er* perspective. Second, I present the literature that is aligned more with the model two practitioner, which I refer to as the professional, teacher as *thinker* perspective.

The bureaucratic approach: The teacher as *do-er*. I use the concept of the teacher as *do-er* to unpack the conceptualization of the bureaucratic, efficient teacher that is commonly promoted in the education reform literature, especially literature linked to the market-based reform model (Au, 2011; Mehta, 2013). The educator as bureaucrat or technician is committed to gathering and recording data for accountability systems, following policy guidelines efficiently and effectively, and maintaining classroom management rigidly. The bureaucratic *do-er* teacher is conceptualized in the market-based reform model literature as an educator who is prepared to follow directives and deliver curricula that are often developed by supervisors or private contractors from outside of the school system (Moe, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2002; Tough, 2012).

The perspective that calls for the development of teachers as efficient workers is connected to the market-based reform model, which views schools as largely disorganized and in need of tight structure and order. This connects directly to calls for schools to be organized as highly centralized, bureaucratic institutions. Ingersoll (2003) explains this perspective on the organization of schooling and teachers work as:

> The school disorganization perspective finds schools to be the epitome of the inefficient and ineffective bureaucracy. For many of those who subscribe to this view, the obvious anti-dote to the ills of the education system is to increase centralized control of schools and to hold teachers more accountable. Their objective has been to 'tighten the ship' in one manner or another, through increased teacher training and retraining requirements; standardized curricula and instructional programs; teacher licensing examinations; performance standards; more school and teacher evaluations; merit pay programs; and, more recently, state and national education goals, standards, and testing. (p. 5)

The *do-er* perspective advocates for using market-based reform mechanisms to create an efficient, bureaucratic teaching force. Stecher and Camm (2010) explain that Performance Based Accountability Systems (PBAS) share three main components: "goals (i.e., one or more long-term outcomes to be achieved), incentives (i.e., rewards or sanctions to motivate changes in individual or organizational behavior to improve performance), and measures (formal mechanisms for monitoring the delivery of services or the attainment of goals)" (p. 2). This approach to organizing teachers' work stresses that the teacher will strive to improve their students' test scores if the scores are tied to teacher performance evaluations and other incentives. Framing the teachers' role as being primarily focused on outputs, evaluations and recording data ensures that teachers will be trained to support and legitimize market-based reform initiatives.

A "no excuses"[7] focus on classroom management and a strict adherence to a prescribed curriculum are the other characteristics defining the bureaucratic, "do-er" educator. A "no excuses" approach to teachers' work, particularly in under resourced schools in high-poverty

[7] "No excuses" policies and pedagogies have a strict focus on establishing order and organization by maintaining uniform policies to control students' appearance and dress (Cohn, 1996; Murray, 1997); strictly regimenting respectful speech and engagement (Nancrede, 1998); and/or upholding severe discipline policies regardless of infraction, including lateness (Burke & Herbert, 1996; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). This approach stresses having "high expectations" and holding students accountable for their success (KIPP™). It presents the mantra that there should be "no excuses" to student achievement (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

urban and rural areas, has been adopted by many non-traditional charter school networks (e.g., the national KIPP™ network) and alternative teacher preparation programs (e.g., Teach for America™; The New Teacher Project™). Often these non-traditional charter schools follow a college-preparatory model and have longer days, with some even going to school on weekends, to provide students from under-resourced backgrounds with the structure that is deemed necessary for academic success. “No excuses” pedagogical approaches often focus on developing “grit”, perseverance, and self-control in students so that they can be successful in their academic career regardless of their life outside school, the social context, or other extraneous factors (Duckworth, 2016; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2002; Tough, 2012). The “no excuses” paradigm stresses character building and holding students to high standards as an apolitical remedy to the social and economic disparities that they face. In light of persistent gaps in achievement in US schools, proponents believe “no excuses” pedagogies are necessary to equip students with the skills and training they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Lemov’s (2010) book *Teach Like a Champion,* is a practical example of the technical, bureaucratic approach to teachers’ work. The book provides forty-nine techniques for educators to follow to tackle any issue they may come across and ensure tight classroom management. It is organized as a check list or script for teachers to follow to deliver effective instruction, with chapters focused on techniques such as: no opt out; do now; without apology; draw the map; the hook; circulate; break it down; call and response; everybody writes; tight transitions; seat signals; do it again; sweat the details; no warnings; etc. It is presented as a guidebook for the contemporary educator to follow.

The phronetic approach: The teacher as *thinker*. Other scholars and educators call for increased attention to the development of the teachers as professionals. Here I use the term

"phronetic practice" to denote this group's emphasis on wise, ethical professionalism rooted in practical rationality as opposed to focusing on either abstract theory or technical know how. Without an exact English translation, phronesis is most often equated to mean "wise practice". Aristotle used the concept to disrupt the Athenian dominant ideology, critiquing it for being too focused on episteme (theoretical knowledge) and techne (technical knowledge) at the expense of phronetic knowledge rooted in practical, rational wisdom that considers the ethical, common good (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Keith, 2015). Flyvbjerg (2001) resurrects the concept of phronesis and stresses the need to integrate it into research methodology in the social sciences in order to remedy the fact that research has historically been dominated by positivistic approaches. The phronetic educator is considerate of context and focuses on deliberation for the common good (Keith, 2015; Pitman, 2012; Schwandt, 2005).

Beginning in the 1990s many in teacher education research turned to earlier work done by education progressives and critical theorists, such as John Dewey and Paulo Friere. They called for the development of reflective, intellectually connected and collaborative educators, who were prepared to acknowledge and account for the complexities of the social, cultural and political contexts of their students' lives both in and out of school (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Little, 2000). Rooted in Dewey's (1895) famous declaration that,

> It is advisable that the teacher should understand, and even be able to criticize, the general principles upon which the whole educational system is formed and administered. He is not like a private soldier in an army, expected merely to obey, or like a cog in a wheel, expected merely to respond to and transmit external energy; he must be an intelligent medium of action. (p. 96)

This approach calls for the preparation of active and reflective educational professionals. It encourages educators to position themselves as praxis-oriented teachers who will take an

"inquiry stance", conducting practitioner research to inform and improve their teaching practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). It views the educator as a professional, being first and foremost an intellectual, who must be active and reflective to respond to the different needs of their students and understand issues of social context. In many ways the call for the reflective educator that reemerged at the end of the 20th century was a response to the growth of bureaucratic, scientific-managerial approaches to teacher preparation and reform that had gained traction with the emergence of market-based education reform policies in the 1980s and 1990s (Au, 2011).

The ideal type of the phronetic teacher professional acknowledges that the work of schools and teachers is complex and messy. Schwandt (2005) explains, "Because all practices are mutable and indeterminate, the knowledge required in practice must have the characteristic of plasticity: flexibility in attending to the most important features of each situation" (p. 324). Schools are seen as being dynamic, complex organizations; therefore, it is argued that they cannot be organized like a factory or a corporation (Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Mehta, 2013). Thus, this perspective stresses that educational practice must consider more than solely instrumental or technical know-how. It recognizes that education does not take place in a vacuum but rather is a complex social process.

Overall, the concern from the phronetic, *thinker* professional perspective is that dominant market-based approaches to education policy and reform will leave society with an abundance of technocratic practitioners and a serious dearth of equity and ethically minded practitioners (Schwandt, 2005). Thus, educational researchers have been calling for the development of phronetic educational professionals who acknowledge and consider the increasingly complex world that their students' must navigate and who really strive to understand and reflect on the social and cultural contexts as they relate to their students' educational needs and opportunities.

For example, Darling-Hammond's (2010a) vision for the development of "high-quality teachers" is rooted in the phronetic perspective. Her research stresses the need for the development of "high-quality teachers" as a primary lever for establishing an equitable and sustainable education system. Her work has focused on studying teacher preparation and development as it relates to education reform nationally by doing comparative international studies of systems that have undergone successful whole-system reform. Reflecting on her international, comparative research she states, "These countries see no advantage to be gained in constructing a fundamentally unequal system in which a large share of the teaching force is poorly prepared, assigned to the neediest students, and left unsupported" (p. 198). She further details the following characteristics as requisite for the development of a high-quality teaching force in the U.S.: universal high-quality teacher education; mentoring for new teachers; continual professional development and learning; leadership development; and equitable, competitive salaries. Darling-Hammond notes that nations with the highest-performing school systems (e.g. Finland, Singapore, South Korea, etc.) all have federal teacher professionalism policies that incorporate the aforementioned characteristics. "Professional policy" is defined in Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, and Darling-Hammond's (2010) policy report of four case study states that are using the approach in the U.S. as follows:

> 'Professional policy' can be used as an alternative to governmental regulation in fields where knowledge is always growing and its appropriate application is contingent on many factors. Professional standards hold members of a profession accountable for developing and sharing expertise and applying it appropriately rather than imposing standardized prescriptions for practice that would fail to meet clients' differing needs. (p. 3)

The recommendations are for the increased development of teacher professional policies, at the state and federal level, in the U.S. (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Mehta (2013) similarly emphasizes the need for the development of educators who are trained to fulfill a professional rather than bureaucratic role. He characterizes the bureaucratic model of organizing teachers work as centered on managerial, top-down control where the power is held at the top and a system of rules and regulations is standardized in order to guide the employees. Mehta stresses that this model is appropriate for more routine, non-complex working conditions, such as work in a factory or in the service industry. In contrast, he sees the professional model, with its emphasis on preparing active, reflective intellectuals, as more suited to teachers:

> Teaching requires teachers to have a thorough knowledge of their subjects and how students understand those subjects, as well as a capacity for real time interactive decision making in unpredictable situations… For these reasons, teaching is more appropriately thought of as professional work, characterized by deep levels of knowledge and expertise, professionally shared standards of appropriate practice, and the use of judgment and discretion in applying that common knowledge to particular situations. (p. 468)

Teachers face myriad, complex "micro decisions" throughout the school day that often require reflective, higher-order thinking and making decisions independently, on-the-spot, in the classroom (Mehta, 2013). Thus, in this perspective the development of phronetic professionals is requisite to ensure that teachers are deliberative and ethical in their decision-making and considerate of the myriad factors that contribute to student success. Ingersoll (2003) refers to the phronetic, reflective conception of the education practitioner as the "teacher disempowerment perspective," highlighting its critique of market-based reforms that increase control over teachers' work. He explains, "These critics argue that school systems are marked by too much centralized control and too much bureaucracy… factorylike schools unduly deprofessionalize, disempower, and "demotivate" teachers – a situation that is dissatisfying to teachers and a source of school inefficiency and ineffectiveness" (p. 7). In essence, then, the phronetic professional

perspective is responding to teacher disempowerment related to over-centralization.

In many ways, the conceptualization of teachers as reflective, phronetic practitioners is rooted in the values and norms espoused by teacher education programs across the country. In particular, teacher educators emphasize the need for teachers to consider the particular complexities of the social context, to remain critically reflective of their practice, and to work for equitable social change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Renee, Welner & Oakes, 2009; Smyth, 1989; Also see Appendix A). The phronetic educational professional focuses on the common good, and deliberation and agency are considered requisite in order to ensure wise, ethical practice. Smyth (1989) articulates the dilemma many teachers face in the current education policy context, noting "If teachers (or those in training) are denied the opportunity to articulate, critique, and culturally locate principles about their own (or one another's) teaching, then, politically speaking, such teachers are being treated no differently than disempowered workers who have historically been oppressed and denied access to power over their work" (p. 5). The phronetic educator perspective considers professional practice to be more than solely a technique informed by scientific knowledge, standards or universal truths. It asserts that the educational practitioners' reality is much more messy and complex than the bureaucratic model allows.

Teacher Activism & Agency

A Very Brief History of Teacher Activism

While teacher activism has been on the rise in the 21st century, it is certainly not a new phenomenon. A comprehensive history of teacher activism in the U.S. is beyond the scope of this project. However, it is essential to acknowledge that activism has influenced the evolution of education in the U.S. since the establishment of normal schools and the push for compulsory

education (Goldstein, 2014). Activism for universal education was considered requisite for the democratic project our country was undertaking (Meier, 2009). In the 19th century, female educators—such as Catharine Beecher, founder of the Hartford Female Seminary and Susan B. Anthony, headmistress of Canajoharie Academy—stood up as early day teacher activists (Goldstein, 2014). These early teacher activists operated in a time where women had few rights but worked to push for compulsory public education in the U.S. They were supported and encouraged by scholars that believed teachers were on the frontline of social and political change and had a pivotal role to play in pushing for the education agenda. Counts' (1932) seminal book "Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order" made a profound social statement about the active role teachers had to play. The text, and much of Counts' work, was a clarion call to teachers to be on the vanguard of educational reform in schools.

In the 20th century, African American teachers often took on activist roles in advocating for their schools. Segregated schooling in America meant that black school children were provided with inequitable conditions, including fewer resources, worse building conditions and teachers whose pay was less than half that of white teachers. As Fairclough (2007) details,

> Racial discrimination and abject poverty compelled black teachers to act as community leaders. Teachers had to create and sustain schools. They struggled to attract and retain patrons; to procure buildings, furniture, and equipment; to ensure regular sources of income; to neutralize white hostility and cultivate white support. Teachers were institution builders, on both a small and a large scale. They founded schools and colleges and often devoted their lives to them. (p. 10)

During segregation, black teachers did not choose to use their agency or not; it was considered a vocational responsibility to fight for the basic needs that their students and schools were not provided. Siddle-Walker (2005) notes, "Black educators consistently advocated for improved facilities, bus transportation, longer school terms... Although the success of their activities was

mediated by the Southern political context of the era in which they advocated, the Black teachers' organization was the most organized agent for change throughout this period" (p. 355).

Black teacher activism continued during the post-Brown era. During the civil-rights movement black teacher activists, led by Charles Cobb and Ella Baker, organized the Freedom School Movement to establish schools designed to achieve social, political and economic equality for black people in the United States (Hale, 2016). Black teacher activists, such as Staughton Lynd, Dorothy Height, Marva Collins and Septima Clark, worked with civil rights organizations, like the NAACP and the SCLC, to fight against the unequitable, discriminatory schooling conditions that black children were experiencing throughout the country (Hale, 2016; Hine & Thompson, 1998; Orfield, 1969). Additionally, the complex historical development of the national PTA provides another example of civic engagement and activism being exhibited in diverse ways by teachers and other community leaders in the United States, often under tenuous conditions and through racial power struggles. The struggle that the black community fought in pushing for representation and civic agency in the PTA has been given little attention in the historical record (Woyshner, 2009).

The development of teachers' unions in the U.S. is another prime example of teacher activism. Two educational organizations, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), were in competition during the 19th century to gain national power and become the voice of teachers across the country (Alvarez, 2003). The AFT's organization was explicitly identified as a labor union with a political agenda. It made allegiances with other powerful labor unions that had already established themselves in the U.S. (e.g. the AFL-CIO). The AFT's goals and objectives focused on organizing to protect teachers' rights as workers, including: securing benefits, negotiating contracts, and protecting teachers'

wages. In contrast, The NEA saw itself as a professional organization. It. viewed the AFT's focus on labor unionism and organizing as a threat to the development of professionalism (Alvarez, 2003). Alvarez's study of teacher organizing in Philadelphia shows how the AFT consolidated power in the big cities:

> The story of teacher unionization and faculty desegregation in Philadelphia illuminates several important issues in educational history. First, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers' many years of organization efforts and coalition building with numerous labor unions culminated in a collective bargaining victory over their rival teacher organization. Such efforts symbolized increased teacher militancy against local school boards in urban areas during the 1960s. Further, the PFT victory symbolized a definitive shift of power and influence in large urban centers away from the National Education Association, the nation's largest and oldest teaching organization, to the American Federation of Teachers and the AFL-CIO... Lastly and most importantly, the PFT victory solidified the relationship the AFT and union locals shared with the broader labor movement throughout the twentieth century. (p. 863)

The AFT cultivated political agency and activism in order to drive the decision over which approach to teacher organizations, and relatedly which organization, would gain dominance by winning the collective bargaining contract for teachers in the U.S.

Perhaps the most famous example of teacher activism is the New York City teachers' strikes of the 1960s. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement and frustrated with the failure of desegregation in the city, community groups in New York demanded decentralization and community control of schooling. Arguing that schools that served only black students should not be run by all-white administrative teams, parents and activists boycotted the first day of the 1966 school year (Berube & Gittell, 1969). Ravitch (2010) discusses these demands for local control, explaining, "The districts – ranging from one to several schools – were located in black and hispanic neighborhoods and led by activists who had concluded that racial desegregation was never going to happen; they wanted community control and – in two of the three districts – 'Black Power'" (p.195). The view was that in order for positive educational development to be

realized the local community had to have a voice in the education decisions affecting their children.

In response, in 1967 and with support from the teachers' union (the UFT), three sites in NYC were approved as demonstration sites to experiment with community control: Ocean-Hill Brownsville in Brooklyn, the Two Bridges Model District in the lower east side of Manhattan, and the IS 201 school in Harlem (Berube & Gittell, 1969; Lewis, 2013; Perlstein, 2004). However, not long after the experiment in local, community control began, tensions between the UFT and the local community, made up predominately of Black and Latinx people, emerged over funding, staffing and other issues, which led to the two teachers' strikes, one in 1967 and one in 1968. In May of 1968 the Ocean Hill-Brownsville board, which had gained full community control through the demonstration district designation, ordered the involuntary transfer of thirteen teachers, five assistant principals and one principal, almost all of whom were white, asserting they were undermining the local control experiment. However, the UFT claimed that the transfers were, for all intents-and-purposes, firings that were done violating due process. The union called for teachers to use their collective political power and agency to respond with a teachers strike of the entire NYC school district. This led to 350 teachers walking out and one of the largest teachers' strikes in U.S. history (Berube & Gittell, 1969; Lewis, 2013). Unfortunately, these strikes positioned the unions, and the mostly white teachers they served, against the local Black and Latinx communities. As Alvarez (2003) details, "The crisis resulted in three citywide strikes of union teachers, an inauspicious beginning for educational reform in predominately black urban schools, and an increase in the power of unionized teachers, especially over personnel policies and practices" (p. 838). The strikes led to the abandonment of the local

community control project, but a notable increase in teachers' political agency through unionization.

These references provide historical evidence of teacher activism in the United States. While not intended to be exhaustive, these examples are reminders of the fact that, though traditionally viewed as a-political (Lortie, 1975; Waller, 1965), teachers have throughout history organized and exerted political agency, in large enough pockets, to influence educational change.

The Contemporary Landscape

Here I present theoretical and empirical research on teacher activism in the 21st century. A number of researchers and activists have argued that only with a more politically engaged and active teaching force can educators respond threats to schools and other key public institutions (Larson, 2014; Little, 2000; Meier, 2009). Some researchers promote and advocate for the development of socially just and politically active teachers by providing case examples of teachers who are doing it (Weiner, 2013; Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009). This literature is usually more rooted in the philosophy of education, presenting "calls to action" or "how-to guides" for becoming teacher activists (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Lipman, 2011; Renee, Welner, & Oakes, 2009; Weiner, 2013). However, there is little empirical research in teacher education that looks at how participation in contemporary teacher activism impacts teachers as educators, both collectively and individually. Below, I first review the theoretical literature. Then, I discuss existing empirical studies of teacher activists. This discussion highlights the need for more research exploring the contemporary phenomenon of teachers participating in activist groups.

Some researchers exploring teacher activism have made direct connections to unionism and a need to re-envision the purpose and direction of unions for the 21st century. Weiner (2013)

envisions a politically active union rooted in social justice, which she calls "social justice unionism," contrasting it to the more traditional "business"/ "server" model of unions. Her theoretical, exploratory study examines a case example of teacher activists in New York City. She found that the move toward fostering social justice unionism through teacher activism is complex work and involves recognizing that constituents and coalitions may be working from different perspectives with different approaches, but that political power is found in making these alliances. She notes, "a complex push-pull dynamic occurs with each change, opening and retracting space, remaking networks and influencing longstanding personal ties among activists". The work to push teachers' unions to be more active and politically engaged is complex. Weiner sees building strong coalitions—that are willing to work together, adapt and compromise for the common goal—as being requisite to garnering the political power to push back on policies that are deemed ineffective or counter to the needs of students'.

In light of the growth of teacher activism, both nationally and globally, scholars have initiated empirical studies to explore the phenomenon. For the purposes of this study the literature review focuses on studies conducted in the U.S. Researchers investigating teacher activism in the current context have explored the ways that activism impacts teacher identity and commitment.

Other researchers have discussed the need to connect Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) with teacher activism. Matias and Liou (2015) are teacher educators who focus on the need to prepare, preservice teachers they educate, most of whom are white, with the cultural and contextual tools necessary to deal with issues of race in diverse classrooms. They present their research in a non-traditional format, utilizing an auto-ethnographic account or counterstory narrative to showcase how one urban teacher engaged in

critical race teacher activism. They argue that CRT and CWS expose the negative impact colorblindness has on the classroom, noting that colorblindness is most commonly implemented by teachers who feel uncomfortable or unprepared to discuss racial dynamics in the classroom. They conclude by proposing a "community of color epistemological approach" that highlights the strengths found inside communities of color and supports both emotional and pedagogical investments needed to utilize critical race activism inside urban classrooms and schools. This article is unique for a number of reasons, but particularly in its recommendations for the classroom teacher to use activism within the classroom to affect change in their students' day-to-day schooling experiences.

Gorski and Chen (2015) examined social justice education activists' burnout. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with fourteen activists to better understand activist burnout and the implications it has for social movements for educational justice. In their analysis three major symptom categories of activist burnout emerged: deterioration of psychological and emotional well being, deterioration of physical well-being, and disillusionment and hopelessness. They conclude noting that the symptoms, as well as the "culture of martyrdom", negatively impact the health and sustainability of activists presenting a threat to the efficiency and effectiveness of education justice movements.

Montaño, López-Torres, DeLissovoy, Pacheco and Stillman (2002) explore the impact participation in teacher activist groups has on teachers who were trained in the UCLA Teacher Education Program (TEP). The program's mission is to develop transformative educators working for social justice. Their study was motivated by the fact that the TEP program's mission stresses developing socially just educators but does not directly address activism, community organizing or civic/political engagement as a means to achieving the social justice aims. Thus,

the researchers wanted to explore what happened when alumni left the program and then participated in "alternative sites of learning", in education activist groups. The authors note, "We maintain that the development of a teacher activist identity is not only a process of acquisition of knowledge through course curricula or seminars but more importantly an experiential process that allows teachers to acquire the skills, disposition, and political consciousness necessary to engage in social and political action" (p. 265).

Montaño et al. conducted in-depth recorded interviews with five TEP alumni to explore their perceptions about knowledge and skills they attained by participating in activist settings. The researchers note that they intended to outline the specific skills and tools the teachers identified, however the data analysis revealed that those skills were not as easily measurable or discrete as they originally expected. Rather, the majority of the teachers' interviews revealed more "ideational" tools and skills, which they viewed as enriching their effectiveness as teacher activists. The four themes or "ideational tools and skills" that immerged from the data, which the educators identify as being connected to their development as teacher activists, were: rhetorical and discursive skills; strategies to develop collective consciousness; politicizing the curriculum; and understanding the nature of change. The authors conclude, "As these teachers participated in the activist organizations, they engaged in multiple activities and different kinds of learning as well as the development of their own 'conscientization'... Identity and meaning were negotiated and co-constructed as they engaged in political praxis within their activist communities" (p. 272). The authors stress it is essential for TEPs that outline the development of social justice, change agent teachers in their missions to account for how this may be accomplished. They investigate this through their study following up with alumni from the TEP to explore how their activist experiences impact them as novice educators.

Picower's (2012) qualitative study examines how teacher activism can contribute to the struggle for social justice. The study is rooted in critical theory, which contends that educational inequities are political, and teachers have a duty to respond to policies that contribute to disparities in educational opportunities. Picower developed a framework of teacher activism highlighting three clear commitments that emerged from her data on teacher activists: 1) *Reconciling the vision*, which connects to how teacher activists have a vision for a socially just world and work to reconcile this vision with the realities of inequality and social injustices, 2) *Moving toward liberation* unpacks how teachers worked toward their vision of liberation by creating and delivering culturally relevant, community responsive pedagogy helping students to deepen their own understandings of social inequality and the skills to take action and work for change and 3) *Standing up to oppression*, which involves teacher activists engaging in long-term collective action to unite against social reproduction in schools and the ways the current schooling environment upholds inequalities and the status quo. She concludes that the three commitments were consistent across the teacher activists' experiences, even if their teaching approaches, pedagogy or school environments differed. Thus, she believes that this framework of teacher activist commitments would provide a useful tool for new teacher activists.

As I have shown, a number of educational researchers have argued for a more activist, socially-justice oriented teaching force (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Montaña, López-Torres, DeLissovoy, Pacheco, & Stillman, 2002; Renee, Welner, & Oakes, 2009). Their research connects teacher activism to the development of a social-justice-oriented teacher identity in which educators are prepared to use their political agency to push for social change and democratic, equitable public education policies.

Activism & Professionalism

Few empirical studies have explored the connection between teacher activism and professionalism. The scholarship that exists on the topic is usually either advocacy based or theoretical in nature. Some have theorized the activist professional, how they should operate, and why they are needed (Lipman, 2011; Larson, 2014). However, few contemporary empirical examples exist. Those that do exist are focused on contexts outside of the U.S. (Avis, 2005; Sachs, 2003; Thomas, 2011). There are no empirical studies exploring the current American context and the relationship between teacher activism and teachers' conceptions of professionalism.

Tarlau (2009) studies educational activism as professionalism in the Brazilian context. She roots her work in the critical paradigm, highlighting the need for a theoretical framework that synthesizes the work being done by theorists of critical pedagogy and frame theory in social movement research, in order to provide a deeper and more robust understanding of the growth of educational activism and organizing in Brazil. Her view is that critical educators could learn from the organizing being done in social movements and social movements could learn from critical pedagogy. Drawing from her research, Tarlau outlines three conceptual frameworks that could remedy this disconnect and build solidarity: conceptualizing social movements as pedagogical spaces; the notion that informal educational projects can lead to the emergence and growth of social movements; and positioning public schools as spaces of contestation which can connect to larger social movements to work for justice.

Sachs (2003) conceptualizes two competing forms of teacher identity through her work researching teacher civic engagement in Australia: 1) the entrepreneurial professional, which is efficient, accountable and in compliance with the imposed policy mandates and consistently a

high-performing teacher as is measured by accountability performance measure and 2) the activist professional, whose main concern is the well-being of all of her children in the classroom with a focus on meeting-students where they are and providing culturally and contextually considerate pedagogy. The "activist professional" is a change agent who focuses on collaborating with educators and the community to improve conditions. The "entrepreneurial professional" emerged as a product of the bureaucratic, scientific-managerialism approach to schooling and reform. While her work focuses on the Australian context, the implementation of market-based reform initiatives is not unique to Australia. Rather, it is a global phenomenon with market-based approaches to reform becoming normative in many countries around the world, including Chile, Sweden, England and the U.S. (Sahlberg, 2011). Thus, her work theorizing and developing conceptions of the modern teacher professional identity, in light of this reform climate, is quite useful in unpacking the teacher activist experience in the U.S.

While not empirical work, Larson's (2014) theoretical analysis of the relationship between teacher professionalism, political agency and activism, is quite useful. As discussed earlier, Larson's scholarship explores the conceptualization and development of the notion of professionalism over the last century or so, primarily in the United States and England. More recently, Larson has argued that the contemporary context calls for a reassessment of the designation of professionalism for some fields, namely engineering and teaching. Larson is critical of the exclusion of teaching from being considered a profession and sees it as a power struggle rooted in the historical development of capitalist class structures. She argues that teachers are professionals but believes fighting for this title and designation will require political activism. She explains,

> The future of teachers' professionalism cannot only lie in demonstrating technical competence, or in recruiting top students to the ranks. Teaching is a contested

> reality, which means that even respect for proven competence must be conquered. As they have done most recently in Chicago and Philadelphia, teachers enter the fray to defend both their jobs and the essential public service they provide. (p. 16)

For Larson, teacher professionalism is tied up with political agency. Professionalism requires having an active voice to call attention to policy reforms that are seen as being detrimental to sustainable, equitable education development.

As this review of the literature illustrates, there are a number of scholars who are studying and arguing for the increased professionalization of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Ingersoll, 2003; Mehta, 2013). At the same time, other scholars are interested in teacher activism as a new social phenomenon that may influence education policy and practice (Picower, 2012; Weiner, 2013). However, these two bodies of scholarship have not been in conversation with one another. This research addresses that gap, by bringing these concepts together in a way that helps us understand both the realities of teachers' experiences, especially in urban areas, and a new conception of what it means to be a professional educator that may be emerging in the face of policy mandates and reforms with which many teachers disagree.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study explores how educators understand and construct their participation in education activism. It is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do teachers experience and understand their activism?
   - How do they frame their involvement?
   - What are their motivations and goals?
   - What are their strategies for action and how do they connect with particular ways of framing activism?
   - What underlying assumptions about the purposes of education, democracy, or other issues shape their activism?
2. To what extent and how do educators frame their activism as being connected to professionalism?

Two affiliated public education activist organizations—the Justice Caucus (JC) and the Active Teacher Coalition (ATC)[8]—served as the site for conducting field observations of teacher activists. The aim was to develop an empirically based interpretation of the culture of the teacher activists, particularly attending to the connections these teachers draw between their activism and their role as educators. Data were collected over a period of twelve months by observing and interviewing teacher activists - many of whom were regularly active with the organizations but also some who employed their activism in different ways and spaces (more detail on this below in interview section).

[8] Pseudonyms are used throughout the study, for any organizations named and for all research participants. Interview participants were invited to provide a pseudonym of their choice; 3 did so.

Introducing the Focal Organizations

The Justice Caucus (JC) and the Active Teacher Coalition (ATC), which identify as officially affiliated organizations, regularly collaborate and co-sponsor events and are the most active and visible education activist groups in the area. Their goals and objectives center on organizing for equitable public education transformation, justice, and equity. I selected these organizations because they serve as a hub for teacher activism within the metropolitan area, with many teacher activists participating in both organizations. Often times the lines of the organization blur and people commonly refer to them as linked. The Justice Caucus and Activist Teacher Coalition have a regular presence at school district and city council meetings, conferences, and demonstrations throughout the year. The Justice Caucus (JC) holds monthly organizing meetings, while the Active Teacher Coalition (ATC) focuses more on developing campaigns, providing professional development opportunities for teacher activists and hosting one-off events throughout the year. They regularly collaborate with other social activist organizations in the region, such as those focusing on housing, health, workers' rights and the livable wage campaign, and immigrants' rights, among other issues.

Additionally, these organizations are connected to larger national public education activist organizations and movements. In particular, the Active Teacher Coalition is part of a national umbrella organization, formed in the late 2000s, which aims to defend and improve equitable public education through teacher agency and action. Many like organizations have formed in cities around the country over the last decade, including the Caucus of Rank & File Educators (CORE) and Teacher Action Group (TAG) in Chicago, the New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCORE), Teachers Unite (TU) also in New York, and the nationwide

Badass Teachers Associations (BATs), to name a few. Thus, while this study focuses on teacher activism at these specific local sites, its findings are representative of a larger national phenomenon: the growth of educational activist groups in the 21st century. In observing these local groups, this study seeks to provide insight into the broader trend. organizations as it relates to their conceptions of professionalism and activism.

Founded in 2011, Active Teacher Coalition's mission is to work with the community to "foster positive school transformation, environments where students and teachers can thrive, and community ownership and influence within education." The organization's membership is not limited to teachers; it also includes paraprofessionals, nurses, counselors, after-school educators, and allies of public education. The Justice Caucus, which emerged in 2014 out of organizing efforts by the Active Teacher Coalition, formed in response to calls from teacher activists and local organizers who were frustrated with the direction district school reform was going after the closing of a large number of schools and significant austerity measures were taken. Through serious organizing efforts in 2013, the Justice Caucus emerged as a social justice caucus within the traditional union. The Justice Caucus focuses specifically on how teachers use political agency and collective power to bring issues to the traditional teachers' union and thus leverage the unions' power in the larger policy landscape. They root their work in social justice unionism (Weiner, 2012) and approach this work through an intersectional lens. The majority of the members of the Justice Caucus are teachers who are also union members; however, the organization also welcomes "supporting members" who are non-teachers. The Justice Caucus' mission is "to work to defend and transform public education for all."

Study Design

The qualitative paradigm emphasizes the researcher's immersion in the setting in order to gain a more robust, holistic understanding of complex social phenomena. As Lichtman (2013) states, "The purpose of qualitative research is to describe, understand and interpret human phenomena, human interaction, or human discourse" (p. 17). As a qualitative researcher, I believe that both social reality and humans are complex and that reality is socially constructed. As Ravitch and Carl (2016) explain, "Qualitative research is a mode of inquiry that centralizes the complexity and subjectivity of lived experiences and values these aspects of human being and meaning making through methodological means" (p. 5). As such, I recognize that knowledge is not disembodied but rather is embedded in the human experience. To this end, I used ethnographic methods to study teacher activists, immersing myself in their local culture and studying their social interactions to gain a deeper understanding of how the educators make meaning of their experience.

As discussed in Chapter One, I use frame theory throughout the research process to help me unpack the varied ways that activists make sense of their participation and attach meaning to their actions. Frame theory is rooted in social constructivism and interpretivism. In my research, I sought to illuminate the multiple frames that teacher activists use, paying close attention to how activists spoke about particular issues and the ways in which specific frames did and did not overlap. This theoretical approach allowed me to develop a more nuanced understanding of how teachers' beliefs concerning the purposes of teaching and schooling in the 21st century connect to their activism.

Ethnographic Methods

This qualitative study employed ethnographic methods to better understand the educators' experience participating in teacher activist organizations. LeCompte and Schensul (2010) explain, "ethnography takes the position that human behavior and the ways in which people construct and make meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific" (p. 1). Thus, to immerse myself in the culture of the teacher activists for this study, I collected data in the field for twelve months, attending a wide variety of events and conducting interviews with the teacher activists.

I conducted field observations at all monthly organizing meetings of the Justice Caucus (JC) and school district meetings, in addition to relevant weekly events and convenings attended by the teacher activists for 12 months, leading to a total of 154 hours of observation (see table 1 below for a breakdown of observations). I took observational notes or "jottings" in the field and then wrote up detailed fieldnotes within twenty-four hours of exiting the field (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Additionally, I conducted interviews with twenty-five participants and collected public documents - either distributed by the organizations or released by the school district or other government offices - pertaining to issues relevant to the activists. I also gathered information about the organizations' activism from their websites.

Before beginning the official data collection process, I had already established relationships with a number of people at both organizations. Since beginning my PhD program, I have been interested in participatory, democratic civic engagement and have participated in public education activist events throughout the city. Additionally, I conducted participant observations of a teacher discussion club organized by the Active Teacher Coalition (ATC) for my ethnography class, where I worked with teacher activists who are active within these

organizations. My history with the group was beneficial as I leveraged my rapport with some of the teacher activists in order to access them as gatekeepers. At the same time, I had naturally begun to develop ideas about the organizations and their members through my prior experience working with them.

Data Collection

Observational Fieldnotes

Participant observation with fieldnotes served as one method of data collection. Participant observation refers to a continuum from full participant to full observer, on which I was positioned somewhere in the middle. I avoided positioning myself strictly as an observer out of concern that participants would feel uncomfortable and less willing to share around a perceived outsider. Standing out in this way could have negatively impacted the data collection. Rather, I positioned myself as a participant-observer to reflect that—while I was still observing this community from the outside as an academic—I had previously interacted with some members of the organizations. This positioning helped me build trust and rapport with the participants. Although I sat at the table with the participants as opposed to in an isolated corner, I did not play an active role in discussions or activities. I presented myself more as an introvert so as not to influence what the teacher activists shared about their experiences or bias data collection while attending organizing meetings, district meetings, and other activism events.

I immersed myself in the field in order to do and see the activities and involvement of teacher activists as they do. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) explain the importance of immersion in ethnography, stating,

> The ethnographer seeks a deeper immersion in others' worlds in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important. With immersion, the field researcher sees from the inside how people lead their lives, how they carry out their daily rounds of activities, what they find meaningful, and how they do so. (p. 3)

While conducting participant observations in the field, I paid attention to a number of factors, which helped me to write focused fieldnotes and develop my interview protocol, including:

1. how teacher activists interact with one another;
2. how they discuss their roles as activists and teachers;
3. how they discuss their views regarding education and the purposes of schooling;
4. how they make meaning, or frame, their varied perspectives on the purposes of teaching and learning;
5. the different frames they develop and utilize to rationalize their activism;
6. which frames activists invoked and when;
7. and any tensions that emerged.

In doing so, I sought to illuminate how teacher activists construct and co-construct their roles as activists and the connections they draw between this role and their professional lives.

Table 3.1. Breakdown of Participant Observations (12 months in the field)

Participant Observations	Details	Frequency	Duration	Total PO Hours
JC Monthly Organizing Meetings	Justice Caucus Monthly Organizing Meetings	10	2 hours	20
JC Committee Meetings	Justice Caucus Committee Meetings (LGBTQ, Political, Anti-Racist White Educators, Racial Justice, etc.)	20	Vary (specific times recorded in observations tracking spreadsheet)	30
Monthly School District Meetings	Regular space for civic engagement between teacher activists & district	10	3 hours	30

Other Government Meetings	specific details/titles of events recorded in observations tracking spreadsheet	10	Vary (specific times recorded in observations tracking spreadsheet)	20
One-time Events (Convenings, Demonstrations, Etc.)	Co-Sponsored by JC & ATC &/or Other Orgs (where teacher activists present)	20	Vary (specific times recorded in observations tracking spreadsheet)	40
Conferences	Justice Caucus & Active Teacher Coalition Co-sponsored Bi-Annual day-long conferences	2	7 hours	14
			Total PO hours	154

Interviews

While observing allowed me to see the culture in action, I also conducted interviews in order to gain insight into the frames individual teachers employ to make sense of their involvement in teacher activism. The overarching goal of using interviews as a data collection method is to deepen our understanding of individuals' social world and lived realities. As Seidman (2006) observed, "At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth… Recognizing the limits on our understanding of others, we can still strive to comprehend them by understanding their actions" (p. 9). I used the interviews as a tool to examine how educators explained their actions, focusing particularly on activists' individual stories and framings and how they connected and diverged. Additionally, interviews allowed the participants to provide *historical information* (re: their teaching career,

how they became civically engaged, etc.) that could not be gathered through observations alone and contributed to data triangulation (Creswell, 2003).

I used in-depth, semi-structured interviewing because it is more conducive to open and genuine conversation with participants (Lichtman, 2013; Seidman, 2006). Using interviews as a second form of data collection enabled my research to go deeper and helped me connect the individual teacher activists' beliefs with my observations. Moreover, the interviews explored how the teacher activists frame their activism and how this connects to their broader educational philosophies and beliefs. Interviews also serve as a useful form of triangulation. During the data collection process, I used interviews to check my observations and interpretations with the participants (Creswell, 2003). I also used them for triangulation of data analysis, to see how teachers' personal narratives fit with the data I collected through participant observations.

Recruitment of Interview Participants. I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty-five teacher activists (see table 2 below for interview participant information). Two "gatekeepers" assisted me with recruiting interview participants (Creswell, 2003; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). According to LeCompte and Schensul, "Gatekeepers are individuals who control access to a community, organization, group of people, or source of information" (p. 10). The gatekeepers I worked with were informal, meaning they do not hold any positions formally signifying their position or legally providing them with the power to approve or deny access, as a principal or superintendent may (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Rather, I considered them gatekeepers due to their history, experience, and connections within the education activist organizations. I selected teacher activists with whom I have a rapport and to whom I felt comfortable reaching out in order to gain entry. After I was granted access to the site, I put out a recruitment call for voluntary interviewee participants.

I purposefully recruited participants from a wide variety of backgrounds and levels of activism. Purposeful sampling is often used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2003; Schwandt, 2007). As Creswell (2003) explains, “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions” (p. 185). In order to recruit a diverse group of voluntary participants, I put out a recruitment call as a one-page document that provided my contact information and summarized the study - while taking care to protect the validity of the research by not revealing too much about the study or its research questions (See Appendix B). I distributed this document through emails sent out to the activist organizations’ member list-serves by my two gate-keepers and at organizing meetings and relevant events in hard-copy.

After a couple of months in the field and after writing a memo reflecting on the recruitment process to date, I decided to expand my efforts and also send out my recruitment flyer through a number of different local College of Education listservs (through the help of colleagues who are education researchers focusing on social justice and activism) and social media outlets, including twitter® and instagram®. The purpose of this was twofold. First, I wanted to ensure that I was not recruiting only interview participants who were especially active within the activist organizations, as I wanted to have a wide variety of different participants with different degrees of activism and approaches. Second, I was also interested in talking to some teacher activists from other metropolitan areas around the country in order to see how the activists’ stories I was capturing doing ethnographic data collection connected to the broader phenomenon of teacher activism in the 21st century (more discussion of this below in the limitations section). The goal of this outreach was to recruit a wide variety of different teacher activists who may experience and frame their activism in unique and diverse ways (Participant

recruitment memo #1, 11/6/17). I purposefully recruited teacher activists from varied demographic backgrounds, types of school, stages in their career, years of experience as activists, etc. My goal was to have a diverse group of teacher activists to help me further unpack and explore the varied ways that teachers frame their activism.

After interviewing fifteen people, I wrote another memo on the participant recruitment process to reflect on the diversity of my participants and identify any gaps in my recruitment (Participant recruitment memo #2, 6/14/18). I observed that while I had a diverse group of teacher activists, I had not recruited any Black, male participants. I worked to remedy this by recruiting two Black, male participants through snowball sampling. The two new interview participants also differed with respect to age, years teaching and degree of activism (one being an older, very active, leader in the activist organizations; the other being a more novice teacher who enacts their activism on a local level). 56% of my sample identified as White, 20% identified as Black or African American, almost 10% identified as Latinx, one participant identified as multi-ethnic Swiss-Bangladeshi and two participants did not self-identify their race or ethnicity. With respect to gender, 68% identified as Cis female, 28% identified as Cis male, and 04% or one participant identified as Non-binary. Regarding sexuality, 16% identified as Queer or Lesbian. My sample included significant variation in years of teaching, with 20% new teachers, 36% experienced and 44% veteran teachers. Finally, 60% of my sample could be called extremely active and the other 40% moderately active. There was also significant variation with respect to the type of schools in which participants taught. The majority of the teachers taught in traditional public schools, a few taught in special admit or alternative schools and a couple taught at public charter schools (See Table 3.2 Below for Interview Participant Breakdown).

Table 3.2. Interview Participant Breakdown

Pseudonym	Teacher Experience (novice = 1-5 years; experienced = 5-10 years; veteran = 10+ years)	Demographic Info (Race/ethnicity; Gender; Sexuality = *self-identified via consent form)	School-type Currently (*self-identified via consent form)	Activist Experience (*if self-identified via consent form)
Delores	Experienced	Black, Cis Female	n/a	n/a
Lane	Veteran	White Jewish, Cis Female, Lesbian	Public, Urban, k-8, Economically Diverse, Large % Asian & rest mixed	39 years
Kara	Veteran	White, Cis Female, Heterosexual	Currently transitioning from Public K-8 to Public HS – both are high poverty, majority minority, NON special admit	10 years
Morgan	Novice	White, Non-binary, Queer	Small, neighborhood, Public HS	5 years
Chase	Experienced	White, Cis Male	n/a	5+ years
Doreen	Novice	White, Cis Female, Straight	Public, Urban, MS (in redesign network) – 99% low-income, Large West African Immigrant Pop, Staff 90% BIPOC	6 years
Audre	Veteran	Black, Cis Female		
Jude	Experienced	White, Cis Female, Straight	Public Special Admit HS	5 years
Mac	Experienced	White, Cis Male	n/a	10+ years
Amelia	Veteran	European, Cis Female, Heterosexual	Public, Middle, 100% Poverty	5 years
Brianne	Veteran	White, Cis Female	n/a	40 years

Kate	Veteran	Cis Female, *race/ethnicity n/a on form	n/a	25+ years (“for as long as I can remember”)
Kelly	Experienced	Caucasian, Cis Female	Contract Alternative	8 years
Penelope	Veteran	Bangladeshi-Swiss American Mennonite, Cis Female	Public Charter K-8, Title 1 - 85% free & reduced lunch, 85% African American	10 years
Matt	Novice	White Jewish, Cis Male, Straight	Public Alternative (Project Based), Magnet HS	7 years
Darla	Veteran	White, Cis Female	n/a	5 years
Selah	Experienced	White, Cis Female, Queer	Neighborhood, Public MS	8 years
Sucre	Novice	Latinx, Cis Female	n/a	10 years
Franklin	Experienced	White, Cis Male, Heterosexual	Public Magnet HS *in Alabama	5+ years
Lauryn	Veteran	African American, Cis Female, Heterosexual	Large Public HS *in Virginia	15+ years
Ben	Experienced	White, Cis Male, Heterosexual	Public School, Very Diverse, Title 1 *in NYC	10 years
Roxanne	Experienced	Latinx, Cis Female, Queer	Public Transfer HS *in NYC	5 years
Rhoda	Veteran	n/a	n/a	n/a
Solomon	Veteran	Black, Cis Male	n/a	10+ years
Calvin	Novice	Black, Cis Male (How would you describe your sexual orientation? “I wouldn’t”)	Small, Public, Alternative HS	7

Interviewing Plans & Protocol. The interviews, each lasting one to two hours on average (with a few lasting 3 hours), were purposefully planned to take place after I was able to do field observations for a while. I wanted to be immersed in the field first to build rapport with the teacher activists and have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of teacher activism, in order to assist with designing my interview protocols. I planned to begin my interviews in the Winter and early Spring of 2018, and had recruited the majority of my participants by January 2018, however, due to the teacher activists' busy schedules, the interviews were conducted during the late Spring and Summer of 2018.

I organized the interview protocol into three sections focusing on background information, the teachers' role, and the activist experience (See Appendix C for Interview Protocol). The first part of the interview centered on gathering background information with questions focused on the participant's introduction to teaching and the preparation they underwent to enter the profession. Next, a set of questions focused on teachers' role aimed to unpack their teaching experience and pedagogical philosophies, how they define and view professionalism, and the role they see teachers filling both in the classroom and beyond. Lastly, the third section of the protocol explored how the teachers make sense of their experiences with activism.

The interview protocol also went through a few different iterations after conducting initial interviews and composing memos about the process. After completing my first two interviews I wrote a memo reflecting on how the initial interviews went (Interviewing process memo #1, 5/5/18). This memo led me to change the order of questions in two sections on the protocol. In the first section, I swapped the order of the last two questions. In the third section, I also swapped the order of the last two questions because the final question had ended on a

negative tone by asking the interviewees to reflect on the challenges to doing the activism work. I decided it would be better to have that be the second to last question and then end with a question asking the participants to share any surprises or rewards they've experienced in doing the activism work. After interviewing a couple more participants, I wrote a memo reflecting on some side conversations I had with participants at the end of their interviews that had led me to add a few more questions to the protocol (Interviewing process memo #2, 6/7/18). The final two questions added to the protocol were in the section that focused on teachers' activism. They asked the teachers for deeper reflection on issues of coalition-building and intersectionality and on the connection between local activism and national social movements. Because I believed these questions were important, I followed up with the four interview participants who had already completed their interviews to gather any responses that they wanted to share to these new questions.

I conducted the interviews in a mutually agreed upon location that was convenient and comfortable for participants. The interview locations selected spoke to the diversity of the participants. For example, I conducted a number of interviews in an historic, working-class Black neighborhood in a Black-owned bookstore/coffee shop. l also conducted interviews in a Black, Queer-owned comic bookstore and coffee shop, an anarchist book shop, and a working-class/middle-class country club in a more suburban neighborhood in the city. I assured interviewees that their identities would be protected and pseudonyms used in any written reports. Participants were also invited to provide me with a preferred pseudonym if they wanted to, and a few did.

I created and distributed an informed consent form (Creswell, 2003; Lichtman, 2013) that included the following main points: 1) That interviewees are participating voluntarily in a

research study and can drop out at any time; 2) the general purpose of the research (without stating too much or identifying the research questions, in order to protect the validity of the research); 3) detail of the research procedures, including a check box for approval to audio record interviews for transcribing purposes; 4) any risks—and how they would be minimized—and benefits of participating in the research; and 5) an explanation of the efforts made to maintain confidentiality. Before beginning the interviews, I had participants sign and submit the consent forms to me, also providing them with a copy.

I audio-recorded the interviews and then transcribed them word-for-word myself. Transcribing acted as a first step in data analysis, because I prepared memos on any significant thoughts I had while doing so or ideas that stuck out. Additionally, I took observation notes during the interviews in order to capture significant interactions, moments, pauses, emotional responses, facial expressions, etc., to help inform a richer description and write-up in the results and analysis.

Documents

I collected relevant documents and paperwork from the field, which I incorporated into the data analysis for a deeper understanding of the context and culture of the organization. These public documents consisted of program and meeting agendas, flyers announcing events, and documents from school district and city council meetings and others pertaining to broader education reform issues, distributed or released by the school district and or other government offices. Including these data helped me develop “thicker” descriptions of the experience, including the thoughts, feelings, images, artifacts, and memories connected to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Geertz, 1973; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

Data Analysis

The data consisted of interview transcripts, observational fieldnotes, and documents. I stored and analyzed all data using Dedoose™, an online data management application for qualitative social science research. Maintaining rigor throughout data analysis is extremely important (Creswell, 2003; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Lichtman, 2013). To ensure that my analysis was rigorous and systematic, I followed Ravitch and Carl's (2016) suggestion that qualitative researchers prepare a "data management plan" to keep themselves on track while analyzing the data. I also maintained a researcher journal throughout data collection and analysis to document my process and methodological decisions, record my thinking, and keep notes as I read through and sorted the data.

I used a generic thematic coding scheme to analyze the data in order to identify the most salient themes and to interpret the participants' shared experience (Creswell, 2003; Lichtman, 2013). I was inductive in my approach, coding the data through the Dedoose™ software by reading through the data in its entirety and looking for common ideas or categories related to the research questions (See Appendix D for Codebook). I drew from Lichtman's (2013) 3Cs process of *coding*, *categorizing,* and *conceptualizing*. First, I read through the data once in its entirety to identify initial *codes*. Next, I assessed the initial coding scheme to consolidate common codes and edit out redundant ones. After culling through and editing, I *categorized* the codes around themes that emerged from the data. Then, I grouped the data into major themes or *concepts*. Following the iterative protocol, I re-read and reviewed the data to check the concepts or themes against the data sources. I filmed myself during this process, physically moving index cards of different codes into major themes or *concepts*. As a visual learner, it was useful for me to watch the video and observe myself sorting and resorting codes into different concepts. Additionally, I

textually and graphically documented the various iterations of the coding process in my researcher journal. Finally, I reviewed and edited concepts to consolidate and remove topics as needed (Lichtman, 2013). I focused in particular on codes related to how the participants frame their activism and how it connects to their beliefs regarding their role as educators. My process was emergent and iterative in order to ensure rigorous and systematic analysis of the data, which took place throughout the research study and continued until data saturation (Creswell, 2003).

I used triangulation to provide validity and rigor and ensure that I was capturing the most accurate description of the participants' lived experience. According to Creswell (2003), researchers "triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes" (p. 196). While using triangulation during data collection is an important strategy to increase validity, it does not necessarily ensure a study's validity; for this reason, I also used triangulation during analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl caution that "while students often design their studies well for triangulation in data collection, they do not engage in rigorous analytic triangulation, which is vital to the goals of these various forms of and approaches to triangulation and validity" (p. 196). Thus, it was essential to focus on triangulation during data analysis. I did so by checking that identified codes, and then concepts or themes, were present in all of the data sources, and by examining whether these concepts or themes showed up in combined data from interviews, observational fieldnotes, and program documents.

I also used member checking to ensure validity. First, after interviews were completed and transcribed, I shared the transcriptions with each interview participant as an initial step of member checking. I allowed them to provide any feedback, corrections or requests. A few people responded to clarify spelling of names or things referenced that were misspelled or misheard

(most of these would become pseudonyms anyway so it did not have much impact). Another handful requested that I clean up any “umms” or “likes” or other awkward speech. But, over all there were no major discrepancies or issues after the first member check. Next, after initial data analysis I identified concepts and themes and shared the preliminary ideas with my participants in the form of brief reports and requested their feedback to assess whether my interpretations matched their lived experience and accurately represented their perspectives. At this point, not all participants responded, but a good number did to simply let me know that the interpretation in my write up was aligned with their story. A select few reached out to have a brief follow-up interview to explain some points further or provide additional information they thought may be useful. While member-checking was a time-consuming process, it helped ensure that my interpretations matched the teacher activists’ lived reality.

Role of the Researcher

In order to conduct effective and rigorous qualitative research, it is essential to build rapport with the participants (Lichtman, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Researchers should refrain from acting as detached investigators perpetuating a hierarchical relationship, delivering top-down results. A humanist approach (Creswell, 2003) is needed in educational research, as the development of scientific knowledge has too often fallen prey to ideological influences and political dogma with no regard for the humans involved in the research (Kuhn, 1962; Phillips, 2014). I acknowledge that the development of knowledge and the assessment of whose knowledge is valued is inextricably connected to issues of power and domination (Fairclough, 1989; Foucault, 1980). Thus, as a researcher, I strove to be cognizant of these power dynamics in every decision and to account for their potential impact, always being cautious to addresses my biases and keep them in check.

Positionality

As a white-presenting woman who was raised in America, I have been afforded unearned privileges based on my race that have impacted both my opportunities and achievements in ways too often unknown to me. Acknowledging this unearned racial privilege and then leveraging it to address systemic racial and class inequities is central to my position as a researcher. At the same time, I have working-class roots, having been brought up in a large family with a combined family income that at times teetered just above the poverty line. My class status has impacted the way I see the world and informed my concern with poverty, inequality, and education.

Due in part to this background, I continue to grapple with how to balance the role of researcher and advocate. On one hand, I believe that educational research should focus on knowledge creation for the development of an education system that is both equitable and responsive to the real needs of all of the diverse 21st century learners in U.S. schools. I also believe, however, that research has an important public function. Educational research should focus on the dissemination of new and important knowledge that helps to construct an equitable educational system. I uphold that the ethical and moral responsibility of an education researcher includes committing oneself as a public intellectual and displaying one's work in multiple avenues, to reach multiple audiences. Thus, I plan to publish in both academic journals and more public outlets, such as newspaper editorials, practitioner journals, white papers, etc. Without this public engagement, I do not see how education research will be able to challenge the status quo and impact positive change in educational settings.

Lastly, due to my history with the organizations, I may have been predisposed to see certain things in the field in a certain way, an issue I addressed through researcher reflexivity, journaling, and forming a data analysis writing group with some colleagues that helped me

acknowledge and bracket my biases during data collection and analysis. I maintained a researcher journal throughout the data collection in order to memo my thoughts, emotions, experiences, and impulses or gut-reactions during the research process, which helped me maintain reflexivity and keep the process iterative. These insights informed how I adjusted my interview recruitment process, interview protocols, and interviewing methods (more discussion in sections that follow). I actively worked to avoid influencing the data by developing interview protocols with non-leading questions and by sharing my interview protocols and observation plans with colleagues in my writing group to get feedback from those with a different perspective. It was important for me to follow these steps in order to exercise rigor in both my data collection and analysis.

Limitations

The study was limited by the fact that I was the sole researcher. Investigator triangulation is not a possibility in an independent study like a dissertation. This limits the amount and variety of data that can be collected and the data analysis. As the sole researcher it is inevitable that you will miss some things because you can only be in one place at one time. There was one specific instance that stands out in which my study would have benefitted from having multiple researchers. In this instance, several participants left a meeting early, presumably because of a disagreement with meeting organizers. Rather than following those participants to explore their perspective, I chose to stay in the meeting. At the time, I did not have the foresight to know that I may be missing data that could be important. Having only one researcher also eliminates the possibility of doing inter-researcher triangulation. However, I used data collection and analysis triangulation, as well as member checking, to mitigate this shortcoming.

Utilizing interviewing as a method of data collection—another limitation common in qualitative studies—presents the possibility of participant bias. Participant bias is the potential that participants will answer or act in the way that they think the researcher wants them to respond or act. This risks the researcher's ability to get an accurate account of the educators' lived experience participating in education activist organizations. I made efforts to mitigate any potential for participant bias by maintaining a professional demeanor, asking open and not leading questions, and avoiding sharing my views at events and meetings.

Generalizability was also a limitation. As I framed this study as an ethnographic exploration of teacher activists in a specific local setting, I do not intend for its results or conclusions to be applied to other groups. Because I conducted the observations and interviews within a specific geographic location, in a local context, during a specific length of time, the data provide understanding about what is happening only at this site and at this specific time. However, as is the case with most qualitative research, this local case is connected to broader social phenomena (e.g., the growth of teacher activism in the 21st century). Thus, the research, when connected with similar studies being done on the topic, can assist in building deeper understanding about the phenomena. Indeed, it was for this very reason that I expanded my interview recruitment to speak with a handful of activists from other geographic spaces across the U.S., including Alabama, New York, Virginia and Michigan. I hope that by studying these local activist groups and making connections with other activist organizations, I will provide insight into the broader phenomenon of teacher activism in the 21st century.

CHAPTER FOUR: FRAMING TEACHER ACTIVISM

Teachers become activists for a variety of reasons and from many different backgrounds. As such, they use a number of different frames to understand and approach their activism. The different frames teacher activists employ illustrate the complexities inherent in doing activist work in education in the 21st century. Moreover, different frames are necessary for coalition building and sustaining the work of teacher activists. It is important to note that while teacher activists may prioritize one frame over the other, this does not mean that they do not engage in other frames when doing the activist work that they do. In my data collection, I observed individuals engaging in different frames at different times and in different spaces, in order to connect with others in the movement and organize to build power. This resonates with the literature on framing in the sociological study of social movements and has important implications for the work of teachers in the 21st century.

In this chapter I discuss my findings on framing teacher activism. This list of frames is not meant to be exhaustive. Instead, for analytic purposes the chapter focuses on the three different frames that the teacher activists most commonly employed to make meaning of the activist work that they do: 1) political activism as teacher professionalism; 2) teacher activism as political power building; and 3) activism as identity and justice work in education. In discussing the findings around the three different frames I will also attend to any complications or tensions connected to the frame.

The Political is Professional and the Professional is Political: Framing Political Activism as Teacher Professionalism for the 21st Century

This section explores the varied ways that teacher activists frame their political activism as connected to their beliefs about teacher professionalism. These teacher activists see teachers'

work as being defined and controlled more and more by people outside of the realm of education (i.e. leaders from the business or tech sector, philanthropists and/or politicians). Teacher activists employing this frame are concerned with market-based policies and reforms that they see as seeking to disempower and deprofessionalize teachers. They also see the impact market-based reforms over the last few decades have had in maintaining hegemonic structures and the status quo through defunding and destabilizing public schools, particularly in high-poverty urban spaces. These teacher activists believe that teachers must take on a more active role in countering the deprofessionalization, demoralization and demonization of the teaching profession.

For example, Doreen, a White, Cis female, novice teacher, explained that she frames teacher professionalism as inherently political: "I think that teachers are political actors, I think that teachers are uniquely situated in the working class and the political spectrum more than any other workers except for perhaps nurses and logistic workers. And with that comes, a responsibility to fight for dignity on the job and dignity in the economy and the political spectrum" (Doreen interview, 6/14/18). Throughout her interview Doreen continued to bring up this idea of it being a teacher's responsibility to be active politically, though she is careful in discussing when and where that should happen: "I think that teachers are very much, and should be, and should see themselves as... agents of change, *more* outside of the classroom than inside the classroom!" (Doreen interview, 6/14/18)

Morgan, a White, Non-binary, novice teacher made a related point. In their interview, they stated, "outside of the school, like political involvement, organizing, social justice involvement is all part of being a teacher. The community and the school should be way more intertwined than they are" (Morgan interview, 6/8/18). For Morgan and others, the teachers' role today must also involve political awareness and involvement. Additionally, Morgan's thoughts

also index a different point about the importance of teachers making connections between the school and the larger community. They think that the school and the community should be more connected than they are today. They go on to say they believe that teachers should be more fully integrated as a part of the community and should live in the communities where they work. They were concerned that so many teachers commute from the suburbs to work in neighborhoods in the city that, at best, they know nothing about and, at worst, they hold deficit opinions about.

This idea of the teacher's role being political and involving taking action outside of the classroom was echoed by a number of participants. Amelia, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher discussed this a number of times throughout her interview. When asked what she believed the teachers' role was, Amelia enthusiastically responded,

> I think they should work hard at teaching the things that kids need to learn or want to learn and then also politics has everything to do with school and I don't think the two need to be separated… And I think any good teacher can weave in politics into the, into the school day and just make kids more woke and thinking for themselves. I don't want to indoctrinate kids but I feel like I can share my perspective and listen to your perspective and kids need to get political! (Amelia interview, 6/6/18)

She goes on to discuss the complexities around working in a high-poverty school with many undocumented students and how she navigates discussing citizenship, civics, and voting rights with students. Amelia explained she felt it was her duty and responsibility as a teacher in a high-poverty school to inform not only students, but also their parents about their rights to vote and/or engage civically, safely, even if they did not have the ability to vote, she exclaimed "I always, on election day, you know usually we have the day off, I always say, listen 'You guys are going to need to vote soon and do your parents vote? I know not everyone in here, their parents can vote, but, but..!'" (Amelia interview, 6/6/18). She noted she always would have voter registration forms out and available at back-to-school nights and other school functions. She believed that

teaching about the connections between power, politics, civics, voting and education was essential to do both in and outside of the classroom, and in active and practical ways.

Amelia also noted that many of the teachers in her school are active with a local non-profit, Action for Change, that partners with teachers to do student-led action civics research projects to make positive changes in their schools' local communities. She makes clear that her focus is not on indoctrinating students or telling them to think a certain way, but rather providing them with the tools so that they can be change agents and researchers working on the issues they care about, for their communities. Talking about these projects and collaborating with the non-profit led Amelia to bring up her concerns regarding teachers who declare they are taking an "apolitical stance". This concern over teachers that claim to be "apolitical" and the message it sends to students was shared by a number of participants. Amelia believes that the apolitical claim is a form of "dog whistle politics" that students fully understand. She exasperatedly declared:

> Many of our teachers are involved in the nonprofit, which is connecting the real world and real world concerns, which of course is all political, with what the kids really care about and what's really going on in the world, into the classroom. And any subject person can do that and I think when teachers say, '*I'm going to be apolitical in the classroom', that is a political decision*... you're not apolitical! A lot of our parents can't vote, because they're not, I don't' think they're full citizens yet, but we make that important at our school, we talk a lot about politics. No one's apolitical… Yeah, you've made a choice and the kids know what choice you've made and I think as long as you're fostering their voice and you're not imposing on them what to think... I also think kids need to, even though I teach kids who live in poverty and have like a lot of issues and trauma, they also have a lot to give. And I feel like that's what's nice about a program like Action for Change in that kids can impact change and make their world a better place and for them... to feel that is *amazingly* political and *amazingly* powerful and if you can learn that in 6th, 7th and 8th grade, you're ready to tackle the universe. (Amelia interview, 6/6/18)

These teachers believe that it is their role and responsibility as educators to empower their students and provide them with the research tools and skills needed to be active political change

agents, focusing on the issues that they care about that impact their communities directly. Amelia's discussion of the fact that her students, while most live in poverty and have experienced trauma, "have a lot to give" directly connects with the concept of "Funds of Knowledge" (Gonzalez, Moll, Amanti, 2005) which rejects deficit narratives of high poverty communities and focuses on highlighting the strengths, expertise and robust knowledges that exist in diverse communities. The teacher activists in this frame believe that teaching students to use their power and engage as political actors is an essential aspect of teacher professionalism. Additionally, the teachers feel that teaching this but not actively doing or modeling it is bad professionalism. They see the professional as being inherently political and the political as being also directly connected to teaching, education and their profession.

The complexities surrounding this frame must not be overlooked. Ben, a White, Jewish, Cis male, experienced teacher, discussed the complexities of teacher professionalism. He notes that it involves the routine day-to-day teacher duties but adds that today he believes it must also involve being politically educated and active. He thinks that all teachers should be aware of the influence and impact that politics and policymakers have on public education, even though he is concerned that most are not and were not taught to be focused on such things. For him the professional is political and therefore teachers must take an active role as direct stakeholders and civically engaged professionals. He stated,

> to me a lot of professionalism is doing well during the day, doing what you should be doing during the day... outside of that, keeping yourself up-to-date on what's new, what's important and trying to impact things for the better for the profession, so that could be trying to influence policy stuff, somehow; it could be you advocating for a certain political person, party, whatever because you believe their philosophy aligns with the needs of students and teachers; it could be you making sure that you're impacting policy at your school, so being on some kind of committee or, like, I've tried to be a union rep, like, those things to me are important about being a professional. (Ben interview, 6/27/18)

These teacher activists see the work of teacher professionalism going beyond the limits of their own classroom and being directly connected to political engagement and activism. For them, teacher professionalism must involve being informed of the political context and engaged in the world outside of school, particularly in response to market-based school reform policies with which they disagree. These teacher activists believe strongly that in the current climate, in which education policy is increasingly influenced and market-based reform initiatives dominate the landscape, teachers must take a political stance and engage to protect and direct their profession and the future of public education in the United States. This sentiment is also captured in the interview with Lane, a White, Cis female, Lesbian, veteran teacher, when she declared, "I feel strongly that a classroom is a microcosm of the society. I'm a teacher who takes a political stance, and believe that it is necessary to do that. That's part of the job of teaching, *to, to have a political stance* and to introduce that into the job. I think the job of the classroom is to support and help raise citizens of the United States of America" (Lane interview, 5/31/2018).

These teachers believe that it is essential for teachers to have an understanding of the political context of education in the urban spaces in which they are going to teach. Additionally, they see it as being essential for professional teachers to be active in advocating and organizing for their working conditions and relatedly, their students' learning conditions. They also acknowledge this involves taking different approaches to doing the activist work - It can involve running for political office or committees, whether regionally, in activist organizations or within one's school; It may focus on participating in local government meetings; for some it is done by organizing and campaigning for changes within the school or the district. While the approaches may vary, the overarching belief for these teacher activists is that in the current climate for public education it is important for teachers to be aware of the relationship between their

profession and politics. Teacher activists embodying this frame reflect on how they teach about civic engagement and therefore they believe it is also important for them to model being active, engaged citizens "fighting for the public schools their students deserve" (Jude interview, 6/14/18). Regardless of their approach, all of the teacher activists employing the "professional as political" frame believe the work of a 21st century professional educator is inherently political. In the following three subsections I present the varied ways that the teacher activists embody the "political is professional and professional is political" frame by 1) focusing on the need for structural knowledge of the socio-political contexts of urban schooling; 2) organizing politically-engaged professional educators to respond to market-based, austerity reforms; and 3) advocating outside of the classroom.

Urban Education, Structural Knowledge, and Teacher Professionalism

Teacher activists prioritizing the "political activism as professionalism" frame also believe that professionalism involves a certain type of knowledge. For them, teacher professionalism in the 21st century must involve not just teaching skills but knowledge of the socio-cultural and political contexts impacting schools and students' learning. They believe that teachers today must have a critical, structural understanding of cities, public education, and how power and inequality impact schools—including of the city in which they teach. Without this knowledge, they worry, teachers are underprepared and ill-equipped to effectively and justly teach children in urban schools. For these teacher activists, it is also viewed as essential for teachers to continue to learn and be reflective throughout their careers, so that they can use their agency to influence policy and advocate for public education.

The teacher activists see a structural, critical understanding as essential to their preparation as a teacher. Some explained they gained this structural knowledge during their

undergraduate studies, often outside of their colleges of education, by minoring in African-American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Sociology, Political Science or Urban Studies for example. Mac, a White, Cis male, experienced teacher discussed how important it was for him to gain a deeper understanding of the social and political contexts of schooling in the United States during his undergraduate studies. He was a member of a racial solidarity student group on campus, made up of all different races and ethnicities, that came together to have critical discussions of race and class inequity in society. He also did a domestic student exchange where he attended a famous HBCU for a semester. He detailed the impact of these experiences on his racial identity development:

> I think by that point what had really affected me, *more*, was my experiences of kind of understanding my own racial identity and privilege, which had come through my classes, because that's kind of like where I went with my sociology classes... and then it came through these pretty intense experiences with Students of Color, which I don't think a lot of other White students were necessarily privy to because we had gone through this whole process of trust building. So it was just kind of seeing and hearing about all the microaggressions and macroaggressions that they experienced in that place that was overall for me a really, really positive experience. And for them, I think, you know people had different experiences, but again, there were some students who became good friends of mine, who grew up poor, in the Bronx, which is twenty minutes from where I grew up and then we were both in the same institution and we were having very different experiences of that institution, both academically and socially! (Mac interview, 6/10/18)

Others sought out and joined progressive public education activist organizations in order to gain the critical, structural understanding of schooling they felt that they did not receive during their teaching preparation. For example, Roxanne explained:

> The point when I started to really politicize myself as a teacher was through joining Teachers Together (a progressive teacher activist network) and becoming a member. To me the most helpful thing was having this network of educators across [my city] that were doing this kind of work, in so many different spaces and having that support and that community - knowing those folks and being able to visit their schools and being able to reach out to them for, for help… You know, being in a school can feel, so insular, like you're just in your little building

> all the time and then you go home and come back and you go home and so for me it was totally transformative to have this network of educators who I could think with outside of my building! (Roxanne interview, 6/26/18)

She went on to become an organization leader, providing political education and activist training for other teachers, thus carrying the torch from the teacher activists who had mentored her when she first entered the field:

> And so I started going to all these events, eventually I became an organizing council member which is like a lead member of the organization. I started, you know, facilitating workshops for other educators… I would go into other schools and help them with their kind of process of trying to shift school culture and climate, so what those two teachers had done, then I was doing it in other spaces. (Roxanne interview, 6/26/18)

For Roxanne, carrying on the legacy of progressive activist organizing was important because becoming politicized herself as a novice educator had been an invaluable source of inspiration and support.

These teacher activists believed teachers too often enter the urban classroom without having this socio-political contextual knowledge. They witnessed this during their teacher preparation experiences and after they entered the field and see it as a real concern for teachers in urban spaces. Morgan, a White novice teacher who identifies as queer and non-binary, described a lack of content regarding the political and socio-historical context of public education in her teacher preparation program at an elite university. They said this was an ongoing problem in the program, as often students had no idea about recent political decisions that impact the schools where they will eventually work, nor did they have any base-line knowledge of the institutions and political bodies that impact public education in the city. This was something Morgan expressed real concern over, as they explained the teachers going into urban schools do not have any political education to understand the full context of what is happening to the schools in the city they will be working.

I observed in the field, the importance of providing a structural understanding of schooling and an awareness of the socio-political context for teachers. Throughout the year there were numerous opportunities and events hosted to provide a critical, structural understanding of the context of public schooling in the city. The affiliated activist organizations (JC & ATC) I observed put on two different conferences throughout the year that provided teachers with a critical, political education and the opportunity to develop their organizing skills. They also hosted a “CB bootcamp” where veteran teachers who are active in the union help provide training for more novice teachers who are interested in running to be union representatives in their school buildings. Additionally, they co-sponsored a number of activities throughout the year that are focused on teachers developing a critical, structural understanding of schooling in the city, such as an ongoing praxis club in the spring and summer book clubs focused on critical education texts.

Organizing Politically Engaged Professional Educators: Responding to Market-Based Austerity Reforms from Outsiders

Other teacher activists focus on organizing other teachers to become politically engaged and active professional educators, particularly in response to the political context at the national level with the 2016 election, the rise of market-based policy, the growing influence of edu-philanthropists and others, and related threats they see to public education. They see 21st century market-based education reformers as trying to narrowly define teachers' work and disempower professional educators and strive to counter this with organizing and teacher agency. Doreen, a White, Cis female, novice teacher was concerned market-based, neoliberal ideologies were driving multiple trends in teaching and learning, in ways that ultimately undermined teachers:

> In terms of the automation of education, given all the blended learning and stuff, it’s emblematic of what happens with neoliberalism and monopoly capitalism and

> the descaling of workers. There's this emphasis on the driven-by-data, "Teach Like a Champion", frameworks that are so pervasive and lead to the devaluing, deskilling of public educators and public education. (Doreen interview, 6/14/18)

These teachers seek to take a much more active role both in and outside the classroom in response to market-based, austerity-driven policy reforms that limit teacher autonomy and authority. To do this, they organize other teachers to become active and put pressure on policymakers to support public schools.

Teacher activists employing the "political activism as teacher professional" frame also argue that teachers' working conditions are intertwined with students' learning conditions. In this way they design their organizing as solidarity work with families and students. Morgan, a White, Non-binary, novice teacher, discussed this in their interview, "I mean it's important you know from a union perspective there's that whole phrase-ology of like teaching conditions are learning conditions, so like what we're fighting for as professionals and as union members directly impacts our students' well being too!" (Morgan interview, 6/8/18). Morgan frames the activist work as solidarity work with other teachers, students, parents and community members to build coalitions of power by connecting shared issues of concern as opposed to keeping them separate. Environmental conditions impact both students and teachers; the case is made much stronger by linking the issues. They go on to detail specific wins that were achieved by using this approach:

> We've seen a lot of victories in our schools come from organizing, so even the things like the hydration stations, is a result of *a broader social conversation about things like water access, like, Flint*... Like if that wasn't happening that might not have seemed like as big of a deal, but also like, the Youth Changers [student organization] had a lot of involvement in that fight, so that was pretty huge! (Morgan interview, 6/6/18)

Morgan makes connections to between the activist work that her and her colleagues organized around and similar issues that are making national news in other cities in the U.S., such as the Flint, Michigan water lead poisoning crisis. Drawing connections to broader issues and other

urban spaces experiencing similar problems was common. By taking this approach, connecting the issues impacting public schools across stakeholders and geographic locations, they are able to organize to bring more people on board, including parents, students, other school staff members, etc. to build power. Similarly, Morgan and other activists saw this strategy as responsible for their success in avoiding a disruptive intervention when their school was brought up for review by the district:

> The fact that our school got out of the [recent reform] thing relatively unscathed, was a big result of us packing the room for our community meeting. Whereas [other schools] had like five people at theirs and there's a lot of reasons that that went down that way but, that helped us only have to receive coaching versus being put into the reform network or whatever other interventions were put in place. (Morgan interview, 6/8/18)

This political activist organizing strategy draws on coalitional power building, which is rooted in the idea that the more stakeholders they can get on board, the more pressure they will be able to put on the school district and city council in order to get needed resources and support for public schools.

Jude, a White, Cis female, experienced teacher of over 10 years, reflected on the issue in their interview when they discussed connections between the activist work that they do and activism around the U.S., namely the teachers' strikes in historically more conservative states around the country (i.e. West Virginia, Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma) and the #redfored movement. She voiced concern that conservative, neo-liberal politicians have been working strategically to limit public welfare programs and weaken public education in the U.S.:

> I don't think it's coincidental that they're all happening in red states. I think they've had the worst of it and they are an example of what happens when privatization goes too far… because the Republicans in those states have been bleeding them even more dry than our conservative Governor bled us. The problem in our state is that everybody is on different school districts, has different contracts, different negotiating things happening, so there's not as much unity across the board like what you see in Oklahoma or West Virginia where they're

> all on the same pay scale, so they can all walk out as a group together. (Jude interview, 6/14/2018)

These teacher activists believe that it is time for teachers and others who value public institutions to respond with as much organizing and strategizing as conservative politicians have put into defunding public education and other social welfare programs in U.S. cities.

"You Can't JUST Work in Room 15 Anymore": Transformative Professionalism, Politics, Space, and Advocating Outside of the Classroom

Teacher activists in the "professionalism as political" frame believe teachers need to have a voice and presence in spaces beyond their own classrooms. They root their work in new or "transformative" professionalism, which focuses on taking an active, political stance in the education policy arena to change the status quo and work for educational equity and social justice (Baker-Doyle, 2017; Mockler, 2006). Kara, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher of almost 20 years, highlights the difference between this view and that of teachers who see their work more narrowly: "I used to have a colleague and she was a great teacher and she used to always say, 'I just work in room 15.' I would always think, yeah on one level I get that, but you really can't just work in room 15 anymore. If you want to really help our kids get what they need, you can't *just* work in room 15 anymore. You have to work everywhere..." (Kara interview, 6/29/18). For Kara and other teacher activists enacting this frame, teachers' work in the 21st century requires teachers to think and act beyond their own classrooms by being politically engaged in spaces throughout the city. These teacher activists see being a highly skilled, professional educator as involving not only being aware of the social context but actively responding to it. This involves thinking and acting beyond your own classroom.

These teacher activists believe that in the current political moment in time, where public education is being influenced, changed and some say disrupted by business executives and "edu-

philanthropists" (Ravitch, 2016) from outside education and many different political spaces, teacher professionalism must also include teachers being active and advocating for public education in more public arenas, outside of the school building. Kara, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher explained, this involves political activism and civic engagement: "in this climate, where we are in our country right now, being a professional educator probably means you should be doing some work outside the classroom to advocate for conditions in society to improve" (Kara interview, 6/29/2018). Kara and others believe teachers must play an active role in advocating for public education and other issues outside of school.

I also frequently observed this frame of political protest, activism and advocating beyond your classroom as an aspect of professionalism in the field. For example, at a City Council meeting teacher activists across the city had organized to protest unhealthy environmental conditions in the public schools. Recent organizing and investigation had brought attention to the fact that many of the old school buildings in the district tested positive for lead, asbestos and/or other toxins. A coalition of education activist organizations, including the Justice Caucus and Active Teacher Coalition, called for this action to take place to put pressure on city council to address the unhealthy school environment issue. When I exited the elevator, I heard a raucous noise and saw it was the education activist groups gathering in the hall outside city council chambers. As I approached the corridor, I saw a big intimidating, old wrought-iron gate with "city council" engraved in it, positioned starkly alongside the new, modern metal detectors. Familiar faces of teacher activists gathered, conversing animatedly. Many of the people out in the hall were recognizable from the public education activist organizations, but not all were. I also recognize that some were definitely not a part of the activists, but here to regulate them. The teacher activists were dressed up for the occasion, carrying protest signs and donning gas masks

and hazmat suits to drive their point home that teachers and students are existing and working in unsafe, harmful and at times toxic environmental conditions that would have a long-term impact on their health. One teacher's sign read in thick black permanent marker across giant white poster paper, simply, "Teachers At Work", conveying this belief that teachers' professional duties included activism and advocacy outside of their classroom (Fieldnotes, 6/15/18).

Teachers Running for Office: Framing Activism as Political Power Building

Another frame employed by the teacher activists is activism as political power building. Teacher activists using this frame to make sense of their activism focus on local electoral politics and getting public school teachers to run for political office. They see having a political presence as essential to building power and promoting transformative, democratic reforms. Kara explained: "there's other people who ran for committee people, who ran for ward leader, who said well if this is where the people who have the power right now are sitting and talking then I want to be there" (Kara interview, 6/29/18). Kara discussed the spaces throughout the city where teachers have successfully run for political office:

> We have two ward leaders at least in the Northeast *now that are teachers*. And we are going to get more, so people are going to have to address education if they want to get office any more! And not just the 'blah blah blah ohhh everybody loves public schools, everybody loves public school teachers', but show us the money, show us the support, show us how you are going to hold the state's feet to the fire. (Kara interview, 6/29/18)

Building political power through securing political office is another way that the teachers frame their activism. Amelia, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher discussed this in her interview, when she recounts how she just successfully ran for committee person in her neighborhood. She explained, "I definitely became a committee person because I want people to understand, in my ward, the educational issues, that was very, very intentional..." (Amelia interview, 6/6/18). Amelia sees there being real power in holding political office as committee person. She believes

that it is a way for her to have a direct line to her constituents, in order to educate them about educational issues, with the expertise of an educator. Amelia and other teacher activists believe teachers running for political office is a strategic way to center educational equity issues, as framed by educators and other stakeholders in schools, in the political arena.

I also observed the focus on running for political office to gain political power to push for equitable, sustainable progressive education transformation in the field. The Justice Caucus had a strong focus on political organizing and local electoral politics. One of the organization's committees was a political committee whose main focus was on supporting local teachers to get into electoral politics and run for office. The political committee met monthly to provide resources and training for teachers interested in running for political office. Additionally, during the year of field observations the Justice Caucus led a campaign to get members of their social justice caucus on the ballot to be able to participate as representatives at the national union convening in the summer. The caucus organization was intentional in recruiting members from historically marginalized, non-represented backgrounds. In order to do this, they focused on recruiting teachers of color, women, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming educators to be on the ballot. They believed it was essential to focus on inclusivity and intersectionality in building the ballot. This ballot initiative is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5, which focuses on coalition building and intersectionality.

“My Existence is an Act of Resistance”: Framing Activism as Identity and Transformative Justice Work

Other teacher activists frame their activism as centered on exploring issues of identity, inclusivity and transformative justice in schools. This frame connects to the concept of “abolitionist teaching,” which employs liberatory, decolonial pedagogies to work for social, gender and racial justice in schools (Love, 2019). These teacher activists see their background,

identity and personal experiences while they were in school as impacting their current work and professional identity as teachers. They speak from an intersectional lens about how multiple aspects of their identity have contributed to layered and complex instances of marginalization and oppression, first as students and then as professional educators, and they see their activist and teaching identities as being intertwined and inseparable, particularly with respect to white supremacy, homophobia and misogyny in their schools. However, at the same time their work on inclusivity, justice and identity issues in schools has led to tensions and challenges. They recall feelings of fear, isolation, and sadness and describe undergoing instances of intimidation and bullying from colleagues and administrators, but they also share how their activism provided them with a tool for resilience to address these issues and move forward. The teacher activists' stories illuminate the challenges involved in doing identity and transformative justice, but they also share rich stories of the rewards and successes of working to transform schools to be more equitable and just for all students.

This section will unpack how teacher activists frame their activist work as rooted in exploring issues of identity and hegemony in schools. Framing teacher activism as identity and justice work in schools connects with the research Love (2019) has done on "abolitionist teaching". Love defines, "Abolitionist teaching is the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools" (p. 2). These teacher activists focus their time on promoting liberatory, transformative social justice praxis, particularly for historically marginalized and oppressed school populations. "Existence as an act of resistance" is a theme that captures the sentiments of these teachers, who feel their presence in schools is an act

of resistance due to their appearance, identity, background, beliefs and at times, activist stance (Sucre interview, 7/30/18). These teachers went into education to create social change--critiquing hegemony in education and disrupting the status quo to promote transformative social justice. However, they have been confronted by schools they see as predominately - spaces of social reproduction, austerity, inequality, and un-interrogated white supremacy.

This section is organized into three subsections that analyze this finding by sharing the experiences and stories of teacher activists who frame their activist work as focused on interrogating the status quo and exploring issues of identity in schools, first, as LGBTQIA teacher activists, second, as BIPOC teacher activists, and third, as anti-racist White teacher activists. Each section will share data that illustrates how the teacher activists' experiences in school, as students and then as teachers, have been impacted by tensions via prejudiced or racist ideologies. Additionally, I discuss how these teachers use their activism in response, as a tool for resilience to "stay in" and "thrive not just survive", doing the work of "abolitionist teaching" (Love, 2019) by promoting liberatory, de-colonial, critical education pedagogies and transformative social justice. Throughout these sections I will review how these teacher activists center identity work and social justice in their activism by using critical, culturally relevant, responsive and sustaining pedagogies and restorative practices as a manifestation of their activism (hooks, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

LGBTQIA Teacher Activists Responding to Heteronormativity and Homophobia in Schools

LGBTQIA teacher activists connect their personal identity to their identity as teacher activists. They believe that this approach is important in building trust with their students. Morgan, a Queer, non-binary, White, novice high school teacher, explained,

> So I feel like in so many ways I've been a more effective educator in all the ways I've been able to be *more out in my identity*, like, even like, specifically as my,

> gender and sexual identity, as my activist identity, as my let's listen to Kendrick Lamar in class identity, like all of those things that I feel authentic in. I feel like authenticity makes me a better teacher and like other teachers don't feel this way and they don't do it that way, but like, and I don't understand how, but for me hiding parts of myself or limiting parts of myself like inherently limit other parts of myself too and being like authentic across contexts as much as is *reasonable and safe* feels like the best way to do my job. (Morgan interview, 6/8/18)

Morgan's believes that fully authentic and out about their sexual and gender identity is essential to her building authentic relationships of trust with their students. They detail being out about their identity also includes bringing their activist identity in to schools, discussing and sharing that with their students. They also mention how being fully out about their identity also involves their "let's listen to Kendrick Lamar in class identity", which speaks to the way that they teach, using music and things shared in common with the students, like their appreciation for Kendrick Lamar (who is known for bring social issues and activism into his rap, what some would consider "consciousness rap"), to build rapport and meet the students where they are. While they take this stance and provide examples of how they do it in their classroom that is not to say it is easy work to do. Doing the work and the challenges involved will be discussed further below.

Lane, a White, Cis female, Lesbian, veteran elementary school teacher, is more reserved in the way she discusses and shares her identity at school. Lane shares her experience of initially getting into activism as being directly connected to her identity as a Lesbian. She explains, "I came out as a lesbian when I was in my young 20s. That needed a lot of activism. So even if I hadn't been a political activist before, even if it hadn't been part of my family, even if it had nothing to do with education, or unions, now, I'm a lesbian. We are pretty oppressed… So, if you wanted to believe that what you were doing was okay, you had to fight for that, right" (Lane interview, 5/31/18). Lane goes on to connect this background to how she became a teacher activist. She explained:

> When I was an educator too I just sort of took all of that stuff I'd been doing anyway, as a lesbian, and now was doing it as an educator. So, I was going to protest marches around education, marches around just being a more inclusive society, immigration stuff, fighting against the closing of schools, anti-testing stuff, all the time when we didn't have a contract. So all the 'give us a contract' stuff. Anything that has to do with keeping the union's afloat? I'm on that picket line! Never crossing a picket line! (Lane interview, 6/8/18)

For Lane, her background as a Lesbian, responding to the oppression and bigotry that she experienced because of her identity, fueled her to take on an activist stance as an educator.

Lane's activism focuses primarily on doing work in her classroom, with her students. She strives to provide space for critical thinking and to facilitate "courageous conversations" about race, gender, sexuality and other marginalized identities in the classroom (Singleton, 2014). She also stressed the importance of providing culturally relevant and responsive texts and curricula:

> So that leads me to where my real activism is, which is in the classroom. My activism is in reading books with children, that are about the world they live in, and having controversial conversations, and asking them to think about things that they wouldn't ordinarily think about and teaching them how to argue, politely, and teaching them how to disagree and still go on with their day. Opening up the curriculum, to allow as many different learning styles in as possible, *and not paying attention to what the mandates are*, and teaching the most interesting, authentic way possible, *and not worrying about what the mandates are*. That is my truest activism. (Lane interview, 8/8/18)

To Lane subversive pedagogy is a form of activism.

Additionally, Lane has collaborated for the past 12 years with a local non-profit, Action for Change, that helps teachers facilitate student-led, community-engaged, action research projects with their students. The projects are meant to encourage critical thinking in the classroom and empower students to use learning and research to make real changes in their communities. Students develop critical thinking skills by researching and discussing current

events and issues that impact their lives and their communities directly. Lane reflected on how she facilitates this in the classroom and how it connects to her activism,

> I talked about, I bring up the term Black Lives Matter in my classroom often, and talk about what that means to me. I talk about gay rights, lesbian, gay rights issues, homosexuals… And not on a personal level, That's not appropriate. But certainly on it, on a national level, right?! Immigration is a monumental topic in my classroom anyway, because our city is a city of immigrants. I teach about our city, it comes up all the time. And we talk about the issues of the day, which have changed a lot over the years. I'm not a politician. But I am a teacher. And I love being a teacher. And that's where my activism happens. It happens in that little classroom with 30 children that passed my life. (Lane interview, 5/31/18)

Lane frames the action research projects with Action for Change* and her focus on developing critical thinking as essential aspects of both her teaching and her activism. For her they are intertwined. This focus on activism within the classroom, through critical pedagogy and action research with students, represents a contrast with the teachers in the previous section, who think teacher activism can not be confined to the classroom.

Morgan's identity and experiences with homophobia came up during their first year teaching. They recount how there had been ongoing fights between the 9th grade girls at school and the administration decided they were going to call two different school-wide meetings, one for the girls and one for the boys. Morgan goes on to share how they used their activist and organizing skills to have conversations with colleagues, bringing up their concerns regarding splitting the school up by gender for the meetings, an issue that was particularly concerning for them as someone that identifies as non-binary or gender non-conforming. They detailed how they brought up these concerns to the administration and while ultimately they still held the two meetings separated by male & female, they felt powerful in having voiced their concerns, making people aware of the issue. In concluding the story Morgan exclaimed "how dare they force me to choose!" (Morgan interview, 6/8/18).

In another instance, as a first-year teacher, Morgan had to address homophobia within their own classroom after a student made a homophobic comment. They brought the issue up to their principal and told them that they were going to address it in class on Monday. Their principal gave them their support and told them to come and get them if any issues came up in the classroom conversation. They had the classroom discussion about homophobia and their identity the following Monday and the class handled it well and there were no negative issues. However, Morgan felt extremely lucky to have such a supportive principal: “Yeah, so that was a cool moment where like I really kind of saw like that she as a leader was like willing to be supportive of activism, which is like important to me, it’s like part of my identity as a teacher and like you know our old principal, I like never would have had conversations with him about like my gender or sexual identity… Like it was not something that would have come up, but with this principal, I knew that I could come out on the first day and be supported” (Morgan interview, 6/8/18). This support had a huge impact on Morgan’s confidence and development as a novice teacher and activist. As Morgan expressed in the beginning of this section, the more they are able to be out about their personal and activist identities, the more they feel they are able to connect with their students and build trust in the classroom. These challenging but ultimately positive experiences doing identity and activist work during their first years teaching gave them the confidence to take on a leadership role resurrecting the years defunct LGBTQI+ education alliance in the city.

BIPOC[9] Teachers Carry on the “Sacred Legacy” of the Black and Latinx Activist Traditions

BIPOC activist teachers believe their personal experiences with identity and racism in schools, as students and then as educators, shape their experiences today as professional

[9] BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, People of Color.

educators. For example, Audre described her decision to enter education as being shaped by her racial identity: “I was always kind of well aware that *education for me, was different for education for other people* and that happened to be because of my schooling, so I started my schooling career in a Ukrainian Catholic school, *where I was one of three Black children, so it was already different*... but sometimes *when I just felt that things were not fair or just, I would speak up, even though I probably should have had my mom do it for me, but I did it for myself, which got me in trouble*” (Audre interview, 5/2/18). This experience, of feeling alone and ill-equipped to advocate in the face of inequality, and then her later experiences with race and racism as a teacher led her to take on the philosophy of liberatory, “abolitionist teaching” (Love, 2019). Thus she uses subversive pedagogies as a method of enacting activism in the classroom:

> I’m bringing in my own stuff; *I’ve always been a resistant teacher*. I’ve always been like, nah, we are not reading this, but we were reading Black books, Indian books, umm *The House on Mango Street* because I had Latino students... I think everybody needs to represent themselves, everybody needs a book. so, I just knew instinctively because of how I grew up that these things needed to take place *because these are my kids*, so the little Latino girl sitting there she needs to be able to see herself too, like nobody wants to read about white men all the time... we’re not going to college if I don’t like who I am and feel good about myself, like that trumps everything, when I feel good about myself and love who I am I am willing to explore new avenues to keep going, it doesn’t work the other way around, we gonna read this book because it’s good for the SAT! (Audre interview, 5/2/18)

Audre reflects here that she believes culturally relevant and reflective texts are an essential part of her pedagogy. She concludes her thought by stressing that love and empowering students to feel proud of themselves and love themselves is also an essential pedagogical consideration. She believes that providing culturally relevant and responsive materials will both empower students and build their confidence, while at the same time preparing them to be successful on standardized tests like the SAT. In this statement she is making clear her belief that non-traditional texts and ones written by historically-marginalized populations are just as, if not

more, important than exposing her students to the Western canon in preparation for standardized tests and their future in general. Audre believes strongly that if students don't gain confidence around their identity they will not be successful. For Audre and other BIPOC activist teachers, their activism is directly connected to the work that they do in the classroom focusing on "abolitionist teaching" and critical, culturally relevant, liberatory pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Love, 2019; Paris and Alim, 2017). For these teachers meeting their students where they are, giving love and being thoroughly aware of and reflective of the social context and structural inequities and their impact on students are key components of their teaching and activism.

BIPOC teacher activists discuss how their family background and carrying on the historical, "sacred legacy" of Black and Latinx feminist activist traditions influenced their identity development as teacher activists. Audre observed that her family background and being named after a famous Black feminist activist influenced her pedagogical philosophies and both her teacher and activist identities: "First and foremost, I'm named after a famous civil rights activist, so it's already in my blood right! You know it was already foreseen for me, so it's always been here. Being Black and being a woman, in this country, you need to either lay down or stand up. I'm not much for laying down!" (Audre interview, 5/2/18). Audre was born with an activist identity and feels the responsibility to carry on the legacy of activism from her ancestors. However, certain events (e.g. teaching culturally relevant texts & getting racist backlash from parents) made her a more confident and vocal teacher activist.

These teacher activists were mentored by elder teachers of color, who had experienced desegregation and had a lot of institutional and historical knowledge to share. However, they also expressed concern regarding the attrition of teachers of color after desegregation programs ended. Audre detailed, "In terms of public education, I think I've always been a revolutionary,

simply because even my first years [teaching] *and having such a strong network of strong Black teachers they already knew it was about educating us about who we were as a people and that's what we did for kids, we made kids feel good about who they are and where they came from*, so..." (Audre interview, 5/2/18). This mentorship from elder teachers of color was extremely important for the development of these teachers' identities. Sucre left the elementary school classroom to work on a PhD in race and policy in part because she received mentorship from a Latinx professor during her master's program for her teaching certification. This relationship had a lasting impact on her; it was one of the only times that she had a teacher that looked like her, who was Latinx. They feel that it is extremely important for their students to have teachers who reflect their identity and name this as one of the reasons that they stay in teaching.

BIPOC teachers reflected that they have had to endure extra scrutiny and racism in schools as educators, which led them to become more committed to their activist identity and networks. They use their activism as a tool of resilience to respond to racism and exclusion in schools. These educators also reflect on the dilemma they faced entering the urban public-school system. They entered the teaching profession with the hopes to work to change the status quo and be a force of love for their students of color, but they often felt their hands tied and their pedagogies constrained. Lauryn explained that she felt as though she had to prove herself in a way that no one else does because she is an African American Female teacher:

> *So I also have to educate them because, you know, as soon as they see me, I'm not respected!...* because I'm actually African American, so it's 'she can't possibly know the subject... Okay. Oh, she has this much education. Oh she's been teaching this long. Oh, she's been living in these different types of, these different circumstances.' *There's 10 million different things that are wrong with me before I even opened up my mouth to these kids. It also flows over, and the same check checklist is going through the parents'* and kids' heads when I met them at back to school night. Okay. So *I got to get through all of that just to teach* the presentation. (Lauryn interview, 6/26/18)

These prejudiced and racist experiences led Lauryn, as lead theatre teacher, to focus at least one of the school plays each year on issues of identity, social justice and inclusivity by highlighting plays that focus on historically marginalized populations.

Audre also reflects on the impact that racist experiences in school had on her stance as a teacher activist. As a teacher, she was committed to bringing in texts that were representative of different backgrounds of the students in her classroom and inclusive of stories that have historically been marginalized or silenced in curricula, as she stresses "it's always been my philosophy that everybody should see themselves in the reading" (Audre interview, 5/2/18). She views representation and culturally relevant teaching as being an important piece of her pedagogical philosophy. But she has experience backlash for this. For example, when, as a teacher in Maryland, she decided to teach a youth version of the autobiography of Malcolm X, a White father complained vehemently. She ended up having a heated conversation with him:

> We had a meeting. I intentionally had my African mud dust cloth on, I was just like, 'she's one of those?' Yes, I'm *one of those*! And he said 'what's the idea of you giving?...', he was really irate, and you could tell he was one of those motorcycle racist guys and I was like 'I have a different mix of kids in this room, so we're all going to...' and he interrupted, 'You can't pick something else? Why can't they just read good old fashion books? if you're going to talk about black people just do *To Kill a Mockingbird* if you want to have black people in the book, you know, we've had umm Mark Twain...' I said 'listen, I invite you to read the book along with him because as people grow they have different philosophies and if you read the book I think you will see how his philosophy changes, but you only know one part of Malcolm and it's the part that you don't like, so why don't you read further along and then after you read the book if you still have a problem with it, let's talk again'… I never saw him again and the kid read the book, so you know. (Audre interview, 5/2/18)

These experiences with racism and racist responses to their teaching led the teachers to take on more of an activist stance, using their activism as a tool for resilience.

Teacher activists in the "identity and justice" frame believe they need to totally transform the education system to undo the harm that has been done and reimagine the possibilities of a

transformative liberatory education. Sucre, a Latinx, Cis female, experienced teacher-turned-Ph.D. student, discussed this in her interview,

> You can not be neutral. Neutrality is like the worst thing in the world to promote in schools, so I think that's my educational philosophy now - *totally undoing education as it is* (laughs exuberantly), that's what decolonizing means here or anti-colonialism means to me... it's like, 'no! we can NOT not have the classroom in a circle', like everybody loves Paulo Freire, but how many classrooms are still you know teachers talking at students (laughs), *they are still like that*. I don't know why... I'm like ok there is not, *there is no social justice happening, if the whole building is oppressive.* (Sucre interview, 7/30/18)

Audre, a Black, Cis female, veteran teacher, echoes this call for a total transformation of the school system. She voiced concerns around the history and legacy of colonialism and white supremacy replicating the status quo in schools when she declared that what's really needed is to tear the whole thing down and rebuild it anew:

> My answer is, truly to *burn the whole damn place down!* The buildings and the systems, and possibly some of the people, because your teachers most, well, teacher education programs are just reinforcing the same oppressiveness that they've been taught and they think it's the right way, because they've got some research or some study that says it is. So, the perfect education system would never be in a capitalistic society, because capitalism is the root of all the evil that's happened; it's always going to promote war, it's always going to promote violence, it's always going to promote poverty, because it's always about where you are on a scale of hierarchy, so the system has to be burned down, completely, literally and figuratively burned down. (Audre interview, 5/2/18)

These educators see themselves as "abolitionist teachers" whose existence and efforts can be dangerous and scary to some while also empowering others and developing resilience (Love, 2019). Teacher activists in this frame employ subversive pedagogies in order to do abolitionist teaching in traditional schools that are dominated by current market-based accountability reforms that provide little space to interrogate the status quo and promote transformative justice.

Accomplices Decentering Whiteness and Training Anti-Racist White Educators

Other teacher activists interrogate issues of identity, hegemony and white supremacy in schools as anti-racist White educators. These teacher activists did not choose to position

themselves as allies. Rather they use the more active and agentic terms “co-conspirators” or “accomplices”, highlighting their status as people who are putting in the work *and risk* for racial and social justice in schools in solidarity with students and teachers of color (Love, 2019). These White teacher activists focus their activist work on exploring issues of “White fragility” (DiAngelo, 2018) in schools by having “critical, courageous conversations about race” (Singleton, 2014) and hosting workshops providing training on anti-racist education pedagogies and practices.

This issue emerged in Morgan’s interview, when they responded immediately, almost involuntarily, to the question of “what do you think the biggest issues facing public education are?” by exclaiming, “White Supremacy!!” (Morgan interview, 6/8/18). They went on to say they have witnessed white supremacy at work in schools and work to decenter whiteness in their school and classroom. Morgan discusses the difficulty of having conversations around race in schools, especially when their Black and Latinx students do not feel comfortable even discussing the concept of race with them in the room:

> There would be kids at school who would describe someone as *White* but then look at me because they were afraid they were going to get yelled at for saying *White!* so just *this really unaccustomed nature of talking, even naming race*, when it’s just like, you’re describing someone, unless you’re explicitly saying something terrible, you can describe somebody... so I just try to be frank about issues of racism and oppression, because they all are aware of it. They’re all able to describe racism, they’ve all experienced racism in specific ways or broad ways and they all feel that... so I, to me it feels helpful to like provide a context, an understanding of that in a slightly larger way and like how they relate to that… where sometimes I have to name my Whiteness and other aspects of my identity to be honest with them about my stake in the conversation… because the fact that I’m mediating the conversation as a white teacher and potentially reminding them of every White teacher they’ve had up unto this point, who a lot of them probably sucked, and treated those kids like crap, whether it was intentional or not, so having to be aware of that is also an important part of my role as a teacher because it’ll affect the way they respond to me and my teaching and my management and discipline and whatever. (Morgan interview, 6/8/18)

Morgan believes that as a White teacher - a demographic representing eighty percent of the teaching force - they have an obligation to commit to decentering Whiteness in schools and to focus on anti-racist education. This commitment included spearheading, as a first-year teacher, the effort to bring the Black Lives Matter at School week of action to their school.

Chase and Amelia, leaders in the affiliated teacher activist organizations, worked as co-conspirators to position themselves in the front, as White teachers, to serve as the spokespeople for the activist organizations, the first year that the Black Lives Matter Week of Action was launched in the city. Amelia reflected on this experience in her interview:

> The first year was amazing, and me and Chase were kind of the spokespeople because, I think that it was strategic, to say 'we're going to have White people stick their neck out publicly' And we got like threats and people called our schools and we just talked to each other and our secretaries supported us, our secretary was taking phone calls, one day the nurse was sitting there and she was like 'I'll talk to them', and she talked to them. No static from our principals, so our staff supported us in it. (Amelia, 6/6/18)

This move to have two White educators as spokespeople was intentional and strategic, as it was seen as a way to be co-conspirators, or accomplices, seriously stepping up to do anti-racist work and be the ones to deal with any pushback or negative reactions from teachers or other organizations across the city.

Mac, a White, Cis male experienced teacher also believes it is important to discuss issues of race in the U.S. through a critical, de-colonial, liberatory lens, but he intentionally clarifies that he is not there to indoctrinate his students. He explained:

> I teach kids, I'm not trying to politically indoctrinate them, but because I get to teach Latinx and African American studies, my whole classroom is set-up as anti-oppressive studies… I look at it more from the lens of colonialism and like what is colonialism? and what are peoples' different experiences of colonialism?... So I get to teach to that all the time. *And, so I'm not so much about like, oh I want you guys to go out and do this thing or participate in this march or participate in this rally, like we're going to use this material to understand what's happening around us and then you get to choose what you want to do with it…* (Mac interview, 6/20/18)

I also observed this sub-framing throughout the observational fieldnotes. During the first week of school, in 2017, the two activist organizations co-sponsored an event focused on the White Supremacist rally that had recently taken place in Charlottesville, VA. Additionally, a sub-committee of the social justice caucus emerged around this same time, which was focused on developing and fostering anti-racist white educators. The anti-racist white educators (ARWE) sub-committee met monthly, focusing on education and racial identity development and providing a supportive space to talk about issues of race and anti-racism, as a white educator.

Franklin, a veteran, White, Cis-Male teacher from Alabama, talks about the unique space he occupies in doing critical, de-colonial, culturally relevant pedagogy in the South. Franklin explained,

> being in Alabama we're sitting on top of Civil Rights History, in 2005 and 2006 were the anniversaries of the bus boycott and Selma March, so I had my students interviewing and writing about meeting those participants. I was in a meeting this morning about taking the students to do some oral histories in a historically Black community. Every year there's one of the best folk art festivals in the country not far from us. I take my students there. They choose an artist in advance, they interview them and they write feature articles which we publish on our blog. (Franklin interview, 6/12/18)

Morgan also discusses the importance of positionality and discussing issues of race in the classroom, as a White teacher. They think that it is essential to be open about race and identity and issues of oppression and justice. Additionally, they reflect on the need for all students to see themselves in the curriculum and materials that they are exposed to in the classroom. Morgan states that their pedagogy explicitly brings in historically marginalized voices to ensure the students see themselves reflected in the texts. They see decentering Whiteness in curricula and focusing on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as being key to providing a quality education and being a good teacher. Morgan reflects, "I guess like social justice, is part of my teaching philosophy. Like the whole mirrors and windows idea where like kids need to be

reflected in their materials, but they also need to be able to like see out into the world. And like *not reading only about like dead white men*, um, is important to me. Um, so not necessarily relying on a like classic or canonical text for teaching, but like finding texts that are relatable, in more direct ways, especially cause like since I'm teaching 9th graders they need that slightly more direct relation" (Morgan interview, 6/8/18). For Morgan, bringing in culturally relevant texts and pedagogy is a key aspect of their identity as an actively anti-racist teacher activist.

These educators' stories provide a powerful example of how teacher activists enact their activism in schools in strategic, and at times subversive ways, to provide a critical, liberatory, transformative schooling experience for themselves and their students in responding to hegemonic ideologies of white supremacy and heteronormativity in urban schools.

As this chapter illustrates, teacher activists employ different frames to make meaning of the activism they participate in and strategies they prioritize. While most prioritize one frame and employ it most often, there is not complete rigidity. Some teacher activists may utilize one frame to make meaning of their activism in certain situation but then employ a different one in other spaces. It is important to note that the frames are fluid and there is overlap. Additionally, while teacher activists may employ one primary frame for a time, this can change if they experience tensions and ruptures in that space, this will be explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: COALITION BUILDING

Teacher activism is about building community and coalitions to fuel the movement for opportunity and justice in public education. Yet, coalition building is difficult, complex work that takes time and intention. In this chapter I will explore the theme of coalition building as activist work by sharing data from the field illuminating the work being done by teacher activists to build coalitions of power through organizing. I will show that coalitional power building is key to the work of teacher activists. However, coalitional power building is approached in different ways by activists employing different frames of teacher activism. Moreover, as my observational fieldnotes and interview data show, coalitional power building is neither quick nor easy; it is long-haul activism work that involves building trust and relationships one conversation at a time. Thus, after exploring key strategies and practices related to coalition building, I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of the tensions and challenges inherent to these efforts.

Building Power: The Importance of Coalitions

Teacher activists see coalition building as key to their activism. Coalition building prioritizes connecting with people and having conversations to listen to others and link shared issues. A number of the teacher activists reflected on the importance of coalition building in their interviews. As Matt, a White, Jewish, Cis male, experienced educator recounted: “To me that’s always that ultimate question, how are we connecting with people to build a larger movement around whatever it is, community control or whatever other things.” (Matt interview, 6/12/18). He sees coalition building through organizing as an essential component of his activist work. Matt goes on to provide a more nuanced discussion of what coalition building means to him as a teacher activist:

> I think it’s not necessarily about coalition building as much as it is about *power building by meaningfully connecting with communities* around shared issues and

> interests and again that's *way* simpler to say than it is to do…. part of the learning of an organizing mindset is learning what does real power look like and how do you assess it and how do you build it and what does false power look like, you know the union has a lot of false power, they say they have all this power, but like can they do anything with it? (Matt interview, 6/12/18)

For Matt, making meaningful connections with school communities is key to the work of organizing and coalition building. Matt believes that building real power involves connecting across groups (rather than just within the union, for example) around shared issues and developing trust around shared concerns.

I also observed teacher activists centering coalition building in the field at the Justice Caucus' convention in Fall 2017. At this event, held at a local Unitarian church and attended by approximately 100 people, the Keynote speaker, an organizer, called on the teacher activists to utilize "deep organizing" in order to build power and coalitions. She spoke passionately about the topic, descriptive detail here, emphasizing the "need to change the relations of power!" While her focus was on teacher activism, she concluded by discussing how the "Fight for $15" workers focuses their mission on a shared struggle to raise the minimum wage. She concluded by saying "this struggle is real and hard and we must be strategic because these issues are always erased from the history books, and people may leave as leaders or organizers in their own schools, so none of this (social justice) work will last without 'DEEP ORGANIZING!'" (Fieldnotes, 11/15/17). Deep organizing involves taking the time to listen and build relationships of trust with people.

Coalition building aims to bring diverse stakeholders together to build power and work for shared goals. This is achieved by bringing together diverse stakeholders with multiple individual issues to work on overarching, broader shared concerns. Morgan, a White, Non-binary, novice teacher roots the work of coalition-building in intersectionality declaring in their

interview, “coalitions are really important, because we all depend on each other to survive, because intersectionality, you know we need to build together because if we don’t we’ll all just be crushed in our little individual silos of identity, so like we need each other” (Morgan interview, 6/8/18). Morgan believes intersectional coalition building is fundamental to building an education social justice movement that represents multiple truths and perspectives and is sustainable in working for justice for all. Kara, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher echoes Morgan’s thoughts about the importance of honoring multiple perspectives and identities in coalition building. She explains:

> I think coalitions with organizations are important because parents want their kids to have good schools, like there’s never been a parent that has said ‘I don’t care if my kids’ school is good, my kid can go to a bad school’. So, for us to listen to parents and to understand the perspective of different groups, different socio-economic groups, different racial groups, because I’m not going to understand everybody’s perspective about education because I’m a teacher or because I went to school, everybody’s experience is different. If you are Black in America or an immigrant in America, your experience is going to have been vastly different than mine, and I need to listen to that experience and say ‘now I see why you are saying this’ or why you want that or *why this thing about school drives you nuts when it doesn’t drive me nuts.* (Kara interview, 6/29/18)

Kara’s thoughts here get to the root purpose of intersectional coalition building, where the objective is to bring together multiple perspectives and stories, to ensure that the work of education justice and the activist vision is inclusive of all stakeholders. Coalition building can only be successful through building power by bringing together and connecting different people and their different stories and needs. Kara touches on a very important point when she talks about the different experiences that people have in schools and the need for them to be acknowledged.

Coalition building also came up in the breakout groups of the Justice Caucus' Fall convention. Angelo, a Latinx, Cis-male, organizer reflected on the importance of developing multi-stakeholder coalitions:

> We have to think about the connections and make them clear, because if it's only the teachers – it's looked at as a labor issue, they just care about their jobs.... if it's just about the kids – it's shut down, they're just radicals... if it's just about the parents – it's they're just the loud, crazy parents. So, *it needs to be all together...* When we have all these people together we're strongest and have the most power! We must make it a school-community issue, make the connections, because packing the district meetings with people from a certain school doesn't matter, we must make the connections, make it bigger and put *real* pressure on the district; make it clear that it's bigger than just one school space, it's a school-community issue. (Fieldnotes, 11/15/17)

Angelo's presentation at the convention stressed the importance of using coalitional power to hold politicians and school leaders accountable. Coalition building seeks to use the power of connecting shared stories and experiences as a strategy to pressure policy makers and politicians to develop policies beneficial to the common good. It must be strategic and inclusive. Coalition building must acknowledge and respect differences and then focus on the power that can be built by linking stories of different experiences for the broader fight for equity and justice in schools.

Both in the field and in interviews, the teacher activists highlight the importance of using coalition building to harness the power of the people to work for positive and sustainable social change in education. All of these instances illustrate how the teacher activists believe coalition building to be key to the work of teacher activists and progressive education social movements. In the two sections that follow I share two examples – the school-site survey and the intersectional ballot initiative - that illustrate how tools were used strategically for coalition building by the teacher activists in the Justice Caucus.

Coalition Building through School-site Organizing: The School-site Survey

School-site organizing is a key strategy of coalition building for teacher activists. Because teachers spend most of their time in the school building with other teachers, activists see school-site organizing as a fundamental step to building intersectional, coalitional power. This was reflected in the comments Angelo, a Latinx, Cis male, organizer, made at the annual Justice Caucus convention when he stated, "How do we actually build structures that are truly collaborative and respect power dynamics?.. Teachers hold the key to making this happen, because they have access to all stakeholders – parents, students, admin, etc." (Fieldnotes, 11/15/17). The teacher activists see school-site organizing as a powerful tool for teacher activists to grow and gain power in a socio-political climate where unions have been weakened over the past decades. They believe that teachers are the key to doing school-site organizing due to their position.

Activists used the school-site survey as a tool to activate school-level organizing. The Justice Caucus had a year-long campaign focused on school-site organizing via a school-site survey. The school-site survey was developed to be an organizing tool to build coalitional power by connecting shared concerns around school environment. The survey consisted of seven questions to be answered with yes/no or a scale and one final, open-ended three-part question that read "what are the top three things you want to change in your building or the district at this time?" However, beyond answering the survey questions, the Justice Caucus created the survey to gather stories of shared concern as a way to build coalitional power. The survey is to be delivered by teacher activists in the Justice Caucus, to be completed in conversation with colleagues in their schools. Again, they are not meant to just be dropped off in people's mailboxes, rather they are to be completed in conversations between the teacher activists and

their colleagues. They are seen as a relationship, trust building tool. The aim was to complete as many surveys as possible throughout the school year. The top of the survey read "We are seeking a snapshot of what school environments are like across the district. Please answer honestly so that the city can know exactly what our building conditions are like!" (School-site survey, 2017-18). The survey was meant to be used by the teacher activists as an organizing tool to have conversations and grow membership around shared concerns.

The survey was initially introduced during the first Fall monthly organizing meeting of the Justice Caucus and was then a recurring topic at meetings throughout the year. The monthly organizing meetings are open to all members and potential members of the Justice Caucus. They are held each month at a relatively new, modern-looking magnet high school where Xavier, one of the lead teacher activist organizers of the Justice Caucus works as an African American Studies teacher. The walls are decorated to evidence the subject they teach, with posters of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King and African Proverbs sharing encouraging words of inspiration. It is a relatively large classroom with a wall of windows bringing in natural light on one side of the room. The high school-sized desks are always organized into a large circle for the Justice Caucus' organizing meetings, so that participants are facing each other. In these monthly organizing meetings – which were open to any members of the Justice Caucus or anyone interested in becoming a member - the school-site survey was always referred to as a tool for starting conversations and building relationships for coalitions within the school building. For example, in the first organizing meeting in September 2017, Jude, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher and leader of the Justice Caucus explained "the building survey *is a tool* and a great opportunity to get to talk to others in the building to see what their issues and or thoughts are regarding the conditions in which they teach" (Fieldnotes, 9/12/17). Rather than seeing the

survey as simply about information gathering, leaders urged members to use it as a tool to start conversations and begin building relationships with other educators in the school. Similarly, another Justice Caucus leader, Xavier, a Black, Cis Male, emphasized "It should also be seen as a way to build connections and community within the school." (Fieldnotes, 9/12/17). In the sections that follow I discuss the different ways the teacher activists used the school-site survey to build coalitional power.

A Tool to Connect Diverse Stakeholders and Issues.

The teacher activist organization strategically developed the survey so that it could speak to a wide variety of stakeholders and be a tool for coalition building. While the school site survey was originally designed to be used with teachers only, in the interest of building broader coalitions, modified it for use with other school staff as well. The aim being to build a large and diverse coalition of people power to pressure the school district to provide schools with the support and resources that they need. In the September 2017 monthly organizing meeting of the Justice Caucus there was a discussion about explicitly modifying the survey for different stakeholders. It was agreed that the school-site survey should take an intersectional approach to reach varied stakeholders and build coalitional power. The lead organizers also discussed how the new contract should be connected to the survey discussions, because they believed "the survey should be viewed as a bargaining tool for the common good! So, the next negotiations, especially in light of the surveying work, includes common good issues like: salary and building conditions and resources to learn, etc." (Fieldwork, 9/12/17).

The focus of the school-site survey was on building power through intersectionality and relationship building. It was viewed as a slow, long-haul game, with goals set for a specific number of survey "conversations" to be accomplished each month, but the long goal being

coalition building through relationship building throughout the school year. As Xavier explains "The goal for the year is to get 1,000 surveys completed, all by union members, *but we should also reach out to secretaries and other support staff that are usually neglected* because the point is to build purposive relationships" (Fieldnotes 12/12/17). The point Xavier is making is that the survey should be a tool for intersectional coalition building by bringing together diverse stakeholders that fill different roles in schools, and not just teachers. The overarching goal being to use coalitional power to hold the district accountable for providing equitable educational opportunities for all students and teachers.

A Coalition Building Tool for Long-term Goals. Coalition building via the school-site survey was focused on working towards long-term goals. This was especially clear in an October monthly organizing meeting focused heavily on the school-site survey as a tool for coalitional power building, particularly with the long-term goal of building power to be prepared for the next round of contract negotiations and the union election. The meeting started off with Jude, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher and leader of the organization, explaining that "The aim of the survey is to do a *listening project to look forward*, in preparation, of the union election this year" (Fieldnotes, 10/10/17). The focus was on using the school-site survey to listen and gather stories to build coalitional power. Next, Amelia, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher and leader of the Justice Caucus, stated, "it's not just about next steps, but *first it's starting the conversation*, just talking to other teachers about what people want and what they are experiencing in their schools. *Starting this conversation now is an important step to take because of the union elections coming up in the next year and the new contract in 2 years*" (Fieldnotes, 10/10/17). While the long-term goal of the survey is to bring about just and equitable change in

the school system, the first step is to use it as a tool to build relationships and intersectional coalitions of people power.

Organizing to Counter Isolation and Intimidation at School. Often teachers feel isolated, as if they are put in separate silos in the school building. The teacher activists see school-site organizing to build coalitional power as a way to remedy these feelings, bringing teachers together to focus on shared issues of concern and using their agency to solve issues of inequity in schools. Darin, an active, White, Cis male, member, exclaimed "*the district is expecting us to be on little islands*, but that's not what we're going to do, we're going to be connected to each other… to the larger issues… just connected!" (Fieldnotes, 10/10/17). The Justice Caucus leaders responded that the biggest way to disrupt this isolation, as a tool of market-based education reform, is to build community to break the district's model of isolation and anonymity. Angelo, a Latinx, Cis male, organizer continued "we need to frame it as, we don't want to push or bully you into thinking like me, but drop little seeds, give them information and educate; work on building relations; stop being the 'Justice Caucus person', and just be a colleague having a conversation" (Fieldnotes, 10/10/17). The overarching message is that the school-site survey should be thought about as a process, to start a conversation and get people thinking; to build power through the diverse set of stakeholders in schools. The school-site survey is also seen as a way to connect teachers and counter feelings of isolation.

Using the school site survey to counter isolation was especially important because teachers often felt scared or intimidated by the thought of activism. During the September organizing meeting for the Justice Caucus the school-site survey was one of the main agenda items. The Justice Caucus leaders mentioned that the goal for the surveys was that thirty percent get completed by the next organizing meeting on October 10. However, a number of participants

exclaimed that people in their school are scared to become active and participate. One of the leaders interjected in response, “if you can’t get people to fill out a form with the Justice Caucus letterhead on it because they're too scared, then there is a bigger issue at their school” (Fieldnotes, 9/12/17). Someone else shouted out from the circle that “teachers are definitely scared”, to which someone followed up encouragingly, “it is my school/your school and I/we have nothing to be scared of because *we have the power*, but I understand at the same time that there is intimidation used in some schools and *real reasons why some are scared*” (Fieldnotes, 9/12/17). This opened up a conversation about the issue of fear in schools for teachers, with Darin, a White, Cis male, active teacher activists emphasizing the potential for teachers to build power: “We are driving this bus, we need to keep pushing and stay positive!” (Fieldnotes, 9/12/17). Here Darin hints at the fact that teachers have power in their numbers and the role that they fill. Schools will not run without teachers. Therefore, the teacher activists believe that if teachers organize, especially along with coalitions made up of support staff and other school employs, they will have the power of their numbers to really push for the transformation and policy change that they deem to be essential for equity in public education. They believe that isolation and fear is a tactic of the school district, to keep teachers disconnected and disempowered. Connecting stakeholders through coalition building is seen as a remedy for the fear and isolation that teachers feel in school.

The Intersectional Ballot Initiative: Political Power and Coalition Building

The intersectional ballot initiative, created by the Justice Caucus, is an example from the field that illustrates the priorities activists place on coalition building. The intersectional ballot initiative was rooted in coalition building as it aimed to bring together a wide variety of different constituents, from the different committees of the caucus i.e. the political committee, the

LGBTQIA+ committee, the racial justice committee, to connect their individual issues and concerns into a broader coalition pushing for progressive, equitable change in education policy. The ballot initiative focused on supporting a slate of fifty candidates to run for seats as delegates at the upcoming national union convention; they intentionally only ran fifty candidates, as the local union was given one-hundred seats and they did not want to look as though they were competing with the union leadership for seats, rather they were looking to collaborate with the union as the Justice Caucus.

The Justice Caucus focused on supporting an intersectional ballot with delegate candidates that had historically not been represented at such national union meetings, including women, gender non-conforming folx[10] and BIPOC teachers. It was intersectional in that it aimed to be representative and inclusive of as many different identities as possible, as opposed to the traditional union ballot that usually ran primarily White, Cis male delegates. Thus, the Justice Caucus was purposive in recruiting candidates to run on the ballot as delegates that were Cis-Female or Gender non-conforming and People of Color. The intersectional ballot delegates looked very different than the traditional union ballot delegates, which were much more representative of the current teaching demographic, being primarily White and Cis Female, however due to it was a political ballot there were a larger number of White Cis Males on the

[10] The word folks is used with an x, spelled folx, throughout this document for two reasons. First, because it is the way the word was spelled by the social justice activist organizations in print documents and written on boards in meetings and conferences. In talking about the work that the activists were doing I believe it is important to respect and honor them by using the language used. Second, and relatedly, folx has its origins in Queer Theory and is commonly used in Critical Social Justice Movements in order to intentionally indicate and acknowledge the inclusion of marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and gender diversity, similar to the use of the term Latinx. While folks is seen as a gender neutral term in English when translated it does become gendered i.e. la gente in Spanish. Thus, the use of folx is an intentional, political disruption; taking an extra step to be intentional in inclusivity and queer the language.

traditional union ballot than is representative of the teaching force nation-wide. The national union convening would involve voting on different pieces of legislation, initiatives, candidates and/or organizations that the national union would then endorse. Thus, the Justice Caucus saw the intersectional ballot initiative as a way to build coalitions of power, bringing in teachers of a wide variety of backgrounds to push forward issues and concerns that they have to support progressive education initiatives.

The intersectional ballot was first introduced at the January 2018 organizing meeting of the Justice Caucus. The intersectional ballot initiative was presented with great excitement as a way to disrupt the status quo and push for more inclusive representation at the national union convention to be held in the Summer. The Justice Caucus developed the initiative, as Jude, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher and lead organizer, details "to recruit specifically Women of Color and or traditionally non-represented groups, LGBTQIA, POC, etc." to be on the ballot (Fieldnotes, 1/9/18). The idea being that the ballot is intersectional and inclusive and gives a seat at the decision making table to those that have been historically marginalized.

The intersectional ballot initiative was also promoted at the February organizing meeting of the Justice Caucus. It was a packed meeting, with some of the teacher activists sitting on the floor in front of the desks. There is a diverse group of participants at the meeting, with both older and younger looking teachers represented; the majority were white but there were also a significant number of African American and Latinx teacher activists present. Jude, a White, Cis female, veteran teacher and Justice Caucus leader introduced the ballot, emphasizing its focus on inclusivity and intersectionality:

> I wanted to say to all in the room that we want people in our union, represented on the ballot, that are not currently represented, nor have they been historically… So, we talked about 'why not start to have one'... let's get a slate of women, and then pushing forward, we focused on how we needed a woman of color representative

> focus… and then even more, we need gender non-conforming, LGBTQIA and non-binary folx represented, so our focus became having a slate of women and gender non-conforming people, we purposefully used the broader term meaning someone who does not conform to gender stereotypes. (Fieldnotes, 2/9/18)

The aim is to build coalitions through inclusivity and intersectionality, but this requires time and compromise. Morgan, a White, Non-binary, novice teacher and lead organizer with the LGBTQ+ committee explained the importance of the intersectional ballot initiative:

> Regarding supporting gender non-conforming folx on the ballot, for me, it's not about being safe and or held or politically correct, *but it's about educating* and pushing us all, for our students too… It's about empowering ourselves regarding the depth of the conversation and perspective, with all on the slate that traditionally have been silenced and not included at the table! We're thinking about and centering how to *not* perpetuate these binaries and push the conversation about it *and reteach ourselves* and this can be happening at all levels - internal to the caucus, at schools, elsewhere. (Fieldnotes, 2/9/18)

Morgan argues intersectional coalition building is complex work that involves the personal, internal work of "reteaching ourselves" or deprogramming dominant ideologies that maintain the status quo. It requires being open to different experiences and perspectives to work for the common good.

Lastly, a couple of artifacts from the field provide further evidence of how the teacher activists and the Justice Caucus prioritized the intersectional ballot initiative as a method of coalition building. First, a high-quality, color flyer was created and widely distributed in January. The top half of the flyer presents a black and white picture of a diverse group of teacher activists attending a protest march. They carry protest signs reading "Teacher student working conditions = learning conditions" and "I'm here so that in 2027 Public Schools STILL EXIST" (Caucus flyer, January 2018). Underneath the photograph in large, bold, urgent-looking slanted font it reads "Our Union Is Strongest When We *All* Have A Voice" and below that in a smaller font "vote the intersectional ballot slate in the election for the national union convention delegate".

The back of the flyer "includes votes on all kinds of legislation and political endorsements", which points to the purpose of building power through representation for historically marginalized folx with the intersectional ballot initiative. The flyer also highlighted the focus on "women to the front" since its a union that is eighty-percent female and "visibility matters". It adds that "our slate prioritized recruiting women of color and also includes gender non-conforming candidates". This statement reiterates the focus on intersectionality and inclusion in building coalitions for political power.

The Justice Caucus' monthly bulletin newsletter for February 2018 similarly highlighted the intersectional ballot initiative. Over half of the front page of the newsletter displays an article on the ballot initiative for intersectional delegate representation for the national union convention. It includes a large photograph of "just a few of the fabulous members who want to serve as delegates," all of whom are female or gender non-conforming and diverse by race and ethnicity. Making a nod to coalition building, the article reiterates the idea that the Justice Caucus ran only fifty candidates out of one-hundred spots because they are looking to work alongside and not compete with the current union leadership. It reads "this means that a vote for [the Justice Caucus] supports both the current leadership as well as the rank and file, *ensuring a truly diverse and democratic representation* at the conference" (Caucus bulletin, February 2018). It also explains how they want to "strengthen" the union by "engaging a wider group of members in official union politics and activities" (Caucus bulletin, February 2018). Supporting folx that have not historically been represented or given a voice in spaces where political decision making is taking place in the union is seen as an essential component of coalition building for common interests and the common good in the education justice movement.

Coalition Building: Challenges to Consider

Tensions of Conflicting Frames

Coalition building is complex, difficult work. When frames do not mesh well or contradict one another altogether tensions and ruptures can arise in the work of coalition building. This was witnessed in the field during the organizing meeting where the intersectional ballot initiative was being discussed. In many ways the intersectional ballot initiative brought together the “running for office to build political power” frame and the “identity and social justice” frame, as its focus was on having a ballot of people who have historically been marginalized due to an aspect of their identity. The lead organizers were extremely enthusiastic, viewing the ballot initiative as integrating two, bringing together the identity and political work.

Yet this integration created its own complexities. For example, during discussions of the intersectional ballot initiative at a packed organizing meeting in February – the second time the initiative was discussed at an organizing meeting – tensions arose. The incident occurred while Morgan, a White, Non-binary, novice teacher and lead organizer for the Justice Caucus, was speaking to the room about the intersectional ballot initiative. They were the second person to speak on the initiative, after being introduced by Jude. As Morgan was speaking about the promise and progress that the intersectional ballot initiative represented, they were interrupted by a small group of older Black, Cis female, teachers across the room. The group had confused looking expressions on their faces, and they were having a side conversation about the proposed practice of beginning introductions with everyone sharing their preferred pronouns and centering critical, courageous conversations about gender identity. At one point their voices were audible, as one woman said, “what is she (mis-gendering Morgan) even talking about?!”, to which Jude indirectly announced, in support of Morgan, “And if you’re confused, I’m totally willing to talk

to others, to explain more, being active allies, *or accomplices as some like to say*, requires this. This represents such an exciting opportunity for those traditionally not included or represented in those spaces…" (Fieldnotes, 2/9/18). Both Morgan and the other leaders in the room did not give much attention to the side disturbance as it was happening, other than to reiterate that the intersectional ballot being inclusive of diverse genders and racial identities was seen as being a positive for the group as a whole.

At the end of the meeting Morgan and a few of her colleagues who had been active with the LGBTQ+ committee debriefed about the disturbance during the discussion of the intersectional ballot and diverse gender identities. They saw such tensions as an inevitable outcome of coalition building and concluded they should continue to do the work, while encouraging conversations about justice and inclusion with those open to having them. They stressed that while they may frame their activism differently they are open to hearing others' stories.

Months later, in their interview, Morgan referenced this incident and added that in addition to the debriefing conversation with colleagues at the end of the meeting, they also had to have a phone call that evening to continue to discuss the incident and make sure that all had recovered from it:

> Sometimes it's actually more exhausting, having difficult conversations about race and gender, and whatever, and having to not only have that conversation in the (Justice) Caucus meeting but then talk on the phone later that night with someone who wanted to follow-up and decompress a little bit... like, yeah, that was fucking exhausting but, ultimately it felt worthwhile and now I know that there's someone who better understands how to have that conversation with someone else and advocate as an ally, so you know it's sustaining! (Morgan interview, 6/8/18)

The work of organizing and coalition building is rooted in teaching others how to communicate and advocate for the cause, even when there are moments of tension when frames conflict.

Unfortunately, I was unable to interview the group of women whose frames seemed to conflict with the "gender justice and inclusive identity" frame because they left the meeting early. However, the fact that they left the meeting early and were new faces that I never saw again at a meeting or event speaks volumes to what can happen when frames conflict. Solomon, a Black, Cis male, veteran teacher discussed the complexities of doing intersectional coalition building in his interview:

> Intersectionality has been the growth area for me and I think is a growth area that a lot of people need to take on. It's complicated and complex because particularly when you don't intersect, you know, your race and gender and... I'm still trying to figure things out and process things. The conversation around intersectionality is worth exploring but it's so deep! Particularly in my house because my wife is just super conservative and so like we have interesting conversations. (Solomon interview, 8/8/18)

Solomon points to the fact that intersectional coalition building is complex and difficult work. He struggles with having conversations around intersectionality even within his family, due to his wife's conservative views. He is interested in doing the work and views it as important, but he also is clear that it requires people be open and willing to grow. There is no magical recipe for doing the work of intersectional coalition building.

According to the activists interviewed, the work of coalition building involves navigating this terrain and pushing forward through disagreements and conflicting frames, knowing that while people may not agree on everything the overarching goal of equity in education is most important. Amelia reflected on this challenge in her interview:

> I still like remain very optimistic especially because of the people I meet… Children, adults, parent activists, just community activists and even if I don't 100% agree with everything they agree with, that's ok, I don't want to be that umm purest left, I think that's extremely destructive and this is something we need to talk about… And I can be very purest, I can be like, 'Ohh nooo, he did that?!.. that one time?! I don't like it!' *and I have to refrain from doing that because we have to take our allies where we can*! (Amelia interview, 6/6/18)

As Amelia observes, the compromises attendant to coalition building can be challenging but are necessary nonetheless. Grappling with these challenges will ultimately allow different people, with different issues, to connect and build power around broader concerns.

Two other interview participants discussed tensions about conflicting ways of understanding activism as leading them to reframe and redirect their activism. Both observed that they experienced ruptures when they focused narrowly on the "political power building as activism" frame, which led to them almost abandoning their activism entirely. Penelope explained,

> A couple years ago I stepped back from the Justice Caucus a little bit. I had been very active in the inception and the building of the Justice Caucus. I was deeply involved. I was on the steering committee and I ran for treasurer and I was the "swag queen" and I really enjoyed that, *but then it got too big for me and it got too political...* That was my thing when I initially started looking at the Justice Caucus, and I was invited to join, I was like I will join as long as it's not too political and as long as it's focused on the social justice movement. Once it starts to get to the political side I'm out. And I stayed true to my word on that. (Penelope interview, 6/30/18)

Penelope goes on to say the situation became so toxic that she got "physically sick" and had the flu twice. In order to avoid burnout, she redirected her activism to focus on the "justice and identity" frame and doing activism on a hyper-local level, within her school community. She explained that the political orientation became too much for her and led her to reevaluate how she positioned herself and framed her activism. Penelope recounted:

> I was just like *I'm just going to focus on my classroom and on me* and that was what led to the therapy... and in the therapy it kind of came out that I love the activism part, but I want to have more control over it and not be at the whim of some organization... I realized that's what was more important to me, organizing around the school and organizing the people in the school. (Penelope interview, 6/30/18)

Lane had a similar experience to Penelope, as tensions surrounding the "political power building" frame led her to withdraw from politics and the Justice Caucus and reframe her

activism work as much more hyper-local, rooted in doing justice and identity work within her school and classroom. Lane reflected:

> I did get involved with the Justice Caucus and I was actively involved, I was running for the union position for the last election and it was extremely ugly. So as soon as the election was over, and we did lose, no surprise there, I pulled very far away. I don't like it. I don't like politics. So that leads me to where my real activism is, which is in the classroom. (Lane interview, 5/31/18)

When frames for teacher activism conflict it leads to ruptures that cause the teacher activists to reevaluate where and how they frame their activism. Lane discussed feeling sadness and guilt about reframing her teacher activism:

> I felt guilty about leaving the Justice Caucus. And that activism that I was doing. And now I'm really out of it. It was so ugly, and painful. And I cried, imagine every night, it was so horrible. And I did it. I don't want anything to do with it. I'm not a politician. But I am a teacher. I am a teacher. And I love being a teacher. And that's where my activism happens. It happens in that little classroom with 30 children that passed my life. (Lane interview, 5/31/18)

While tensions between the political and justice-identity frames led both Lane and Penelope to leave the Justice Caucus, they still remain firmly committed to doing the work of teacher activists. However, the tensions they experienced, like those evident in the meeting when some teachers questioned the need for gender inclusive language, highlight the challenges associated with building coalitions.

Bringing so many different people, activists, together, under such a large social movement umbrella as the education justice movement, will indubitably lead to some disagreements and tensions. How one moves forward in response to contradicting frames, to grow oneself and the movement from tension, is important. Morgan discussed this in their interview:

> I think most teachers not all but like a vast majority think they're doing the right thing and want to do the right thing for their students *but that just looks different for different people* and for some that means being apolitical because being

> neutral is important and it's like alright, that's impossible and your neutrality is also political but, that's what some people believe is best and right, so we have to like cope with that too... So yeah, I guess that's just an issue we'll have to like cope with as we try to like broaden our reach and power, is like, what does that mean for us? what does that mean for our, like you know I think it's pretty clear that like an organization like the Justice Caucus has a focus on racial justice and social justice in a broad sense but there are going to be members who don't agree with that 100% of the time and like what does that mean for us? (Morgan interview, 6/8/18)

Morgan's questions highlight the real work of the Justice Caucus and teacher activist organizations like it, how to deal with and move forward from tensions due to the fact that not everyone is going to be on the same page one hundred percent of the time on every issue, especially as membership numbers grow. As social movements or progressive education organizations grow it is essential for them to deal with the growing pains. When social movements build coalitions of power and grow there is always a risk that their meaning and message can become diluted, coopted and/or mainstreamed. It is essential for organizations to be aware of this risk and iterative in their organizing strategies, so that they can remain focused on what their goals and objectives are as they grow and evolve. This is the complex work of coalition building.

Splintering and Message Dilution

Another challenge to coalition building is keeping up with new groups emerging in response to the political context. In early 2017, the city experienced a flurry of new education activist organizations emerging in response to the election of Donald Trump and his nomination of conservative, pro-charter education philanthropist Betsy DeVos. While this may have generated more activist energy, it also created a splintering of efforts and weakening of the power of the education justice movement. Lane discussed this in their interview, noting:

> I think coalitions are great. I think networking is fabulous. I think the more people you can bring into your fold, of course. But I also think it's not overly run well. So

> you have a group over there and a group over there and a group over there. And we all believe the same thing. But we don't talk to each other. I think that we should all be banding together. (Lane interview, 5/31/18)

Lane goes on to describe significant confusion resulting from this profusion of organizations:

> I definitely think there are more Coalitions going on, and I definitely think there are more people popping up everywhere, around the city, starting groups. But I don't think that's great. I think, you know, what are you doing over there? Have you not heard of...? When I was with Education Org and they would talk about, all these groups going on in the city - like it was a new thing - and I'm like, you know, the Teacher Network has been around for 40 years, people!!... What are you talking about? Okay, so I was kind of offended. Why don't you just come to see, what are you doing over there?.. Starting?.. Why is Teachers Network having trouble getting members now? Because you started 14 groups over there. (Lane interview, 5/31/18)

Lane is exasperated about the growth of new education justice groups that do not have the historical memory of other groups is warranted and the ways in which the emergence of these groups interferes with efforts to build power. To her, if new groups emerge but the intentional work of coalition building is not done, it only serves to weaken all of the groups, as they stand alone and isolated and power and participation is diverted.

It Takes Time

A final challenge associated with coalition building is its time-consuming nature. This was something most organizers accepted, believing that building trusting, authentic relationships cannot be rushed. Thus, Xavier argued:

> It's bigger than just this room, it's really about building power in the city and I feel it in this room right here. *You build it one person at a time.* I know some people come to a meeting for the first time and may be intimidated seeing a picture of thirty people in one school in BLM t-shirts, but really it starts one person at a time, if you can, get one other person involved, *because you don't build a movement all at once, but person by person.* (Fieldnotes, 2/9/18)

For Xavier and the other teacher activists it is important to acknowledge that effective coalition building is time intensive work. It does not happen over night. Coalition building requires having

conversations to build trust. It involves listening deeply to the concerns of others to connect them to broader issues. Xavier drives this point home by stressing that coalitions are built one person at a time.

Amelia reflected on this in her interview referencing how evidence from the history of the civil rights movement helps her to stay focused on the process and not rush even though it is not her nature:

> It frustrates me, I don’t have a long process, *but the process of this is slow, social change does not come in a moment!* You know I was reading something about the Montgomery bus boycotts and everybody, every American knows about that and it didn’t just happen spontaneously one day. It was like years and years of identifying the problem, getting people together... *years and years and years*, *it was not a spontaneous act by a nice lady, it was a political act by an extremely activated lady and with many many people around her*. Yeah and and then you know *galvanizing thousands of people behind that act!* So, I think that I always have to remind myself that this thing that’s been happening in public education for the last twenty, twenty-five years is not a juggernaut. It’s like turning around a battle ship, it’s going to take time, but it can be turned around! (Amelia interview, 6/6/18)

To Amelia, the history of social movements is a reminder that coalition building cannot be rushed. While she can find the slow pace frustrating, she ultimately believes that the scope of the task before them— “turning around a battle ship”—requires a long-term vision.

Teacher activists see coalition building to gain power and support as a central component to the work of the teacher activists, because it is essential to building the power needed to push for equitable and democratic transformation in education. This chapter has focused on two strategies for coalition building: the school site survey and the intersectional ballot to build political power at national union meetings. In both instances, the overarching goal is to build power through the shared concerns of the people, to work together for the common good. However, the work of coalition building is complicated and the challenges and tensions involved in doing the work must be understood in order to navigate them.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

In the previous two chapters, I presented my findings about how teachers frame their activism and enact it for coalition building. In this chapter I aim to expand my findings by unpacking how they address each of the study's research questions. The final chapter is organized as follows: First, I will briefly review the findings as they relate to the research questions. Next, I will discuss the implications of these findings for policymakers, teacher education programs, activist organizations in general, and the two organizations I studied. I will conclude with suggestions for future research.

The first research question asked *How do teachers experience and understand their participation in education activism?* Chapter 4, which focused on framing teacher activism, suggests that teachers become activists for a wide variety of reasons. They come from many different backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, they employ different frames to understand and approach their activism, such as the professional as political frame, the political power building through running for office frame, and the identity and justice frame. The different frames teacher activists employ index the complexities involved in doing activist work for equitable public education in the 21st century. There is certainly fluidity in how teachers frame their activism, but it there are also discernable patterns. Thus, while activists' frames may overlap, and most are not just solely operating from one frame, individual teachers do root themselves in one primary frame which then impacts how they navigate and focus their activist work. I identified two primary and sometimes competing frames: "identity/justice" and "teacher professionalism as political". While we see different teacher activists employing different frames due to their background, experience and motives, it is worth noting that the identity and justice

frame was more commonly drawn on in the field. The teacher activist organizations saw it as a frame that could bring in many different stakeholders under one umbrella. The identity and justice frame was deemed more powerful in bringing together different people and build strong coalitions because of the fact that it did not just focus on the work of teachers. Due to this, it was used as a strategy to grow the movement and build coalitions under the shared concern of justice for all, teachers, students, parents, and community in general. However, this is not to say that the common focus on this frame did not come with its challenges, as was noted in the end of Chapter 5 with the discussion of the gender-inclusivity/diversity conversation in the Justice Caucus organizing meeting and the ruptures that emerged.

Teacher activists who frame their involvement around "identity and justice work" are motivated by doing work that centers social justice and identity inclusivity through utilizing culturally relevant texts, doing action civics service-learning projects and focusing on representation. Most of these teachers enact their activism on a more local level, doing critical pedagogy and participatory action research projects within their school community. These teacher activists feel strongly education is a project of liberation and freedom; this shapes their activism both in the classroom and beyond.

In contrast, teacher activists whose views are largely informed by the "professional is political" framing are deeply committed to linking their activism to teacher professionalism. The second research question, which asked *To what extent and how do educators frame their activism as being connected to professionalism?",* allowed me to dig into this issue more deeply. I found that the "professional is political" frame is extremely prevalent among teacher activists. These teacher activists are concerned that teacher professionalism has continued to be defined and influenced by politicians and businesspeople outside of education. In response, they believe

that teachers must play a much more active role in also defining teacher professionalism. For them, teacher professionalism in the 21st century involves having knowledge of and being actively involved in the political arena. Teacher activists employing the “professional is political” frame consider their political activism to be a requisite component of their professionalism. For them being a responsible professional and citizen of a democracy requires taking an active stance and being involved in the political realm. They believe that the teaching profession has become more and more political and this requires them to take an active role in shaping it. A statement that was made by a number of teacher activists in this frame sums this up well, as they often stated that the decision some teachers claim to make to be “apolitical” is in and of itself a political decision. For them the political can not be avoided as they see their profession being wrapped up in it. Teachers employing this frame usually focus their activism on activities outside of the school.

Additionally, in Chapter 5 the research findings shed light on the research question that asks: *what are their strategies for action and how do they connect with particular ways of framing activism?*, by exploring one of the primary organizing strategies employed by the teacher activists, coalition building. Teacher activists believe that building coalitions is key to the work of progressive education activism. Coalition building involves connecting strategically with people. For them, this involves having a broad understanding of issues, to connect individual issues to broader, shared community concerns. Additionally, this requires bringing multiple, diverse stakeholders into the fold to build power. Coalition building seeks to use the power of connecting shared stories and experiences as a strategy to pressure policy makers and politicians to develop policies beneficial to the common good. It must be strategic and inclusive. According to my participants, coalition building must acknowledge and respect differences and

then focus on the power that can be built by linking stories of different experiences for the broader fight for equity and justice in schools. Yet, as my data show, coalition building can create challenges of its own, as frames can conflict in the effort to bring people together that hold different ideas and concerns. Thus the work of coalition building must involve having the difficult conversations to address tensions and grow together.

Implications

Implications for Policymakers

This study is a reminder that teachers have much to offer the project of education policymaking. As "boots on the ground," teaches can be invaluable in developing and defining policy, and my research suggests that many teachers would like far more input than they currently have. Yet, the current mechanisms for teacher input are quite limited. One of my participants, Franklin, spoke directly to this issue:

> What would that protocol look like for teachers to make constructive criticism? Because the public comments at a district meeting, that's a terrible place, but if you just tell your principal, you know what is he or she going to do with it? So, there's a method for everything, I mean there's everything from school shooter training to what day your grades are due so report cards can be printed, so why is there *no* protocol for constructive ideas? And what would it look like? (Franklin interview, 6/12/18)

Inviting teacher leaders to the decision-making table could lead to more sustainable and effective policy development. My data, as well as teacher activism across the country, show that teachers currently represent a powerful, yet untapped, source of policy energy and expertise.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs (TEPs)

Teachers need more of a foundation and preparation around the socio-political contexts of the cities where they will teach. Many of the teacher activists believed they were underprepared in this regard when they entered the field. Others felt they were prepared with this

knowledge, which they found to be essential, but only because they minored in urban or ethnic studies or took courses outside of their teacher education program. Teacher attrition and the overall shrinking of the teaching profession is a real problem in urban education. Thus, providing teachers with a teacher education program deeply rooted in understanding the socio-political contexts impacting city schools and a structural understanding of schooling would better prepare teachers to enter the urban classroom and be successful long-term professionals. As was discussed in Chapter 4, the teacher activists attempted to address this shortcoming in teacher education preparation by providing opportunities for teacher activists to gain a deeper understanding of the social contexts and structural issues impacting city schools, through such programs as the praxis club and the critical summer book club. Developing a robust understanding of the socio-political contexts and having a critical, structural understanding of schooling was considered to be essential preparation for all teachers entering schools in urban spaces. This involved the activist organizations developing intentional programming to cultivate teachers' critical consciousness.

Implications for Teacher Activists and Education Social Movements

Teacher activists are not a monolith. Progressive education social movements bring together teacher activists who frame their participation in varied ways. Additionally, as both Penelope and Lane's stories attest, it can be essential for teachers to be able to pivot and change course in order to avoid burnout. For both Penelope and Lane framing their activism around "political power building" felt increasingly disconnected from the aspects of teaching that felt gratifying to them. Ultimately, their negative experiences employing the political frame led them to pivot and redirect their activism to focus on the "identity and justice" frame, thus avoiding burnout and remaining evolved as activists.

Another implication for teacher activists in progressive education justice social movements is the importance of acknowledging the time required to do activist work. Activist organizations would do well to count the little wins, as they are a part of the process in building to the big wins. Additionally, they could acknowledge that this is a project with an indefinite timeline, because the work of equity and justice is always evolving.

Building coalitions is key to sustaining and growing progressive education activist movements. Connecting strategically with people speaks directly to the work of coalition building. It is not just about telling people things or standing on a soapbox, but rather it is about genuinely connecting and building trust with people around shared issues of concern.

Future Research

Future research might build on my initial work outlining the common frames employed by the teacher activists. As I detailed in the beginning of chapter four, my findings on the frames employed by the teacher activists were meant to provide a snap-shot of the most commonly employed frames. The three most commonly employed frames that I identified were: "the professional is political", "power building through political office", and "identity and transformative justice work". However, I think that if the study was expanded we may see potential frames emerge that center around themes of activism, social identity and issues of teacher retention and attrition. I believe that it would be quite interesting to expand the number of participants in the study to see what other meaning making frames for teacher activism may emerge.

Relatedly, this study focused primarily on unearthing the different frames for how people make meaning and enact their activism, with particular focus on the connections drawn between activism and professionalism. However, a significant concept that I began to identify towards the

end of my analysis, which would be worth following up with future research, is the unique ways in which ones' social identity impacts how they experience and engage in activism. This would involve further investigating the complications and negative ramifications different teacher activists experience. For example, an excerpt from my interview data is illuminating here, where Calvin, a Black, Cis Male, experienced teacher discussed his intricate, personal dance with owning the activist identity, he explained:

> I think that, for a long time I've been an angry person for reasons that weren't always clear, I did not always have a clear picture of why I was angry, and at some point when I started learning about injustice, systemic and otherwise, it just resonated with me in a major way because what it allowed me to do basically was to channel my rage into something useful. So, in a weird kind of way, a disconnect that I have is that all the stuff that I say, even though I speak with passion, I don't really feel it, intimately, I think it. *Obviously I feel emotionally drained and burdened by the shit that I've experienced, right, but in terms of what drives me it's very intellectual*. (Calvin interview, 8/6/19)

He goes on to discuss how he is looking forward to being in a new school environment where he feels he will be able to be more open and out with his activism, after having a number of negative experiences, with both leadership and colleagues, at his previous schools. The connections between race and activism are complicated, both historically and contemporarily, and are worth further exploration. While this concept of the impact social identity has on one's activism did not emerge as a huge finding in this study, due in part to the smaller sample size, it is indeed worth exploring more in my future research. This would involve attending to emotions discussed such as fear, anger, anxiety, sadness, surprise, etc. In a future follow-up study, it would be quite interesting to further explore how one's social identity, as well as the social identity of those around them in the space (i.e. being a BIPOC teacher in a school with predominantly White teachers and leadership), the culture of the place and school environment and the broader policy environment, matters and impacts how people engage in activism.

Future research might also explore additional questions, such as “how do teachers grow and evolve as activists?”; “how do teachers avoid activist burnout?”; and/or “what moment or experience sparked their critical consciousness and led them to activist work?”. Investigating these questions would lead to a more robust understanding of the activist experience. Additionally, expanding the participant number would also be beneficial (as discussed above). One thing that I was interested in exploring is how teacher activists do the work in different spaces throughout our country. I was able to expand my recruitment and interview a handful of teachers from different states around the country, including Alabama, New York, Michigan. However, due to the constraints of time, I only interviewed a few teachers outside of my focal organizations. I think that it would be powerful to interview more teacher activists from other parts of the country.

Given the trends of increased teacher activism, and the implications of this shift for teachers and schools in general, a better understanding of how teacher activism connects to teachers’ views on professionalism is needed. This study helps us to better understand the current growth of politically engaged, activist teachers and the connections they draw between their activism and their role as educators. It addresses an identified gap in the education reform scholarship around the relationship between teacher activism and teacher professionalism. There has been sparse research on how teacher activism connects with notions of teacher professionalism in the U.S. However, without this research, we are left with an insufficient understanding of both what it means to be a teacher in the 21st century U.S. and the ways in which teachers themselves can be agents of social and educational change. This study informs policy makers, teacher education programs, activists and education scholars about how teachers are responding to the current educational context and the varied ways they frame their activism.

The rise of teacher activism speaks to the fact that teachers want to play an active role in the broader project of professionalizing teaching and further developing the profession for high-quality, skilled educators. There is growing consensus amongst teachers that recognize that their profession, and education in general, has too often been controlled and defined without their voice, by those with motives that are very different from their own, i.e. human development, economic vs. equity and transformation of the status quo. Thus, the growth of teacher activism shows that teaching in this moment often involves working outside ones' classroom, to shape policy and provide a counter-narrative to the dominant one that has painted teachers and the work that they do in deficit terms.

REFERENCES CITED

Alvarez, R. L. (2003). There's no such thing as an unqualified teacher: Unionization and integration in the Philadelphia public schools. *The Historian*, *65*(4), 837-65.

Archer, A.L., & Hughes, C.A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching.* NY, NY: The Guildford Press.

Au, W. (2011). Teaching under the new Taylorism: High-stakes testing and the standardization of the 21st century curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *43(1)*, 25-45.

Avis, J. (2005). *Beyond performativity: Reflections on acivist professionalism and the labour process in further education.* Journal of Education Policy, 20(2), 209-222.

Ayers, W., Quinn, T., Stovall, D. (2009). *Handbook of social justice in education*. NY, NY: Routledge.

Badass Teachers Organization. (2017, March 20). History. Retreived from https://www.badassteacher.org/category/history/

Baker-Doyle, K. (2017). *Transformative teacher: Teacher leadership and learning in a connected world*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing Group.

Ball, S. J. (2003). *Class strategies and the education market: The middle classes and social advantage.* London, England: Routledge Falmer.

Benford, R.D., & Snow, D.A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26,* 611-639.

Berube, M. & Gittell, M.J. (Eds). (1969). *Confrontation at Ocean Hill-Brownsville: The New York strikes of 1968*. NY, NY: Praeger.

Blumer, H. (1969). Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method. NY, NY: Prentice Hall.

Burke, E., & Herbert, D. (1996). Zero tolerance policy: Combating violence in schools. *NASSP Bulletin*, 80(579), 49-54.

Carnoy, M. & Rothstein, R. (2013, Dec 1). PISA day: An ideological and hyperventilated exerise [Web log comment]. *Economic Policy Institute*. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/blog/pisa-day-ideological-hyperventilated-exercise/

Coburn, C. (2006). Framing and the problem of reading instruction: Using frame analysis to uncover the microprocesses of policy implementation. *American Educational Research Journal, 43(3*), 343-379.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation*. NY, NY: Teachers College Press.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Villegas, A.M. (2015). Framing teacher preparation research: An overview of the field, Part I. *Journal of Teacher Education, 66(1)*, 7-20.

Cohn, C.A. (1996). Mandatory school uniforms. *The School Administrator*, 2(53), 22-25.

Counts, G.A. (1932). *Dare the school build a new social order?* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2005). *Instructional leadership for systemic change: The story of San Diego's reform*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010a). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. NY, NY: Teachers College Press.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010b). Teaching and educational transformation. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational change* (pp. 505-20). NY, NY: Springer Science and Business Media.

Day, C. (2002). School reform and transitions in tearcher professionalism and identity. *International Journal of Educational Research, 37*, 677-692.

Dewey, J. (1964). What Psychology can do for the teacher. In Archambault, R.D. (ed.), *John Dewey on education: Selected writings* (195-212). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Duckworth, A. (2016). Grit: The power of passion and perseverance. NY, NY: Scribner.

Etzioni, A. (1969). The semi-professions and their organization. NY, NY: Free Press.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Fairclough, A. (2007). *A class of their own: Black teachers and the segregated south.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London, UK: Longman.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can suceed again*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Universtiy Press.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. C. Gordon (Ed.). NY, NY: Pantheon Books.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (2016). *Bringing the profession back in: Call to action*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Gardner, H. (2004). How education changes: Considerations of history, science, and values. In Suarez-Orozco, M.M. & Qin-Hilliard D.B. (eds.), *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium* (1-37). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gewirtz, S., Mahony, P., Hextall, I., & Cribb, A. (2009). *Changing teacher professionalism: International trends, challenges and ways forward*. NY, NY: Routledge.

Goffman, I. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of the experience*. NY, NY: Harper Colophon.

Goldstein, (2014). The teacher wars: A history of America's most embattled profession. NY, NY: Penguin Random House.

Gorski, P.C. & Chen, C. (2015). "Frayed all over:" The causes and consequences of ativist burnout among social justice education activists. Educational Studies, 51(5), 385-405.

Greeno, J.G. (2009). A theory bite on contextualizing, framing, and positioning: A companion to son and goldstone. *Cognition and Instruction*, *27*, 269-275.

Gutmann, A. (1999). *Democratic education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hale, J. (2016). *The freedom schools: Student activists in the Mississippi civil rights movement.* NY, NY: Columbia University Press.

Hand, V., Penuel, W., & Gutierrez, K. (2012). (Re)framing educational possibility: Attending to power and equity in shaping access to and within learning opportunities. *Human Development*, 55, 250-268.

Hargeaves, . (2000). Four ages of professionalism and professional learning. *Teacher and Teaching: History and Practice, 6(2),* 151-182.

Hearn, J. (1982). Notes on patriarchy, professionalization, and the semi-professions. *Sociology, 16*, 184-201.

Hine, D.C., & Thompson, K. (1998). *A shining thread of hope: The history of black women in America*. NY, NY: Broadway Books.

Holmes, T.R., & Murrell, J. (1995). Schools, discipline and the uniformed police officer. *NASSP Bulletin, 79(569)*, 60-64.

hooks, b. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: Practicial wisdom*. NY, NY: Routledge.

Ingersoll, R. (2003). *Who controls teachers' work?: Power and accountability in America's schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Jaquith, A., Mindich, D., Wei, R.C., Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *Teacher professional learning in the United States: Case studies of state policies and strategies.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Keith, N. (2015). *Engaging in social partnerships: Democratic practices for campus-community partnerships*. NY, NY: Routledge.

Kuhn, T.S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Labaree, D.F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(1), 39-81.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Fighting for our lives preparing teachers to teach African American students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *51(3)*, 206-214.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher, 35(7)*, 3-12.

Larson, M. (2014). Looking back and a little forward: Reflections on professionalism and teaching as a profession. *Radical Teacher*, 99, 7-17.

LeCompte, M.D., & Schensul, J.J. (2010). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research: An introduction*. NY, NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Lewis, H. (2013). *New York city public schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg: Community control and its legacy*. NY, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lemov, D. (2010) *Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to colleg*e. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Lindahl, R. A. (2010). Framing school improvement as deutero learning: The road less travelled. *Planning and Changing, 41(3/4),* 234-248.

Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race and the right to the city*. NY, NY: Routledge.

Little, J.W. (2003). Constructions of teacher leadership in three periods of policy and reform activism. *School Leadership & Management, 23(4)*, 401-419.

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: a sociological study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Love, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press Books.

Lubienski, C. (2001). Redefining public education: Charter schools, common schools and the rhetoric of reform. *Teachers College Record, 103(4)*, 634-666.

Matias, C. E., & Liou, D.D. (2015). Tending to the heart of communities of color: Towards critical race teacher activism. *Urban Education, 50(5)*, 601-625.

McNeil, L. (2002). Private asset or public good: Education and democracy at the crossroads. *American Educational Reserach Journal, 39(2),* 243-248.

Mehta, J. (2013). From bureaucracy to profession: Remaking the educational sector for the twenty-first century. *Harvard Educational Review*, *83(3)*, 463-488.

Meier, D. (2009). Democracy at risk: School's most pressing job is to teach the democratic life. *Educational Leadership*, *66(8),* 45-49.

Moe, T.M. (2003). Politics, control, and the future of school accountability. In P.E. Peterson and M.R. West (Eds.) No Child Left Behind?: The Politics and Practice of School Accountability, 80-106. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowle dge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, *31(2)*, 132-141.

Montaña, T., López-Torres, L., DeLissovoy, N., Pacheco, M., Stillman, J. (2002). Teachers as activists: Teacher development and alternate sites of learning. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 35(3)*, 265-275.

Murray, R.K. (1997). The impact of school uniforms on school climate. *NASSP Bulletin, 81(593)*, 106-112.

Nancrede, S.F. (1998, August 20). School to take foul mouths to task: Southport High will institute zero-tolerance policy on profanity. Indianapolis Star, p. A1.

Orfield, G. (1969). *The reconstruction of southern education: The schools and the 1964 civil rights act.* NY, NY: Wiley.

Osmond-Johnson, P. (2014). Supporting democratic discourses of teacher professionalism: The case of the Alberta teachers' association. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 171*, np.

Perlstein, D. (2004). *Justice, justice: School politics and the eclipse of liberalism*. NY, NY: Peter Lang.

Phillips, D.C. (2014). Research in the hard sciences, and in very hard 'softer' domains. *Educational Researcher, 43(1),* 9-11.

Picower, B. (2012). Teacher activism: Enacting a vision for social justice. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *45(4)*, 561-574.

Pitman, A. (2012). Professionalism and professionalisation: Hostile ground for growing phronesis? In E.A. Kinsella and A. Pitman (Eds.), *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions* (pp. 131-146). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. NY, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. NY, NY: Basic Books.

Ravitch, S.M., & Carl, N.M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical and methodological*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Renee, M., Welner, K., & Oakes, J. (2009). Social movement organizing and equity-focused educational change: Shifting the zone of mediation. In A. Hargreaves et al. (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Educational Change* (pp.153-168). NY, NY: Springer.

Sachs, J. (2003). *The activist teaching profession*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* NY, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sahlberg, P. (2013). Fulfilling the dream in Finland. In H.J. Malone (Ed.), *Leading educational change: Global issues, challenges, and lessons on whole-system reform* (pp. 16-19). NY, NY: Teachers College Press.

Schwandt, T. (2007). *The Sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Schwandt, T. (2005) On modeling our understanding of the practice fields. *Pedagogy, Culture, and Society, 13*(3), 313-332.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Siddle-Walker, V. (2005). Organized resistance and black educators' quest for school equality, 1878-1938. *Teachers College Record, 107(3)*, 355-388.

Singleton, G. E. (2005). *Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for achieving equity in schools.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Skiba, R.J. & Peterson, R.L. (2000). School discipline: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children, 66*, 335-347.

Smyth, J. (1989). Developing and sustaining critical reflection in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, March-April*, 2-9.

Suarez-Orozco, M.M. & Qin-Hilliard, D.B. (eds.) (2004). *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium* (1-37). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Stecher, B.M. & Camm, F. (2010). *Toward a culture of consequences: Performance-based accountability systems for public services – executive summary*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND corporation.

Tarlau, R. (2009). From a language to a theory of resistance: Critical pedagogy, the limits of "framing," and social change. *Educational Theory, 64(4)*, 369-392.

Teacher Activist Groups (TAG). (2017, March 20). About us. Retrieved from http://www.teacheractivistgroups.org/about

Thernstrom, A., & Thernstrom, S. (2003). *No excuses: Closing the racial achievement gap in learning*. NY, NY: Simon Schuster.

Thomas, S. (2011). Teachers and public engagement: An argument for rethinking teacher professionalism to challenge deficit discourses in the public sphere. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 32(3)*, 371-382.

Tough, P. (2012). *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*. NY, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2009). Fostering teacher professionalism in schools: The role of leadership orientation and trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45(2)*, 217-247.

United Opt Out National (UOO). (2017, March 20). Home page. Retrieved from http://www.unitedoptoutnational.org

U.S. National Commission on Excellence and Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform (a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education,

United States Department of Education). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Vermeir, K., Kelchtermans, G., & März, V. (2017). Implementing artifacts: An interactive frame analysis of innovative educational practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 63*, 116-125.

Waller, W. (1965). *The Sociology of Teaching*. NY, NY: Wiley.

Weber, M. (1946). *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology*. NY, NY: Oxford University Press.

Weiner, L. (2013). Social justice teacher activism and social movement unionism: Tensions, synergies, and space. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research, 3(3),* 264-295.

Woyshner, C. (2009). *The national PTA, race, and civic engagement, 1897-1970.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

Zhao, Y. (2013). Directions of change: Why the United States and China are moving in opposite directions. In H.J. Malone (Ed.), *Leading educational change: Global issues, challenges, and lessons on whole-system reform* (pp. 16-19). NY, NY: Teachers College Press.

APPENDIX A

Top 10 Colleges of Education Mission Statements

Harvard GSE:
Everything we do at HGSE is grounded in the belief that education is the most pressing issue of our time, and ***that research-based education policy and practice have the power to create a more just and prosperous society***. HGSE faculty, students, and alumni produce groundbreaking research in fields as diverse as the moral development of children, international education policy, organizational leadership, neuroscience and cognitive development, and the role of the arts in schools. (https://www.gse.harvard.edu/about/employment/missionvalues)

Stanford GSE:
Aiming towards the ideal of enabling all people *to achieve maximum benefit from their educational experiences*, the Stanford Graduate School of Education seeks to continue as a world leader in ground-breaking, cross-disciplinary inquiries that shape educational practices, their conceptual underpinnings, and the professions that serve the enterprise.

The School also *seeks to develop the knowledge, wisdom, and imagination of its students to enable them to take leadership positions in efforts to improve the quality of education around the globe*. (https://ed.stanford.edu/academics/masters-handbook/mission)

UCLA ED&IS:
GSE&IS is dedicated to inquiry, the advancement of knowledge, the improvement of professional practice, and service to the education and information professions. We develop future generations of scholars, teachers, information professionals, and institutional leaders. *Our work is guided by the* ***principles of individual responsibility and social justice, an ethic of caring, and commitment to the communities we serve.*** (https://gseis.ucla.edu/about/mission-values/)

PennGSE:
Penn GSE emphasizes the interplay of theory, research, and practice in everything we do, believing that education research produces knowledge to inform practice, but ***also that research must be informed by the issues, needs, and concerns of practitioners***. We are recognized for our strengths in research on urban education, policy, teaching and learning, the cultural contexts of education, language education, qualitative analysis, practitioner inquiry, developmental psychology, and quantitative and multimethod inquiry.

University of Wisconsin – Madison SOE:
Our mission is ***to advance public education for learners at all levels in a variety of settings***. We will accomplish this within the university and local, state, national and global communities through innovation, increasing diversity and strategic partnerships. Through the reach of our research, programs and community, our achievements will be magnified from Wisconsin to the world — the Wisconsin Idea in action.
(http://education.wisc.edu/soe/about/school-at-a-glance/strategic-priorities)

Johns Hopkins SOE:
Mission statement – Its mission is to support and advance the quality of education and human services for the continuous development of children, youth and adults. (http://education.jhu.edu/aboutus/mission.html)

Conceptual Framework – The **SOE prepares leaders and *change agents*** who are ready to address complex challenges in education and communities. (http://education.jhu.edu/aboutus/ConceptualFrmwrk2016FINAL.pdf)

Teachers College, Columbia:
Teachers College, Columbia University is the first and largest graduate school of education in the United States and is also perennially ranked among the nation's best. Its name notwithstanding, the *College is* ***committed to a vision of education writ large*****, encompassing our four core areas of expertise: health, education, leadership, and psychology.**

Teachers College sees its leadership role in two complementary arenas. One is as a major player in policy-making to ***ensure that schools are reformed and restructured to welcome all students regardless of their socio-economic circumstances***. The other is in preparing educators who not only serve students directly but also coordinate the educational, psychological, behavioral, technological, and health initiatives to ***remove barriers*** to learning at all ages. (http://www.tc.columbia.edu/abouttc/)

Vanderbilt Peabody College of Education and Human Development:
The Department of Human and Organizational Development is committed to promoting individual, relational, and collective well-being by enhancing the development of individuals, organizations, communities, and societies. We strive to achieve these aims by creating and disseminating knowledge about how people, groups, and systems influence one another.

HOD faculty, staff, and students hold each other accountable to promote:
- People's rights, dignity, learning, and growth;
- Relationships based on caring and respect;
- ***Communities of inclusion and support***;
- and ***Societies built on democratic participation, justice, and equality***.

(http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/hod/graduate-programs/mission_statement.php)

University of Washington College of Education:
As a public college of education, we ***strive to transform inequitable systems of education to create just, sustainable and culturally-thriving democracies*** by engaging in dynamic, collaborative partnerships, practices and research. (https://education.uw.edu/about)

Northwestern School of Social Policy & Education
To understand and improve human learning and development throughout the life span and in multiple contexts — in classrooms and schools as well as within families, in communities, in the workplace and in elective learning environments…

Influential Research
Students have the opportunity to be involved with faculty in high-caliber research that ***influences policy in the areas of education and social policy***. Faculty at the School of Education and Social Policy conduct ***research that makes a difference in people's lives***. This research explores learning and development across the life span as well as ***social programs that affect schools, communities, children and families***. (https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/about/index.html)

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT CALL DOCUMENT

Teacher Activist Research Project

Hello! My name is Monica Clark and I am a PhD student at Temple University. I'm reaching out to recruit voluntary participants to do interviews for my dissertation. I am interested in developing a deeper understanding of the work and experiences of public education teacher activists. Teacher activism and public education activist organizations have been on the rise in the US for the past few decades. The emergence of a number of new public education activist organizations[11] in the early 2000s, as well as the resurgence of older education activist organizations, evidence the widespread growth of grass-roots activism, organizing and civic engagement in support of public education in the US. The aim of this project is to create a deeper understanding of the teacher activist experience; particularly exploring the connections public education teacher activists make between their civic engagement and activism, their work as teachers and larger social forces.

If you identify as a teacher activist or activist teacher, I would love to talk with you and document your story. If interested, please contact Monica Clark at Monica.Clark@temple.edu The interviews will be organized as a conversation and should take between 60-90 minutes. They can be conducted wherever is most convenient for you. Interviewees will receive a $10 gift card as a token of gratitude for their time. Please feel free to forward this message to those who may be interested in participating. And don't hesitate to get in touch with questions or concerns at any time.

---

[11] For example, the Badass Teachers Association with branches throughout the US (BATs); The Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE) in Chicago; Teacher Action Group (TAG) also throughout the US; Free Minds Free People; New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE); Alliance of Philadelphia Public Schools (APPS); the Caucus of Working Educators (WE) in Philadelphia; and the Save our Schools (SOS) coalition, just to name a few.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Interview Protocol

Introductory/background information

1. Can you share with me your story of becoming a teacher?

2. What type of college did you go to to become a teacher? What was your experience of your Teacher Education Program? Can you describe your TEP experience?

3. What has your experience been since entering the field of teaching? I.E. What has your career trajectory been thus far? How many schools have you taught at and how did they vary (location, organization/type of school, demographics of the student population)?

4. How long have you been teaching at your current school?

5. Describe the school you teach in now (school type, location, demographics)? Can you describe the school environment and organization?

6. What is your role in the school where you teach currently?

The Teachers' Role

7. Describe your pedagogical philosophy?

8. How do you define professionalism?

9. How would you describe the teachers' role inside of school? Outside of school?

10. Has your teaching been impacted by reform policies?

11. What do you think the primary purposes of education should be?

Activism & Civic Engagement

12. Can you discuss your history of activism?

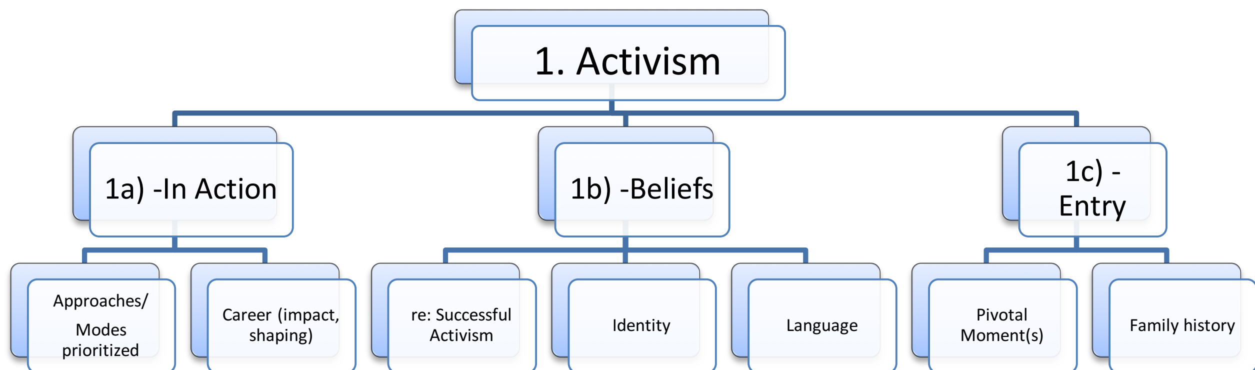
13. How did you become involved with the activist organizations?

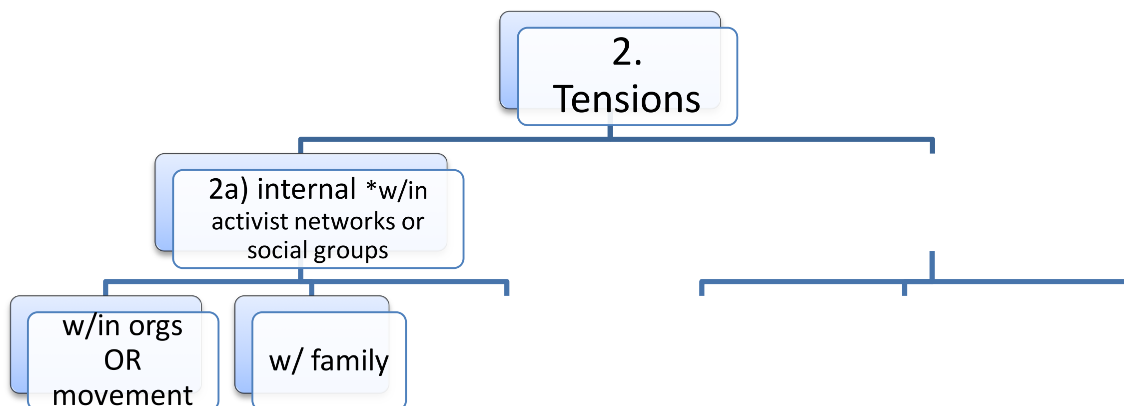
14. How long have you been active with the organizations?

15. Do people at your school know about your civic engagement? How do they react?

16. What do you see being the main purposes for your civic engagement?

APPENDIX D: CODEBOOK





3. School Reform

- Impact
- Responses
- Messages about teachers

4. Teachers Work – Thoughts on teachers work/role, “the profession” and professionalism, teacher identity, etc...

5. Teachers Learning – i.e. experiences Preservice, in the field, political education.

6. Teachers Beliefs/Ideologies – How teachers (-activists) think about things i.e. schooling, politics, identity etc...

7. Emotions – Feelings or emotions expressed, exhibited or described

8. Biography/Background/Identity Story(ies) – Significant notes on background/identity and schooling (their own &/or talk of students/school situations)...

- Race
- Sexuality
- Gender
- SES
- Union Family
- Political Education

9. Pivotal/Transformative Moments

10. Socio/Political Context – & school environment; changes over time; etc.

11. Methodology – Observer comments (in fieldnotes), researcher decisions & actions