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When and Where *We* Enter: African American Women Teachers and Communal Notions of Citizenship in the Social Studies Classroom

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When and Where *We* Enter: African American Women Teachers and Communal Notions of Citizenship in the Social Studies Classroom

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Mrs. Regina Reese and Mrs. Zabrina Kelley. Thank you for being outstanding educators, colleagues, friends, support systems, and inspirations for my dissertation project. I hope that the world may one day soon recognize and celebrate the wonderful things that are happening in your classrooms and the change you have enacted in the lives of so many students.

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When and Where *We* Enter: African American Women Teachers and Communal Notions of Citizenship in the Social Studies Classroom

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This qualitative multiple case study focused on how three African American women social studies teachers conceptualized and taught notions of citizenship. By using a Black feminist conceptual framework, the author explored how the multiple intersections of the teachers' identities impacted how they understood and taught notions of citizenship. As a result of their lived experiences and situated knowledge, the participants rejected the dominant narrative of citizenship because it was not inclusive of diverse perspectives or histories. Instead, the participants taught a notion of citizenship that centered on valuing notions of community and working towards racial and community uplift. This study hopes to shed light on how African American women teachers' alternative notions of citizenship may provide a framework by which reconceptualized views of American citizenship may be presented.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The construct of citizenship is a site of political and social struggle that continually reemerges in the United States (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). While the notion of citizenship and its qualifications have changed over the course of American history to include more people, it is most commonly recognized as a signifier of a legal status that ties an individual to a particular country (Marshall, 1950/1998). In the United States, groups and individuals granted American citizenship are entitled to certain rights, privileges, and freedoms that the government must protect. Numerous legislative battles and social movements have been and continue to be waged by historically marginalized groups to achieve full citizenship status and its associated rights (e.g., women, African Americans, Latinas/os, Native Americans, LGBT, etc.).

Although most would like to believe that citizenship is "colorblind" and apolitical, at its core, citizenship is a designation of membership to the nation-state and, as Hall and Held (1990) argued, is defined in response to the question, "who belongs and what does belonging mean in practice?" (p. 175). Yuval-Davis (2006) referred to this as the "politics of belonging" and that it centers around questions about who belongs, who doesn't, and what qualifications (such as race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality) are required for one to meet the criteria for belonging. For example, African Americans have fought to prove their legitimacy as members of society since their first arrival at Jamestown in the seventeenth century. And although African Americans successfully

achieved *de jure* citizenship as a result of the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) and the Civil Rights Act (1964), recent events have demonstrated that African Americans continue to be positioned outside the realm of *de facto* citizenship and do not, therefore, consistently enjoy the rights of due process and equal protection afforded other legitimate members of society.

For centuries, African Americans collectively have experienced state-sanctioned violence at the hands of White mobs and law enforcement officials acting on behalf of the state. The recent deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and countless others demonstrate that Black bodies (or in these cases Black male bodies) continue to be devalued by society. Moreover, the state and federal governments' failure to prosecute those responsible for their deaths is even more troubling and reiterates the message that Black bodies do not qualify as legitimate members of the nation-state. African Americans continue to experience what Salamishah Tillet (2012) referred to as *civic estrangement*:

> As a form of an ongoing racial inequality, civic estrangement describes the paradox post-civil rights African Americans experience as simultaneous citizens and "non-citizens," who experience the feeling of disillusionment and melancholia of non-belonging and a yearning for civic membership. (Tillet, 2012, p. 3)

Civil estrangement describes the ways in which African Americans possess legal citizenship in the United States but fail to be recognized as legitimate citizens of the nation-state. They are positioned as perpetual outsiders from full American citizenship.

While civic estrangement is one way to make sense of African Americans' positioning within the United States, Vargas and James (2013) offer a different explanation. They argue that because of the state's failure to protect Black bodies or rights, we as a nation must consider the following:

> What happens when, instead of becoming enraged and shocked every time a black person is killed in the United States, we recognize black death as a predictable and constitutive aspect of this democracy? What will happen then if instead of demanding justice we recognize (or at least consider) that the very notion of justice—indeed the gamut of political and cognitive elements that constitute formal, multiracial democratic practices and institutions—produces or requires black exclusion and death as normative? (Vargas & James, 2013, p. 193)

Vargas and James (2013) offer this as an attempt to make sense of the countless deaths of young Black males. They propose that certain bodies were never meant to be fully integrated into the American body politic or achieve justice because, "for a Black person to be integrated, s/he must either become non-black, or display superhuman and/or infra human qualities" (p. 194).

The problem with this lens is that it is fatalistic and dooms African Americans to remain outside the realm of citizenship, forever unable to fully integrate into society. Instead of accepting Vargas and James's assertion that Black death could become a normed aspect of our democracy, millions of people from all walks of life have come together to express solidarity and reassert that "Black lives matter." The 2012 murder of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin sparked national protests and social movements condemning the devaluing of African American bodies. Most recently, the 2014 shootings

of Michael Brown and Tamir Rice and Eric Garner's death from being choked by police reignited nationwide protests, marches, "die-ins" in public spaces, social media campaigns, and dialogues about race, representation, and policing practices in communities of color. While these movements have represented solidarity across differences in brining people together to stand against injustice and promote national conversations about race, the national movements have failed to include the countless African American women who have also been killed at the hands of police. Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Rekia Boyd, Yvette Smith, Tyisha Miller, Kathryn Johnson, and Eleanor Bumpers were all African American girls/women killed by police officers in recent years. But their lives have been ignored in the media and left out of public protests, demonstrations, and conversations. The message sent could be read as, "Black female bodies matter less and are not worthy of media attention."

African American women collectively have experienced violence, humiliation, subjugation, and death at the hands of policing structures throughout American history (see Hartman, 1997; McGuire, 2010). Nineteenth century educator and scholar Anna Julia Cooper (1892/1988) often wrote of the "double enslavement of Black women by being confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both" (p. 134). Cooper argued that Black women experienced oppression on account of both their race and gender, but most refused to acknowledge that both could be at play. As a result of the multiple intersections of their identities (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), their experiences have been shaped both by

racism and patriarchy, which went unacknowledged by civil rights leaders and movements for both African Americans and women (see Clark, 1990; Height, 2001; hooks, 1999; Rouse, 2001). While Black women have been known to resist subjection and fight on behalf of both African Americans and women (Barnard, 1993; Brown, 2006; Crawford, Rouse, & Woods, 1993; Franklin & Collier-Thomas, 2001), they are largely excluded from public memory and representation in collective movements fighting for equality and citizenship.

This omission of African American women speaks largely to their assigned position in American society, as well as to their experiences of citizenship. Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2004, 2009) wrote that the oppression of Black women has been tied not only to the exploitation of their labor in the capitalist economy but also to the negative representation of Black womanhood in public memory and the current media. The public representation of Black womanhood has been tied to their perceived status as "breeders" (Holt, 2010; Loomba, 2005), as hyper-sexual "jezebels" (Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011; Hartman, 1997), as the subservient and docile "mammy" (Collins, 2009, 2004; Harris-Perry, 2011; Sewell, 2013), as the "angry Black woman" (Harris-Perry, 2011), or as the oppressive "Black matriarch," a neglectful mother who is believed to emasculate Black men (Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011). These negative representations have influenced how Black women are perceived as citizens and have led to their exclusion from the symbolic representation of citizens.

Political scientist Melissa Harris-Perry (2011) argued that because of the misrecognition of Black women in the larger society, their work and experiences in uplifting the community have been ignored and under-recognized as forms of citizenship. The work of Black feminists (e.g., Collins, 2009; Giddings, 1984; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Harris, 2011; Harris-Perry, 2011; hooks, 1999) catalogues the many ways in which Black women have built a historic tradition of resisting oppression and fighting not only for African American citizenship rights, but for community uplift and the empowerment of Black women as well. Women such as Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, Anna Julia Cooper, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Septima Clark, Dorothy I. Height, Angela Davis, bell hooks, and countless others have firmly established that this tradition rests on substantial acts that Black women undertook for the good of the community, despite the very real threat of personal harm. Most often, their community work occurred through Black women's clubs and was linked to uplifting the private sphere and Black families (Brown, 2006). After and since the turn of the last century a lot of the advocacy and community work by Black women and club groups was performed within the realms of education. It is not surprising that a number of Black women club members were in fact teachers, doing citizenship work in their communities while teaching African American students notions of citizenship.

There are countless stories of well-known African American women educators who successfully took on the role of educating African American youth about citizenship throughout different periods in history. Teachers such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Nannie

Helen Burroughs, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ella Baker, Septima Clark, and countless, sometimes nameless others understood that it was their role to prepare African American students to one day take their place as citizens in a world that did not see them as citizens. For that reason, they did not teach a traditional understanding of citizenship. Instead, they taught a conceptualization of citizenship rooted in African American communal values and engagement in the work of critical citizenship (Harley, 1996; Murray, 2012; Siddle Walker, 1996). Each of these educators understood that her role as a teacher was to give students an education that would lead to racial uplift and access to citizenship.

Unfortunately, in the present day, African American women are severely underrepresented in the teaching force—especially in the social studies. Nevertheless, the extant literature on both the historic (see, e.g., Siddle Walker, 1996, 2001) and the current pedagogical and curricular practices of African American women teachers (see Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Gordon, 1985; Irvine, 1999) is truly remarkable. Scholars have found that African American women teachers have traditionally viewed teaching as a means to serve their community and help lead to racial uplift (Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Foster, 1993; Walker, 1981). Because African American women continue to experience civic estrangement as citizens (Tillet, 2012) on account of the intersections of their race and gender, it is important for us to examine how these estranged citizens conceptualize the notion of citizenship and teach it to their students.

Several scholars have conducted research on democratic citizenship education being situated as the primary purpose of teaching social studies (Barton & Levstik, 2008; Parker, 1996, 2008; Stanley, 2004). Scholars have long argued that the purpose of social studies is to instill in students the notion of democratic values and civic responsibility. However, schools continue to serve as social reproductive factories that reproduce the existing structures and norms that represent the interests of the ruling elite (Gutmann, 1987). Citizenship education teaches students American heritage disguised as history (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994), blind loyalty to the nation-state (Barton & Levstik, 2004), and the primacy of individual rights and responsibilities (Hahn, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). This model of citizenship education is aimed at teaching a singular civic identity and a common body of civic knowledge as a means to promote unity, patriotism, and personal responsibility (Hahn, 2008). In an increasingly diverse and globalized society, it is important for us to consider how we really want to be able to respond to the question, "what kinds of citizens are we preparing?" (Parker, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2006).

Several scholars have offered critiques of traditional citizenship education for its assimilationist approach to promoting democratic unity (Banks, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Parker, 1996). Moreover, traditional citizenship education fails to acknowledge the history of the United States as a country that systemically enslaved an entire race, denied or violated the rights of countless groups, and legally considered women to be second-class citizens (Epstein, 2008). Subsequently, recent research on citizenship education has

focused on extending the notion of citizenship into one that values and upholds cultural and multicultural citizenship (see Banks, 2004; Dilworth, 2004, 2008). While multicultural and cultural citizenship are important because they allow multiple groups to claim cultural community as a site of citizenship (Dilworth, 2004, 2008; Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997), they do not go far enough in instilling a framework of citizenship that encourages citizens to actively fight for inclusion in the civic myths that influence public perceptions of who belongs as citizens. Pang and Gibson (2001) note that citizenship in a racialized society necessitates that citizens uncover the inconsistencies between the founding ideals of equality and pluralism and the lived experiences of its citizens. Tillet (2012) used the term *critical patriotism* to describe the ways in which those who are positioned outside the realm of citizenship can insert themselves into the narrative of the United States while critiquing the structure.

The literature on the historical practices of African American women teachers (i.e., prior to school integration in the late 1950s) suggests that while they taught in segregated and oftentimes inferior conditions, they were remembered for their dedication to the education of African American youth and the uplift of their community (see Murray, 2012; Rouse, 2001; Siddle Walker, 1996). The contemporary literature on African American teachers suggests that current teachers continue the tradition of their forebears and engage in similar practices of activism and community uplift (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008). These women have traditionally viewed teaching as a spiritual endeavor (Casey, 1990; Irvine, 1999) and still recognize the

importance of their work in educating future citizens. Dixon and Dingus (2008) acknowledged this relationship, stating that the work of African American teachers engaging in acts of community uplift is a "continuation of the legacy of Black womanhood" (p. 818). These educators' contributions to the teaching profession and to the Black community can be understood as acts of citizenship.

Famed educator and scholar Anna Julia Cooper once wrote in her profound book, *A Voice from the South* (1892/1988), that

> Only the Black Woman can say "when and where I enter, in the quiet undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole *Negro race enters with me*." (p. 31)

This statement is a testament to the remarkable position of Black women and their role in uplifting the race. Cooper believed that it was Black women, who experienced both racism and sexism, who were capable of uplifting the African American race to achieve recognition as citizens. Anna Julia Cooper fought tirelessly throughout her life to recenter and uplift the voices and experiences of Black women in pursuit of a more just society for all.

My experiences as a teacher and researcher have shown me that contemporary African American women teachers follow this same historic tradition and continue the work of so many of our predecessors in recentering the knowledge and experiences of African American women while simultaneously doing the work of citizenship through our teaching, activism, community uplift, and everyday activities. That is why I chose to

channel the spirit of Anna Julia Cooper for this dissertation project. African American women teachers decide when and where *we* enter, and thus follows the community.

Overview of conceptual framework

This research explores how the multiple intersecting identities of African American women social studies teachers, along with the experiences that arise from those identities, shape how these women conceptualize and teach the construct of citizenship. In exploring these notions, I employ a theoretical framework that centers on the research literature. The first frame focuses on Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) and the importance of African American women's epistemological standpoint. This framework places the knowledge and experiences of Black women at the center of analysis and allows them the opportunity to define their own reality and notion of truth. Through a framework that values the knowledge and experiences of those who experience oppression, their voices will be legitimated and integrated into mainstream dialogue. This is done as a conscious effort to empower both the individual woman and the community.

The second frame serves as an extension of the first, in terms of the recognition of the reality of intersectionality of identities and oppression. Black feminist thought represents a paradigmatic shift in how we recognize and experience oppression. This framework acknowledges that race, class, and gender are concurrent systems of oppression (Collins, 2009). Legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) used intersectionality in her analysis on how the intersections of race and gender led to the complicated experiences of both racism and patriarchy in multiple spaces.

11

Intersectionality also recognizes that knowledge is formed as a result of different lived experiences of Black women (Napes & Gurr, 2014) and does not force women to privilege one axis of their identity over the other (Frost & Elichaoff, 2014).

The third frame arises out of the first two, in terms of the importance of uncovering and privileging the knowledge and experiences of African American women. This frame examines the experiential knowledge of Black women and how it shapes their worldview. Napes and Gurr (2014) and Scott (1991) have written about the ways in which lived experiences, along with sociohistorical/sociopolitical contexts, can create complicated and contradictory sources of knowledge. Coupled with the intersections of identities, this creates an epistemological standpoint that differs from those of White women and African American men.

Therefore, it is crucial that we learn how the positionality of African American women teachers can impact how they conceptualize and teach the construct of citizenship in their social studies classrooms. This research will demonstrate how contemporary African American women social studies teachers continue the tradition of reconceptualizing and teaching transformative constructs of citizenship. I argue that these teachers' experiences and personal ways of knowing history represent marginalized perspectives that have been omitted from civic myths and the dominant historical narrative. What they know to be true about citizenship, activism, and survival is incongruent with traditional models of citizenship education. I further argue that these women have therefore chosen not to teach according to traditional models of citizenship

education; instead, they purposely teach their students notions of a more relevant kind of citizenship—one that aligns with their worldview and their cultural and community knowledge and experiences.

Overview of study design

This study used a qualitative multiple case study methodology. Merriam (2009) defined case study research as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). Data were collected and analyzed for three African American women social studies teachers. Each case was analyzed separately to determine the emerging themes. Then, the themes were compared across cases as a way to provide insight into my research questions.

The research questions that framed this study explore how social studies teachers draw from their multiple intersecting identities (race and gender) and experiences to inform how they teach notions of citizenship to their students. The research questions included the following:

1. How do African American women conceptualize the notion of citizenship?

2. How do the intersections of their identities both influence and complicate how they understand and enact notions of citizenship in their social studies classrooms?

The participants in this study were three inservice African American women social studies teachers. The participants were purposefully selected because of their positionalities as African American women social studies teachers who taught in a school

district located in a large state in the southwest United States. Data collection included semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts. When the fieldwork was completed, the data were analyzed as Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2013) suggested. The analysis was later written in three themed chapters that utilized a narrative style in order to recount how the intersecting identities and experiences of the participants shaped their conceptualization of citizenship and how it was taught to students.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Citizenship in a democracy entails multiple nuances and manifestations that has changed over the course of American history depending on social, political, and economic forces. When European explorers first colonized the American continents in the late fifteenth century they brought with them western political philosophy and a framework for government. Centuries later it would be western European Enlightenment thinkers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, who would greatly influence the founding fathers in the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Once the American colonists won their independence from Great Britain they founded a government on the belief in a social contract between the people and their government. Social contract theory implies that the government derives its power from the consent of the governed (i.e. citizens). John Locke proposed the notion of citizens possessing "natural rights" that were unalienable and protected from the government. In social contract theory individual citizens consent to surrendering some of their freedoms to the authority of the government in exchange for the protection of their remaining rights. It would be these same ideals that would serve as the foundation for the United States constitution and American democracy.

It was during this time that the men who crafted the United States constitution would decide the qualifications of citizenship; who was a citizen, who could become a citizen, as well as their rights and responsibilities as citizens. It was decided that in order

to be a citizen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century one must be a White protestant male who owned property. Women were not eligible to be citizens of the United States nor Native Americans or African/African American slaves (as dictated by the 3/5th compromise, they were designated to the status of property and non-humans). This inevitably created a hierarchy where White men with property were in power and women and people of color made up a subjugated class.

The foundation of the modern American democratic state is still premised on Enlightenment ideas and western political philosophy, but changes in social, political, and economic entities and ideas have led to disagreements and renewed interests in citizenship. According to liberal theory, citizenship necessitates a reciprocal relationship of rights and responsibilities between the individual and the nation state. However, in republican theories the political body governs on behalf of the individual and loyalty to the nation state is an essential duty of each citizen (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Stuart Hall and David Held (1990) wrote that citizenship in the modern day had three distinct categories: membership, rights and duties in reciprocity, and real participation. Kymlicka and Norman (1994) stated that there have been increasing calls for "a theory of citizenship that focuses on the identity and conduct of individual citizens, including their responsibilities, loyalties, and roles" (p. 353). This is a difficult task because there are two different concepts of citizenship: citizenship as a legal-status (citizenship as membership in a political community) or citizenship as a desirable-activity (citizenship as participation in a desired community) (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). In their analysis of

contemporary discourses on citizenship, Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) noted that

citizenship in a democracy typically is considered the conferring of a membership status

and identity to individuals within a political entity. They also found that citizenship also

involved participation in the political process and citizens adopting a specific set of

historical and political knowledge that reflects the values and perspectives of those in

power.

Political theorist Bryan S. Turner (1993) attempted to account for the changing

construct and oppressive conditions of citizenship. He defined citizenship as "a set of

practices (judicial, political, economic, and cultural) which define a person as a

competent member of society, and which as a consequence shapes the flow of resources

to persons and social groups" (p. 2). By defining citizenship as a "set of practices",

Turner helps us understand citizenship as a social construction that changes throughout

history based on social, political, and economic forces in society. Moreover, Turner's

definition links citizenship with inequality and power structures and the unequal

distribution of resources.

The literature on citizenship in the modern society appears to echo the idea that

citizenship entails a membership status that includes certain legal rights and the

expectation for participation in the preservation of the nation state. Additionally, Turner

(1993) conceptualization of citizenship also brings in the idea of power structures

controlling and manipulating the conditions and unequal distribution of resources that

affect members and nonmembers in a society. Membership to the nation state is an

important part of the construct of citizenship. Hall and Held (1990) recognized this and wrote that the idea of citizenship has always included a discussion and struggle over the meaning of the idea of membership to the community one lives in: "who belongs and what does belonging mean in practice"? (p. 175)

Exclusionary history of citizenship in the United States

Yuval-Davis (2006) wrote that the contemporary debate on the politics of belonging deals with the question of who 'belongs' and who does not, as well as what are the common grounds (in nationality, culture, race, gender, religion) that are required to signify belonging? Both history and contemporary society has paid witness to political, social, and economic structures using the politics of belonging to exclude certain racial/ ethnic groups, women, religions, immigrants, etc. from attaining citizenship status and rights because of their perceived differences to an imagined "mythical norm" (as being White, male, heterosexual, middle class, Christian) (Lorde, 2012).

For centuries, American citizenship (as participatory, a legal status, and sense of belonging) had been unattainable for those who were considered "non-White" (African Americans, Native Americans, Latinas/os, immigrants) and women. At the founding of the United States the government has engaged in malicious practices in order to ensure that citizenship remained a private entity that was guaranteed only to White male protestant property owners (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Throughout the course of the United States those in power have made the conscious decision to not grant citizenship to women (e.g. the historic practices of women being denied the right to an education, divorce, or to

vote) the poor (e.g. the loss of political, economic, or social rights for indentured servants), and communities who experienced colonial oppression (e.g. Indian Removal Act of 1830). Over time to solidify the White male racial and patriarchal hierarchy they dropped the religious and class qualification for citizenship to include more White men into the ruling elite. Moreover, because of the racial and gendered ascriptive nature of citizenship, certain immigrant groups who settled in the United States would be eligible to *become* "White" over time (e.g. immigrants from western Europe), thus granting them legal and social citizenship status and rights (see Zinn, 2003).

The construct of citizenship had become a racialized (Mills, 1997), gendered (Pateman, 1988), and classed (Zinn, 2003) construct. While citizenship was a legal status that gave citizens certain rights and privileges, it also became a social construct and discursive practice that has changed over time to exclude certain bodies from belonging and participating as legitimate members of the body politic.

Gender and citizenship

Feminist scholars often declare the notion of democratic citizenship as a gendered and patriarchal concept (Assiter, 1999; Crocco, 2002). Crocco (2002) wrote, "for much of U.S. history, the public domain itself has been gendered male, viewed as out of bounds to women as public actors making a public claim" (p. 52). Bickmore (2002) contends that a person's gender and intimate relationships are crucial elements of their membership and role in society. Ideologies surrounding gender and sexuality have shaped political, social, and civic membership in society.

The discourse surrounding women and citizenship is typically relegated to the division between public and private spheres (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Elshtain (1981) discussed that the discourse of the public/private divide of citizenship permeates much of Western political thought. She argued that dating back to Aristotle, political theorists argued that because of women's reproductive capabilities it destined them for the private domestic sphere while maintaining that their male counterparts were better suited for participation in public life (Elshtain, 1981; Smith, 1999). Additionally, the public realm was idolized as a universal space for logical thought (i.e. men) and the private sphere was believed to be better suited for the body, emotion, and relationships (i.e. women) (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

Because a woman's place was/is believed to be in the home, men have deliberately kept women from enjoying public (i.e. political) citizenship and instead, charged them with maintaining the private sphere (i.e. the home) (Voet, 1998). Yuval-Davis (1997) concluded, "Women, therefore, were not excluded from the public sphere incidentally but as part of the bargain between the new regime and its member citizens" (p. 12). Since the founding of the United States women have been expected to maintain what was perceived to be their sole and most important role in the new nation, referred to as "republican motherhood". This involved the birthing and raising of children who would one day become active citizens in American society (Schwagger, 1987). This was to be their primary role in the new democracy and their roles as "private" citizens of this nation.

Kymlicka and Norman (1994) argue that we as a society have failed to renegotiate gender roles in the public/private sphere that prevents women from full participation as citizens. In fact, feminists have attempted to break down the gendered practices of the divisions of the public and private spheres in order for women to experience full inclusion as members of the democratic state (Arnot, 1996; Jones, 1998). Women suffragists and rights activists around the world have worked tirelessly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to secure the vote (a perceived marker of citizenship) for women and thus granting them access to participation in the public political space. In the United States suffragists (e.g. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Church Terrell, Alice Paul, Sojourner Truth, and Susan B. Anthony) defied social gender norms by speaking at public rallies, participating in hunger strikes, and engaging in demonstrations in public spaces that, on occasion, landed them in jail. During World War I several women suffragists and organizations picketed the White house with signs and banners condemning President Wilson for spreading democracy overseas while ignoring the fact that women (both White and African American) in the United States were still without the vote.

Feminists in the present day continue to work to redefine citizenship in an effort to make it more conducive to the experiences of all women. Bernard-Powers (2008) asked, "do we take the woman out of the citizen or do we define citizenship as woman-centered?" (p. 317). A "woman-centered perspective" on citizenship is a second stance that reasons that we must change the concept of citizenship if women are to be included

because the notion was originally constructed in the male image that excluded women (Crocco, 2002; Pateman, 1992; Voet, 1998). However, many feminists of color critique the feminist paradigm and movement for its western perspective of the experiences of women that fails to take into account issues of race, class, immigration status, colonialism, etc. bell hooks (1999) and Chandra Mohanty (2003) offered a critique of hegemonic Western feminisms and their homogenous construction of women's experiences and oppressions. hooks (1999) contended that White women continue to dominate feminist discourse but have little or no understanding of White supremacy. Mohanty (2003) argues that western feminism is normalized while they construct "Third World women" as a powerless and oppressed group. Women of color have taken it upon themselves to redefine their experiences to challenge racist and classist oppression within feminism and the larger society (see Anzaldúa, 1987; Collins, 2009; Mohanty, 2003; Walker, 1983).

Race and citizenship

African Americans have had a complicated experience being and participating as American citizens. Even dating back to the late eighteenth century when the American colonists were renouncing their British citizenship and declared themselves to instead be American citizens, African Americans were symbolically excluded from this designation. The Declaration of Independence famously stated that "all men are created equal", but the founding fathers insisted that it really meant "all [*White]* men were created equal". While African Americans insisted that they were always included in the founding ideal of

equality and used that document to fight against their non-citizen and slave status, however the courts would later take steps to remedy this misunderstanding by legally declaring African Americans to be non-citizens. During the contentious period of sectionalism prior to the civil war, the 1857 Supreme Court case *Dred Scott v. John F.A. Sanford*, the court ruled that persons of African descent cannot be, nor ever intended to be, citizens under the Constitution. This decision categorized African Americans not as citizens, but as property. While the thirteenth amendment legally ended slavery it did not stop state and local governments from passing laws that instituted a system of segregation throughout the United States.

After the civil war, the fifteenth amendment was passed which granted African American the right to vote (a marker of citizenship) as a result of their military service. However, laws were passed that prevented them from voting and living as full citizens. Black codes[1] and Jim Crow laws[2] were passed throughout the United States instilling systematic subjugation and fear throughout African American communities. Every aspect of their lives was segregated and governed by the threat of mob violence and terror as a way to maintain control of Black bodies in defense of the White race (Wiegman, 1993). When Homer Plessy attempted to challenge the constitutionality of segregation in the courts in 1892, it instead led to the legal sanctioning of segregation throughout the US. In

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[1] Laws restricting African American freedom in addition to forcing them to work in a labor market economy that left them in a cycle of debt.

[2] Laws and social practices that instituted racial segregation.

the 1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson* the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation laws under the doctrine of "separate but equal". This decision legitimized the institution of segregation and provided an impetus for further laws to segregate the races (including African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans).

Holt (2010) wrote that while many people want to believe that "citizenship is national and has no color" (p. 313) however, the brief history of African Americans I have presented demonstrates the unfortunate reality that Whiteness has been (and continues to be) a criterion for full citizenship in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Urrieta, 2004). Banks and Nguyen (2008) and Ladson-Billings (2004) claim that White racialization has privileged people of European descent and has consistently isolated and excluded people of color. Since the arrival of the first Africans in the early 17th century, race has been a persistent factor in the granting of membership and citizenship rights to individuals. Guiner (2004) noted the importance of race when she wrote,

> Race matters not just for blacks, in other words, but for every citizen of the United States. Because of its foundational role in the making of this country's history and myths, race, in conjunction with class and geography, invariably shapes educational, economic, and political opportunities for all of us. (p. 117)

Race has been used as a method to include and exclude certain groups of people from the body politic.

24

African Americans have historically been part of the colonial structure in the United States. Africans were first brought to America against their will in 1619 as indentured servants and later were legally enslaved as an entire race (Takaki, 2008) based on a European colonial framework (Loomba, 2005). Prior to European colonization, the colors white and Black represented opposites of purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, beauty and ugliness, and God and the devil (Collins, 2004). The colonization of Africans and African Americans was justified by Europeans using science and ideology to make the case that Africans, by nature, were savages, cannibals, and uncivilized and thus rendered them to second-class subhuman status (Cesaire, 2000; Collins, 2004; Fannon, 1952/2008; Roediger, 2010). Dichotomous thinking and notions of difference was/is a method used to objectify marginalized groups by defining them in oppositional terms: man/woman, Black/White, citizen/non-citizen (Collins, 2009; 2004). These relationships tend to normalize one while the other is viewed as the "other" and outside the norm.

Racial ideologies were central to the justification of the enslavement, subjugation, and denial of citizenship status and rights to non-White populations that has continued through the present day (Fannon, 1952/2008; Hunter, 1998; Takaki, 2008). Saidya Hartman (1997) wrote, "the instrumental role of equality in constructing a measure of man or descending scale of humanity that legitimated and naturalized subordination. The role of equality in the furtherance of whiteness as the norm of humanity" (p. 121). By making the claim that racial groups were non humans and lacked a sense of humanity

(which was backed by racial ideologies), those in power believed they were justified in denying citizenship status and rights to these communities for centuries.

Fighting for recognition as citizens

These examples demonstrate how the government and legal practices have been used to institute a structural racial and gendered hierarchy and the removal of citizenship rights and membership to groups of Americans on account of race, class, or gender. Students of American history certainly notice the correlation between race, gender, and the granting of citizenship rights to different groups of Americans (Dietz, 2002). Race and gender have been used as barriers to include and exclude certain groups from belonging to the American body politic.

Mills (1997) would argue that the *racial contract* creates a society of persons [Whites] and subpersons [African Americans] where the structure is built so that subpersons are never meant to achieve equal citizenship and status to Whites. The racial contract was created at the founding of the United States and continues to exist in modern society because not only does the contract have the ability to change over time based upon the needs of society, but it also exists because the ruling class (Whites) benefits from the racial contract and continues to agree to exclude others thereby denying non-Whites membership as citizens (Mills, 1997). Carole Pateman (1988) also argues of the existence of a *sexual contract* that suppresses women and devalues their labor within a capitalist structure. She wrote, "Women are not party to the original contract through which men transform their natural freedom into the security of civil freedom...The

(sexual) contract is the vehicle through which men transform their natural right over women into the security of civil patriarchal right" (p. 6).

Both the racial and sexual contract are attempts by political theorists and philosophers to understand how and why different groups continue to remain excluded from legal rights and membership as citizens. Nevertheless, oppressed groups have continued to fight for citizenship rights and membership in the United States. When Native Americans first came into contact with Europeans they fought and resisted their attempts to take over their land (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Takaki, 2008). Africans and African Americans who were enslaved constantly resisted capture and their enslavement by working slowly, breaking or hiding tools, learning to read, refusing to have children, running away, helping others escape, or singing songs of resistance (Collins, 2009; Holt, 2010). Gail Collins (2003, 2009) has written extensively on the ways in which women have campaigned for centuries to be included in the public political sphere. Mexican Americans fought tirelessly for their citizenship and property rights that were entitled them as listed in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998; Takaki, 2008).

These groups also used the American judicial system as a space to fight for their legal citizenship rights (e.g. *Worchester v. Georgia, Dred Scott v. Sanford, Plessy v. Ferguson, Muller v. Oregon, United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind, Hernandez v. Texas, Taylor v. Louisiana*, etc). In the present day the struggle continues in the fight for belonging and full recognition in the US. Grassroots and nation wide movements have

formed and different groups are working in solidarity to fight for the universal right to exist as human beings and citizens in the United States and the world (e.g. the DREAMers, #Blacklivesmatter, #notallwomen, #loveislove, #bringbackourgirls).

Citizenship for African American women

But for African American women, their sense of belonging as Americans citizens is further complicated by their intersectional raced and gendered identities. They are often plagued by what Francis Beale referred to as "double jeopardy" in reference to the dual discriminations of oppressing structures that shape their experiences and identities as citizens (King, 1988). Legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) analyzed how the intersections of race and gender allows Black women to experience discrimination in ways similar to and different that Black men and White women. She argued,

> Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways similar to white women's experiences; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double discrimination- the combined effects of practices, which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes, they experience discrimination as Black women- not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as Black women. (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149)

Crenshaw critiqued feminist and antiracist frameworks in their failure to consider differing intragroup standpoints and how multiple oppressing structures could impact different groups. Acclaimed scholar and social critic bell hooks offered the following critique of modern day feminism,

> White women who dominate feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women's reality is true to the lived experiences of women as a collective group. Nor are they aware of the

28

extent to which their perspectives reflect race and class biases. (hooks, 1999, p. 271)

Because of the refusal of feminists and African American men to consider notions of differences within their movements and frameworks has left Black women marginalized in their attempts to work within either movement. Their intersectional identities have complicated the experiences of African American women's quest for citizenship in both the public and private spheres.

Representation and citizenship for African American women

Collins (2004, 2009) argued that the oppression of Black women have been structured along the dimensions of the exploitation of their labor combined with the negative representation of Black womanhood. This has resulted in their exclusion from attaining citizenship rights and membership to the nation state. A majority of Black women's activism has been to reclaim negative representation and redefine Black womanhood.

During the systemic enslavement of African Americans beginning in the seventeenth century, Black women were forced to work as free labor to the benefit of the US economic system. Collins (2009) described Black women's position in the labor market as *mules;* "as dehumanized objects, mules are living machines and can be treated as part of the scenery. Fully human women are less easily exploited" (p. 51). While enslaved African American women worked as either house servants or field hands, their central role was that of a breeder and producer of future exploited workers. Hartman

(1997) wrote the following of the burden freed and enslaved Black women carried in terms of their place in the capitalist economic structure:

> …The paradoxical construction of the freed both as self-determining and enormously burdened individuals and as members of a population whose productivity, procreation, and sexual practices were fiercely regulated and policed in the interests of an expanding capitalist economy and the preservation of a racial order on which the white republic was founded. (p. 117)

For African American women (both enslaved and free) they had full knowledge that their bodies served as vessels to reproduce the slavery structure to the benefit of Whites and the capitalist economy. Society viewed them as livestock and economic commodities whose value was in their ability to reproduce (Holt, 2010; Loomba, 2005). Even today over a century after the end of slavery, Collins (2009) argued that Black women's citizenship continues to be tied to their reproductive capabilities in giving birth to second-class citizens. She wrote,

> African American women encounter differential treatment based on our perceived value as giving birth to the wrong race of children, as unable to socialize them properly because we bing them into bad family structures, and as unworthy, symbols of U.S. patriotism. (Collins, 2009, p. 248-249)

This is in part because of the negative public representation of Black womanhood that continues to marginalize them as citizens.

While Black women give birth to future generations of citizens/non-citizens it is important to distinguish between procreation and motherhood. Since motherhood and racism were symbolically entwined in that Black women's sexuality and fertility were controlled and recreated a raced notion of American womanhood (Collins, 2009; King,

30

1973). Black motherhood has historically been represented by the image of the "mammy" as the caretaker of White children (Collins, 2009, 2004; Harris-Perry, 2011; Sewell, 2013). The "mammy" is a mythical figure that consistently represents Black womanhood as faithful and obedient domestic servants. A significant characteristic of the mammy is in her ability to know and accept her place in the racial and economic structure as that of an obedient servant. Likewise, the mammy figure is expected to transmit notions of accommodation and deference to her children and others, thus reaffirming the racial order.

A second controlling image of Black womanhood dates back to enslavement is that of the "jezebel": the hyper sexual seductress. Efforts made to control the fertility and bodies of Black women were perceived as justified by their uncontrollable hyper sexuality and reproductive tendencies (Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011; Hartman, 1997). If Black women were believed to have uncontrollable sexual appetites, then their hyper fertility was an expected outcome.

Another component of the "jezebel" images was the belief that Black women were capable of "seducing" their White masters, leading to mixed race offspring who would become slave workers in the capitalist structure. When examining the history of African American women in the United States one cannot ignore the multiple ways the Black female body has been objectified and abused by the racial and patriarchal structure. Rape has been used not only as a tool to benefit the capitalist system, but also as a political weapon to terrorize Black women and force them into submission (Hartman,

1997; Holt, 2010; McGuire, 2010). The rape of enslaved and later free African American women was consider justified based on their positions as hypersexual beasts (Collins, 2004). According to McGuire (2010), "the sexual violence enacted and enforced rules of racial and economic hierarchy" (p. 29). Although the rape of a slave by her White master was a method of economic benefit to expand their slave workforce, it was also later used as a method of intimidation used to keep African Americans oppressed in the political, social, and economic hierarchy. The threat of rape was also a constant reminder to Black women of their continued status as the "symbolic property" of White men.

The "angry Black woman" is an early twentieth century representation of Black womanhood that was prominent in the media and public discourse. Also known as "Sapphire", she appeared in the 1930s on the popular radio show titled *Amos 'n' Andy*. Sapphire was presented as an angry, hostile, assertive, sassy, and shrill Black woman who was also had a habit of emasculating Black men (Harris-Perry, 2011). This representation continues to be a widespread and oftentimes accepted representation of Black women in television, movies, and in music by all races (see Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011).

A final prevailing representation of Black womanhood was that of the "Black matriarch": a neglectful mother who emasculates Black men (Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011). This stereotype was widely popular in the 1960s after Daniel Moynihan (1965), a policy writer for the US government, published his disreputable report titled *The Negro family: The case for national action.* In this report he concluded that slavery had destroyed Black families because it had led to the reversal of gendered roles. He argued

that the absence of a patriarchal structure was a symbol of Black cultural inferiority

(Collins, 1989; Giddings, 1984). Also, because Black women failed to perform their

"womanly duties" it had contributed to the deterioration and social problems in African

American families and communities. This had led to the absence of Black fathers and the

creation of matriarchal familial structure and a "cultural dysfunction" that contributed to

the high rate of poverty and unemployment in Black communities across America

(Collins, 2005, 2009; Holt, 2010; Sewell, 2013). The combined public images of the

"mammy", "jezebel", the "angry Black woman", and "Black matriarch" continued to

have a lasting influence on exclusion from Black women in membership to the nation

state as well as from feminist and antiracist groups who would take up their cause.

African American women fighting for recognition and citizenship

Crenshaw (1991) used the term "political intersectionality" to highlight the fact

that women of color are often situated in multiple subordinate groups that purse

conflicting political agendas. This was especially true for Black women fighting for

citizenship in multiple spaces throughout history. Because of their raced and gendered

experiences it often defined and confined the interests of the entire group. Crenshaw

(1991) argued,

> Among the most troubling political consequences of the failure of anti-
> racist and feminist discourses to address the intersections of race and
> gender is the fact that, to the extent they can forward the interest of
> "people of color" and "women".… The failure of feminism to interrogate
> race means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate
> and reinforce the subordination of people of color, and the failure of

antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently
reproduce the subordination of women. (p. 1252)

In order to understand the positioning of Black women within the citizenship historical

narrative is important to consider the interlocking systems of oppression that plagued the

lives of Black women activists. Barnett (1993) wrote, "the invisibility of modern Black

women leaders and activists is in part a result of gender, race, and class biases prevalent

in both the social movement literature and feminist scholarship" (p. 163). Black women

have played a momentous role in the fight for both women and African American civil

rights. They were, as women's and civil rights activist Dorothy Height (2001) suggested,

the backbone of the churches and the movement. But their roles and contributions have

been reduced to "professional bridge leaders" (Robnett, 1997) because of prevailing

gendered and racial stereotypes that believed them to be incapable of leadership (Rouse,

2001).

Because both the long African American civil rights and women's movement has

a history of ignoring the issue of racism and sexism in the larger society as well as

internally, Black women were barred from taking an active role in either movements (see

Brown, 2006; Collier-Thomas & Franklin, 2001; Giddings, 1984; hooks, 1999; Olson,

2001). hooks (1999) attributed this to "racist and sexist socialization had conditioned us

to devalue our femaleness and to regard race as the only relevant label of

identification" (p. 1). Black women were forced to choose between participating in the

uplift of African Americans (and ignore sexism) or fight for women's equality (and ignore racism).

In the late nineteenth century the women's suffrage movement split over the passing of the Fifteenth Amendment, and loyalty to the Republican Party. The National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was formed and led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. This organization adopted the strategy of "expedience" in terms of women's suffrage. They also adopted the strategy of arguing for the enfranchisement of White women as a method to enhance the power of the White ruling class and to further subjugate Blacks and immigrants (Giddings, 1984). African American women members joined the organization attempting to challenge this strategy in hopes of enlisting their support in African American civil rights. Black members of the NASWA tried to draft resolutions that would force the organization to take a stand against racial segregation, but the organization refused (Giddings, 1984). The NASWA also went further to marginalize its Black women members by heeding to pressures by southern chapters to restrict Black membership. When the NASWA marched on Washington in 1913 woman suffragist and anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells-Barnett was told that she could not march with the all-White Chicago chapter of suffragists out of fear of offending southern women. However, Wells-Barnett refused to be put off and during the march she slipped in line with the White women and continued marching with the White women (Giddings, 1984).

Brown (2006) discussed that while African American women battled two forms of oppression and were committed to voting rights and the political visibility of women, African American women clubs made the decision to choose racial politics over gender politics as a result of internal pressures in the movement from both men and women. Although both Black men and women fought for liberation during slavery and Reconstruction, Black male political leaders continued to uphold patriarchal values and encouraged Black women to assume a subservient role and remain in the private sphere (Brown, 2006; hooks, 1999). At the turn of the last century with the emergence of progressive politics, the "New Negro Movement", and the United States entrance into the first World War, civil rights organizations (such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP) continued to utilize restrictive notions of gender by reinforcing boundaries of what constituted "men's politics/men's issues" (such as anti-lynching efforts and civil rights) while dictating that community service and social work were "women's issues". The media also helped reinforce the division of the spheres by publishing editorials in African American ladies magazines praising women for performing their "wife and motherly" sacrifices during the war (Brown, 2006). As one editorial stated, "these men are the saviors of democracy" (author unknown, 1917).

While traditional patriarchal values coupled with the structure of White supremacy attempted to maintain the color line and division of public and private spheres, African American women challenged these harmful practices while simultaneously enacting notions of citizenship. It was after World War II when Black

clubwomen began actively shifting their attentions from the private sphere to public politics by working to redefine the negative images of Black womanhood (Collins, 2009) and fight for African American citizenship (Brown, 2006).

The Women's Political Council (WPC) began in 1946 as a civic organization but quickly became an important group fighting for civil rights in Alabama. They first started organizing efforts to register African Americans to vote and later moved to the problem of segregation. It was the WPC that first called for a boycott of the Montgomery bus system in order to protest segregation and the degrading treatment of African Americans in the early 1950s. After Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955 the WPC, led by their president Joann Robinson, worked quickly to organize the boycott by making and passing out over 35,000 flyers to adverse the boycott (Barnett, 1993). They even organized a system of transportation and carpool arrangements for the thousands of African Americans who participated in the boycott. Inspired by the WPC a woman named Georgia Gilmore, a cook and domestic worker, helped raise money to fund the boycott by founding "The Club From Nowhere" and going door to door asking for donations and selling dinner plates and baked goods (Barnett, 1993). It was the collective efforts of the WPC that sustained the bus boycott for its entirety. Unfortunately, once the movement gained national attention outside civil rights organization took over the boycott and pushed the WPC and the women activists out of their leadership positions. The male leadership neglected to credit the work of these brave women for beginning the national nonviolent civil rights movement.

When reflecting on the lack of women participating in the 1963 March on Washington, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) President Dorothy Height (2001) recalled,

> We were forced to recognize that, traditionally, black women, through their unstinting support of race movements and their willingness to play frequently unquestioned subordinate roles, and to put the men out front, made it seem that this was acceptable. Little or no thought had been given to ourselves as women. (p. 90)

Women were expected to remain silent and work in the background under the leadership of men. While Height and others tried to convince the male leaders to feature women in the program for the March on Washington they were not taken seriously. It was made clear to women activists "there was an all-consuming focus on race. We women were expected to put all our energies into it. Clearly, there was a low tolerance level for anyone raising the questions about the women's participation, per se" (Height, 2001, p. 86). The male leadership made excuses as to why women would not be featured in the final program. In an effort to "appease" their concerns the male leadership decided to allow a few women to sit on the stage platform. Women activists were expected to be content with silently sitting on the stage and act like good, respectable women.

Height summarized the particular struggle of Black women in terms of acquiring recognition and rights as citizens: "Fifty years ago women got suffrage… but it took lynching, bombing, the civil rights movement and the Voting Rights Act... to get it for Black women and Black people" (Hunter, 1970). African American women worked within both the racist structure of the women's movement and the patriarchal structure of

African American civil rights organizations to finally acquire membership as citizens in the nation state. Famed author Toni Morrison noted the continuous hardships and triumphs they had encountered to succeed, but at certain costs.

> What do Black women feel about Women's Lib? Distrust… Too many movements and organizations have made deliberate overtures to enroll Blacks and have ended up by rolling them. They don't want to be used again to help somebody gain power- a power that is carefully kept out of their hands. (Morrison, 1971)

Throughout American history Black women have collectively responded to the call and actively fought for American citizenship through their work in racial, gender, and community politics. These stories and others document how Black women fought for both the recognition of Black womanhood and citizenship while battling both racism and sexism that kept them from achieving prominence or visibility in race or gender movements. While the contributions of African American women to the struggle for citizenship and recognition are heroic and inspiring, they still remain largely absent from the dominant historical narrative and public memory of citizenship.

The politics of historical memory

Those who exhibit power in society dictate how we remember historical events, individuals, and in what ways future generations remember the past (Blight, 2002; Dowd-Hall, 1998; Laswell, 1958, 1977). Dowd-Hall (1998) argued that historical memory has become both a "cultural obsession and a powerful political weapon" (p. 439). Blight (2002), Trouillot (1997), and Thelen (1989) suggest that Whites have controlled the American historical memory and have been able to decide how marginalized populations

are remembered (or omitted) in history. Trouillot (1997) adds to our understanding about public memory by discussing the political decision to silence certain groups and memories: "I am quite willing to concede that the conscious political motives are not the same. Indeed again, that is part of my point. Effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural" (p. 106). The decision to silence and control public memory is structural and has dire consequences on the public perception and sense of belonging certain groups feel as citizens.

The practice of controlling and exploiting the public memory of a marginalized group can be seen as a method of control. Even the conscious decision of whom we remember and forget is politically driven. Dowd-Hall (2005) provided an example in her article on the long civil rights movement and wrote the following on the politics of remembering,

> Yet remembrance is always a form of forgetting, and the dominant narrative of the civil rights movement- distilled from history and memory, twisted by ideology and political contestation, and embedded in heritage tours, museums, public rituals, textbooks, and various artifacts of mass culture- distorts and suppresses as much as it reveals. (p. 1233)

Dowd-Hall argued that the memory of the civil rights movement has been manipulated, crafted, and packaged in a particular way that has distorted its true history and accomplishments. She also reveals that the decision to manipulate the public historical memory of the movement was done for political purposes to reassert the "New Right" position of power and to reverse the gains of the movement.

In order to maintain power and control over public historical memory one must find a way to disseminate the historical memory for the general public to learn. One way this has been done is through the erection of public historical monuments. Public historical monuments are used as national sites of remembrance. In the United States it is common to see historical monuments dedicated to those so serve during wartime. In the south it is not uncommon to see historical monuments dedicated to remembering those who fought for the confederacy during the civil war. Blight (2002) chronicled the attempts made by the south to remember the civil war as a "lost cause" that demonstrated the valor of southern men and women while forgetting the plight and presence of African Americans in the civil war. This was done as a way to unify the nation and heal from the war. The daughters of the confederacy used historical monuments of confederate generals and soldiers as a way to control and disseminate the "lost cause" narrative and manipulate how we (as Americans) remember the civil war.

The second way to control historical memory is through the school history curriculum that is taught to future citizens. The social studies curriculum is written in a way that glorifies the United States and mythologizes historical events and figures (Loewen, 2007; Lowenthal, 1998; Tyack, 1999). Lowenthal (1998) made the distinction between heritage (which is often taught in schools) and history when he wrote,

> Heritage should not be confused with history. History seeks to convince by truth, and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forges, and thrives on ignorance and error. Heritage uses historical traces and tells historical tales…celebrating some

bits and forgetting others, heritage reshapes a past made easy to embrace. (p. 11-13)

Heritage is widely found in most history curriculums because it presents a nicely packaged and uncomplicated version of history where good always triumphs over evil.

Additionally, the dominant narrative of history tends to construct narratives in particular ways that mythologizes and "heroifies" historical figures (Kent, 1999; Kohl, 1994; Loewen, 2007). Loewen (2007) defines the practice of heroification as, "… a degenerative process (much like calcification) that makes people over into heroes. Through this process, our educational media turn flesh-and-blood individuals into pious, perfect creatures without conflicts, pain, credibility, or human interest" (p. 11). Social studies teachers, the curriculum, and textbooks heroify historical figures through omission: purposely neglecting unfavorable, or "un-American" qualities, acts, or decisions of the person. Loewen used the example of Helen Keller as an example of heroification. Keller is often remembered in history as overcoming her many disabilities by receiving an education. However, textbooks and teachers omit her socialist beliefs and activism because socialism is considered "un-American" and therefore students must be shielded from Keller's "radical" beliefs. Helen Keller is thus frozen in time and taught as an "ideal" and reduced to a helpless blind-deaf woman without a voice or agency. This one-sided, uncomplicated portrayal of historical figures erases their "human-ness" and leaves students with an unrealistic role model they are unable to emulate (Kohl, 1994; Loewen, 2007).

It is well known that social studies textbooks are quite problematic. Loewen (2007) found that the stories found in history textbooks are simplified, devoid of any real conflict or suspense, and fail to use the past to shed light on events in the present. Moreover, textbooks also omit issues of structural racism (Brown & Brown, 2010; Loewen, 2007). Loewen found that while textbooks have increased their coverage of slavery it is still constructed as a sectional problem rather than a national one. Racism also continues to be limited to an individualistic act in the past (i.e. the Klu Klux Klan or Bull Connor) instead of as structural and embedded in the fabric of the United States (Brown & Brown, 2010; Loewen, 2007). In their analysis of the representations of racial violence in American history textbooks, Brown and Brown (2010) found that the narratives presented in textbooks fail to clearly identify the institutional nature of racial violence. Students are left with gaps believing that the acts of violence were the result of "bad men who were doing bad things" instead of being part of a structural institution of racism (Brown & Brown, 2010).

What tends to get less attention is the patriarchy that is heavily embedded in public memory and the historical narrative that presents men as the main characters in history (Maher, 1987). Feminist scholars have also critiqued the standard curriculum and school textbooks on account that they are both male-centric and women are rendered invisible (Maher, 1987; Maher & Tetreault, 2001). Bickmore (2002) goes further and adds, "within the formal social studies curriculum, the seemingly neutral language used in textbook narratives and graphics carries a gendered and sexualized point of view" (p.

43

200). When women are represented in the historical narrative they are presented in traditional, "motherly" roles that link them to the private sphere (Yuval-Davis, 1997) and exhibiting "feminine" qualities and characteristics. Similarly, Schmidt (2012) found that although the US history curriculum has increased the number of women since the 1970s, they continue to remain attached to the private sphere as mothers and wives (such as first ladies), or if they are shown in the public economic sphere it is either in traditionally "feminine jobs" (such as teaching, nursing, domestic service, secretaries, etc.) or as a result of a national crisis (such as during the civil war or World War II). The portrayal of African American women is even more problematic because they are largely absent in the dominant narrative or their male counter parts overshadow their presence. Rosa Parks is muted in the historical narrative and is reduced to a "tired seamstress" and her activist background is largely omitted (Kohl, 1994; McGuire, 2010; Theoharris, 2013). These troubling representations of women take away their agency and send a message that women held a minimal role in the success of this nation.

Double consciousness and civic estrangement

W.E.B. DuBois (1903/1994) began his profound book, *In the Souls of Black Folks* with a discussion about the "unasked question" between DuBois and "the other world" (p. 14). The question that he felt White America wanted to ask him was, "how does it feel to be a problem?" (p. 15). DuBois was referring to the dual sense of identity that African Americans experienced as living as a racialized other while simultaneously being an American. He referred to this phenomenon as a *double consciousness.*

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, —this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. (p. 13)

According to DuBois, African Americans have struggled with being able to see their true selves as human beings because of the White supremacist structure that has denied them that realization. Despite their struggles and hardships, African Americans continue to endure and only hope that one day they are able to exist freely and equally as both African American and American without sacrificing one tenet of their identity, their humanity, or rights as citizens. African American women also exist by being seen through a racialized *and* gendered veil that positions them differently than Black men in terms of their identities as citizens.

Mark Weiner (2004) argues "for a group to enjoy full citizenship in the cultural sense, the civic majority must recognize that the group 'belongs', that it shares certain characteristics with the community" (p. 8). While civil rights movements and legislation has altered the extent of their *double consciousness* and legal rights as citizens, African

Americans (and other historically marginalized groups) continue feeling a sense of estrangement in terms of being seen and treated as legitimate citizens and members of the nation state (see Vickery, in press). Salamishah Tillet (2012) used the phrase *civic estrangement* to describe the ways in which African Americans possess full legal citizenship yet continue to be marginalized in how they are represented in the American citizenship narrative and memory that promotes an American identity. She wrote,

> In the case of African Americans, civic estrangement occurs because they have been marginalized or underrepresented in the civic myths, monuments, narratives, icons, creeds, and images of the past that constitute, reproduce, and promote an American national identity. Civic estrangement is both ascriptive and affective. As a form of an ongoing racial inequality, civic estrangement describes the paradox post-civil rights African Americans experience as simultaneous citizens and "non-citizens," who experience the feeling of disillusionment and melancholia of non-belonging and a yearning for civic membership. (Tillet, 2012, p. 3)

Civic estrangement leads to not only the development of a "double consciousness" in terms of a citizen identity, but also a search for a new site of citizenship where African Americans (and other historically marginalized groups such as women, Latinas/os, Native Americans, immigrants, religions, LGBT, etc.) can redefine the notion of citizenship that better attends to their cultural historical knowledge.

Redefining citizenship

The history of exclusion and struggle for citizenship has been noticeably absent in contemporary theories and frameworks of citizenship. While there have been scholars to call for more inclusive definitions of citizenship (see Hall & Held, 1990; Kymlicka, 1995), groups that had been denied legal citizenship rights and experience estrangement

have instead moved to redefine citizenship completely. This new conceptualization of citizenship would also allow groups to claim a space for themselves in order to experience a sense of belonging to a community, which is an essential component of citizenship.

Cultural citizenship

A number of scholars who advocate cultural pluralism have made the argument that citizenship must take into account cultural differences (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Banks, 2008; Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2004). They argue that in order to accommodate the needs of minority groups we must adopt a "differentiated" conception of citizenship (Kynlicka & Norman, 1994; Young, 1989). Cultural citizenship was first proposed as an attempt to rectify the past and the present struggles over culture, representation, language, minority rights, etc. for Latinas/ os (Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). It is a call for full membership and citizenship for all Americans, regardless of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation (Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997; Ong, 1996). Cultural citizenship attempts to highlight cultural community membership. This view of citizenship asserts that members of marginalized groups will be integrated into the political community through their cultural group membership.

Spinner (1984) argued that traditional liberal citizenship has mostly failed African Americans because the theory is based on individual rights and actions and does not take into account cultural group membership or past histories. Cultural citizenship differs from

traditional liberal discourses of citizenship where individual rights are foundation and instead recognizes collective or communal cultural norms regarding rights (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). According to Kymlicka (1995) cultural membership provides us with a sense of identity and belonging. This framework interrogates how ethnic, language- minority, and other cultural groups conceptualize citizenship as being closely linked to identity and cultural membership (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Kymlicka, 1995).

Cultural citizenship aims to be inclusive and provides the chance for minorities to affirm their cultural identity as part of their citizenship (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Ong, 1996; Rosaldo, 1994). As a result of the long history of racism and the denial of full citizenship, African Americans tend to view their fidelity not to an American identity, but to their own cultural identity (Ladson, 1984; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Ladson-Billings (2004) wrote that because of their ancestral history of oppression she found that Black students in her study refused to see themselves as Americans, "Instead their sense of citizenship was mediated through their identities as African Americans… [They] hold racial/ethnic allegiances first, and national allegiance second" (p. 113-114). This often will create a dual sense of citizenship where members hold an allegiance to both their cultural group and to the United States (see Anzaldúa, 1987; DuBois, 1903/1994; Ladson, 1984).

Differing notions of citizenship first emerged as a critique that citizenship has been culturally and racially normed and assimilationist in nature and practice. For those

48

reasons, cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different without compromising your sense of belonging or participation from the nation state (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). Cultural citizenship does not detract from one's allegiance to the nation state but instead honors the duality of citizenship by halting assimilationist notions of citizenship (Park & Burgess, 1921; Park, 1930, 1950). While some would criticize cultural stances of citizenship based on the assumption that they emphasize difference and division (Ravitch, 1993; Schlesinger, 1991), it is important that we view differences as a way to achieve unity.

Feminist notions of citizenship

With that said, cultural citizenship does limit the construction of citizenship to culture, race, ethnicity, and nationality while failing to fully attest to the intersections of race and gender. Cultural based frameworks of citizenship assumes that women and men share a common experience but fails to take into account how both race, culture, and gender intersect and leads to different experiences of citizenship. Bernard-Powers (2008) wrote, "gender does not function in social isolation: it is shaped by multiple identities in specific historic, political, and economic contexts" (p. 315). Therefore, a different framework of citizenship is needed to fully understand the complexity of the intersection of gender and racial identities. Bernard-Powers (2008) and Voet (1998) agree that plurality means that the multiple identities of citizens must be incorporated in order to reconceptualize citizenship.

Multiracial and multicultural Feminism are useful as a framework for inserting intersectionality into the concept of citizenship (Zinn & Dill, 1999). Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) have attempted to reconceptualize critical race theory (Bell, 1980, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) by calling attention to intersectional structures of oppression. Critical race feminism focuses on the lives of women of color who face many forms of oppression due to the intersections of race, class, and gender in the systems of patriarchy and racism (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). They characterized critical race feminism as a theoretical lens and movement that places the experiences of women of color at the center of analysis and argues that these experiences are different, but not divergent, from men. Delgado Bernal (2002) argued for the necessity of critical raced-gendered epistemologies in that they,

> … Offer unique ways of knowing and understanding the world based on the various raced and gendered experiences of people of color. In my mind, there is not just one raced-gendered epistemology but many that each speak to culturally specific ways of positioning between a raced epistemology that omits the influence of gender on knowledge production and a White feminist epistemology that does not account for race. (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 107)

Because of the particular cultural, historical, and political positionality of Black women, Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) and Womanism (Walker, 1983) have been used to attend to the complexity of Black women's experiences. Because of the history of the women's movement exclusion of African American women and refusing to address racism (both within the movement and larger society), several scholars suggest that Black women are less likely to identify as feminists or see feminism as relevant to their lives

(see Boisiner, 2003; Collins, 1996; Hemmons, 1974; hooks, 1999; Kelly, 2001). Black feminism places Black women in a position to tackle the issues affecting Black women in the United States and the larger global struggle for gender equality (Collins, 1996). By placing the term "Black" in front of "feminist" Collins (1996) argued that this act disrupts the exclusionary aspect of feminism. The goal of Black feminism is to create a political movement not only against institutional structures (economic, political, and social), but to protect the public representation of Black woman's minds, voices, and bodies (Taylor, 1998). This perspective views the experiences of African American women as normative instead of divergent from Black men or White women.

Womanism comes from a similar tradition of Black feminist thought. Acclaimed writer Alice Walker (1983) used the term womanism to represent the positionality of African American women (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005). Like Black feminism, womanism views oppression as an interlocking system with varying degrees of privilege and also considers empowerment and collective action as pathways to social transformation.

While both Black feminism and womanism seek to empower African American women, there are perceived tensions between the two frameworks. Collins (1996) and Taylor (1998) state that some womanists reject Black feminism's association with the mainstream "White" feminist movement and privileged middle class values. Smith (2000) stated that some mistakenly view Black feminism as "Black male bashing" or as a competition between Black women and Black men as victims (Brown, 2006). Smith,

challenges these negative critiques and representations of Black feminism when she described her personal understanding of Black feminism. She wrote, "To me Black feminism has always encompassed basic bread-and-butter issues which affect women of *all* economic groups. It is a mistake to characterize Black feminism as only relevant to middle-class, educated women" (Smith, 2000, p. 52).

Communal notions of citizenship

Significant work has been done to explore dual notions of citizenship and how individuals can experience citizenship in multiple sites and ways. M.B.M Avoseh (2001) investigated citizenship in traditional African societies and found that they conceptualized and enacted citizenship in relation to their community. He wrote,

> A communal view of life... is an imperative for active citizenship in traditional African societies. In this view of life, the individual makes conscious efforts to be aware of the existence and interests of others and therefore she/he 'lives and lets others live'. (p. 480)

This suggests that active citizenship entails individuals adopting a communal framework that allows them to consider how their actions attends to the needs of their community. This perspective asserts humanity and the uplift of the community at the center of citizenship. Furthermore, because an individual must consider how their actions affect others and the community it requires relationships with community members to be a fundamental component of citizenship.

Knight and Watson (2014) studied African immigrant youth's experiences in the United States with civic learning and engagement. The authors learned that civic learning

occurred in situated contexts such as through familial and community relationships. They

wrote,

> Varied norms of interacting and knowing among groups of people for
> participatory communal citizenship occurs within community events such
> as festivals or funerals in which members teach local knowledge, history,
> and culture; engage multiple forms of civic learning; and compel action on
> behalf of others. (Knight & Watson, 2014, p. 545)

An important part of participatory communal citizenship was learning local community

knowledge and culture as well as adopting a communal perspective. This civic learning

and citizenship education occurred in spaces outside of school that are typically not

considered sites of civic learning.

Citizenship in schools

To summarize, over the course of history we have seen social, political, and

economic forces shape the meaning of citizenship to include or exclude historically

marginalized groups. Discourses, both throughout history and the present day, continue to

define and shape how we as a society understand citizenship. De Lissovoy (2008) and

Giroux (2009) argue that neoliberalism is a powerful discursive force that has shaped the

contemporary meaning of both society and schooling. Knight Abowitz and Harnish

(2006) add that the neoliberal structure of schools has also influenced citizenship and

citizenship education. The notion of liberalism prioritizes the rights of individuals over

collective rights while neoliberalism combines market liberal ideology and aggressive

individualism. Additionally, schools have adopted neoliberal conceptions of citizenship

and have become factories for producing workers. Capitalist and neoliberal policies have

created the conditions that have turned schools into factories that produce human capital (McLaren, 2005). Schools reinforce the capitalist structure by reinforcing capitalist ideology and practices as well as producing efficient workers to be exploited.

As a result of the growing urban population and the rise of industry, bureaucratized schooling became an urban and social economic necessity. According to Tyack (1974), at the turn of the last century Americans began to view schooling as a way to "transform pre-industrial culture-values and attitudes, work habits, time orientation even recreations of citizens in a modernizing society" (p. 29). Therefore, it was up to the schools to teach students how to be good workers in the new manufacturing society. Schools were designed and run similar to factories that prioritized "order, regularity, industry and temperance", and to "obey and respect their superiors…following an exact schedule and military routine" (Tyack, 1974, p. 72). Since America was in need of industrial workers, schools were designed to teach students the attributes they would need in a factory environment (Anyon, 1981; Tyack, 1974)

An assimilationist concept of citizenship and schooling has existed throughout much of American history (Banks, 2004; Cornbleth, 1998; Gordon, 1964; Suraez-Orozco & Suraez-Orozco, 2001; Tyack, 1974). It was believed that the purpose of schooling in the early twentieth century was to reeducate individuals into the dominant mainstream culture and force immigrants and non-White individuals to give up their ethnic identity and culture in order to gain citizenship status and membership (Banks, 2008; Park & Burgess, 1921; Tyack, 1974). Assimilation was a precondition for success in schools. A

look at the history of schooling has shown us that schooling was used as a way to "Americanize" and essentially strip immigrant and non-White students of their language and culture in an effort to turn them into "American citizens".

The process of the Americanization of marginalized student populations was a complex process, but teachers were aggressive in their approach to assimilation and demanded complete conformity to the American culture. San Miguel and Valencia (1998) wrote that Americanization was a political movement that compelled immigrants to adopt certain "Anglo-American" ways while they remained at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder of American society (p. 358). The Americanization of non-Whites consisted of teaching English while punishing students for using their native language as well as assaulting all forms of cultural differences (Adams, 1988; San Miguel & Valencia, 1998; Tyack, 1974). Teachers in Native American boarding schools consistently commented on the "otherness" of Native Americans and how they must shun their customs and culture to be brought into mainstream White society (Adams, 1988). Textbooks insulted a variety of different ethnic groups and blatantly pointed out stereotypical differences between racial groups while always stressing the preferred "American standard". Native American education focused on the Protestant Ideology of "Protestantism, capitalism (individualism), and republicanism" (Adams, 1988). Teachers taught students the importance of the individual rather than the Native American value in the community ("I" instead of "we") and were punished and criticized for not adhering to that ideology.

African American education after the civil war involved teaching Blacks to become second-class citizens in the new industrialized social order. Education historian James Anderson (1988) wrote that an educator stated that working class blacks "must be taught to work, to submit to authority, to respect their superiors… the saw and plane and the anvil must take the place of geography" (p. 85). African Americans needed to find a place in the new industrial economy and that place would be performing manual labor for a White overseer. In the discussion of African American education, one Virginia landowner asked "if we educate the Negro out of being a laborer, who is going to take his place" (Anderson, 1988, p. 96)? An important method society used to promote White supremacy in public schools was to give non-Whites a limited educational experience. African American abolitionist David Walker once expressed concern that Whites were conspiring to keep black children ignorant, to keep them from the advanced knowledge that they needed for their liberation (Mabee, 1968). Programs for taught African American youth to "work with their hands", "have few wants", and to stay in their "natural environment" (Anderson, 1988, p. 82). Rather than offer African Americans an education that would help them succeed and move up the social ladder, society continued to keep them uninformed as a way to control, handicap, and prevent them from competing with the status quo. Not only was it unnecessary for African Americans to have a traditional education because of their lack of intellect, but also low skilled workers were being exploited to benefit the White capitalistic economy.

It is important to note that while schools enforced assimilationist politics and discouraged the expression of home culture or language, that only *certain* immigrants and racial groups could *fully* assimilate into the American civic body politic (e.g. immigrants from Europe). While schools for African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinas/os, and Native Americans were based upon assimilationist goals and principles they were also premised on students learning their proper place in the American racial order. Those in power would never allow them to gain full citizenship rights and membership.

Even today schools continue to pressure students from different racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds to assimilate in order to successfully complete school. In her book on the politics of caring in the schooling of Mexican and Mexican American youth, Valenzuela (1999) found that schools continue to serve as institutions that were subtractive in nature, meaning that students were taught in a way that resulted in their loss of cultural and linguistic identities and affiliation with the Mexican culture and Spanish language. Schools are structured in ways that devalues the different cultural backgrounds, languages, and ways of knowing that students bring with them into schools.

Citizenship education in the social studies

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) emphasizes that "the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS, 1994). This national organization contends that an important focus of the social studies is teaching students to be well informed and

concerned with promoting the public good as future citizens of our democratic society. The social studies classroom is an important space where students learn what is citizenship, who can be a citizen, the rights given to citizens, and the responsibilities and duties of citizens.

While the NCSS has advocated the purpose of social studies being that students acquire the skills needed to make informed decisions as citizens in order to promote the public good, however there appears to be a disconnect between the NCSS message and what is actually occurring in social studies classrooms across the country in terms of preparing future citizens. Citizenship education in schools focuses on students' adopting a "blind patriotism" in addition to acquiring a common body of "official knowledge" (VanSledright, 2008) that is seen as "commonsensical knowledge that is accepted without questioning the source of the knowledge or asking whose knowledge is represented (Apple, 2004).

Citizenship education, in both elementary and secondary settings, continues to place emphasis on the transmission of American heritage (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994), loyalty to the nation state (Barton & Levstik, 2004), as well as highlighting "unity, consensus, and the responsibility to society" (Hahn, 2008). Hahn (2008) stated that social studies classes continue to limit citizenship and civic education to individual rights while neglecting to discuss the duties or responsibilities of citizens (Avery & Simmons, 2000/2001; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Civic republican discourses of citizenship create a singular civic identity with a common

body of civic knowledge as a way to promote unity, patriotism, and active participation in democratic activities.

Gutman (1987) referred to traditional democratic education as social reproduction: an opportunity to reproduce structures and norms that those in power deem essential. While citizenship education has been premised on all students acquiring a common body of political knowledge that unifies them as American citizens, the notion is problematic because White middle class cultural knowledge is synonymous with an "American identity" (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Additionally, this framework for viewing citizenship "does not acknowledge that the nation systematically violated people's rights, enslaved or expropriated people of color, or legally considered women to be second class citizens" (Epstein, 2009, pg. 8). Civic education has been reduced to the celebration of American heritage and a narrative that is absent of different voices, perspectives, or includes the struggles and triumphs groups have experienced to attain full citizenship. Instead, students are taught that our founding fathers bestowed citizenship rights to marginalized groups as a result of some moral imperative (Loewen, 2007). This uncritical and false narrative of history is taught to promote a sort of blinded patriotism and unfaltering civic allegiance (Barton & Levstik, 2004), but also to reinforce the White male power structure. While there is nothing wrong with allegiance or patriotism, dissonance occurs when groups are omitted or silenced in the historical narrative and students are taught a version of history that devalues the voices and contributions of historically marginalized groups.

According to Hahn (1999, 2002, 2008) most children are first exposed to civic ideals in elementary school social studies lessons on holidays (fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day), patriotic symbols (such as the flag, bald eagle, monuments), and our founding fathers (all of whom were wealthy White men). These lessons on symbols are an important part of citizenship training and are coupled with the performance rituals of citizenship such as the recitation of the pledge of allegiance (and the Texas pledge), the singing of the national anthem, and (in Texas schools) a moment of silence that oftentimes is presented as an opportunity to pray for our nation and its leaders. The symbols and performances of citizenship limits citizenship to recitation and blind allegiance without students developing the skills to think critically, question, or learn how to dialogue or deliberate, which are crucial skills needed to modern society.

Parker (2008) introduced two new stances of civic engagement: *democratic enlightenment* and *political engagement*. He stated,

> Political engagement refers to the action or participation dimension of democratic citizenship, from voting to campaigning, boycotting, and protesting. Democratic enlightenment refers to the knowledge and commitments that inform this engagement: for example, knowledge of the ideals of democratic living, the ability to discern just from unjust laws and actions, the commitment to fight civic inequality, and the ability and commitment to deliberate public policy in cooperation with disagreeable others. Without democratic enlightenment, participation cannot be trusted. (Parker, 2008, p. 68)

While schools tend to limit citizenship education to acquiring civic knowledge, students need certain tools that would allow them to become politically engaged citizens and

participate in the democratic process. Parker (2003, 2006, 2008) offered two kinds of classroom discussions that emphasize both democratic enlightenment and political engagement: Seminars and deliberations. He proposed,

> Seminars encourage students to see the world more deeply and clearly, thanks largely to the selection of the seminar's text and to multiple interpretations that are brought to bear by the various discussants. Deliberations encourage discussants to think together, with and across their differences, as do seminars, but now the discussion is aimed at deciding which course of action tot take to solve a shared problem. (Parker, 2008, p. 71)

Seminars and deliberations is a way for students to become informed on issues of importance and encouraged to view the issue through multiple perspectives. Additionally, they motivate students to have civil discussions with the purpose of understanding a text or deciding on a course of action. Parker argued that these are skills that are necessary for our modern citizenry.

Hess also promotes the use of discussion and deliberation in a classroom as a way to promote civic engagement (Hess, 2004; Parker & Hess, 2001) but she urges the incorporation of controversial issues into these discussions (Hess 2002, 2004, 2011; Hess & Avery, 2008). According to Hahn (1991) and Kahne, Rodriguez, Smith, & Thiede (2001) teachers rarely engage in classroom discussions concerning controversial issues for a variety of reasons (e.g. a lack of class time, knowledge of how to successfully facilitate the conversation, teacher's refusal to give up control of the classroom, or teacher fear of disrupting the class harmony). Hess (2002) contends that engaging in these types of discussions is beneficial for students because it can improve their critical

thinking and interpersonal skills as well as raise their interest and engagement in the political sphere.

Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh (2010) found that best practices in terms of civic education involved:

> …Civic role models, learning about problems in society, learning about ways to improve one's community, having service-learning experiences, being required to keep up with politics and government, being engaged in open classroom discussions, and studying topics about which the student cares, all promoted commitments to civic participation among high school students. (p. 145)

The approaches to citizenship education presented by Kahne and Middaugh (2010), Hess (2002, 2004), and Parker (2008) all involve student-to-student interaction as well as teaching students to dialogue and deliberate about issues they have chosen and are meaningful and relevant to their lives and their communities. However, the findings from Kahne and Middaugh's (2010) study suggest that students' access to the best practices in civic education is uneven. More specifically, they state that in California there was evidence that systemic inequalities existed and there were differences in access to high quality civic education by race and ethnicity. For example, African American students reported not having discussions of current events relevant to them, taking part in role-play or simulations, or feeling as though they had a voice in school or their classrooms. Latinas/os also reported having fewer opportunities for service learning or role-play and simulations. White students were more likely to have civically oriented government

classes and reported having a voice in their school and classrooms (Kahne & Middaugh, 2010).

Kahne and Middaugh's (2010) findings appeared to be congruent with the findings from Rubin's (2007) study on youth civic identity development. According to Rubin (2007) the sociocultural construction of citizenship and youth's civic identity are constructed through the lived experiences of individuals and their communities. Rubin found that the ideals and realities of citizenship depended upon youth's personal and community experiences as citizens. Some students experienced *congruence* in terms of citizenship, but others experienced a *disjuncture* between the ideals of the US and their experiences and that of their community (Rubin, 2007). She wrote,

> This examination of the experiences of youth, particularly youth from traditionally marginalized groups, reveals that civic identity is both locally constructed and situated amid larger structural inequalities. In this light, what has previously been described as "disengagement" in the civic education literature may actually, for marginalized students, be a rational response to the disjunctures they experience in a society that purports equality but delivers injustice. (p. 473-474)

Although historically marginalized students experienced disjunctures that were locally constructed and situated in structural inequities, the author did find that these urban youth of color expressed a sense of empowerment and desire to become actively involved in social change.

By focusing on blind patriotism, political knowledge, voting, and notions of personal responsibility, students miss the complexities of citizenship (Parker, 2003). It limits and narrows the understanding of citizenship as the basic rights and duties of a

single citizen. This implies that citizenship is an individual effort instead of viewing it as communal. The narratives that are taught in schools often lack a meaningful critical race or gendered analysis of the intersecting structural barriers that has prevented groups from attaining full citizenship (Bell, 1980, 1995; Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Yosso, 2002).

Towards a more inclusive construct of citizenship education

Parker (2003) implied that an important part of democratic citizenship involves embracing concepts of diversity and unity. However, Kymlicka and Norman (1994) asked the question, "can citizenship provide a common experience, identity, and allegiance for the members of society? Is it enough simply to include historically excluded groups on an equal basis, or are special measures sometimes required?" (p. 355). As citizens in a global society we must embrace notions of diversity and unity, but it is not enough to merely include differences in the curriculum and teach ideas of tolerance. We must do as Kymlicka and Norman (1994) propose and completely revise the current definition of citizenship (and how we teach about citizenship) to be more inclusive of the growing social, cultural, gendered, and economic pluralism of our modern society.

It is important to note what Bernard-Powers (2008) referred to as the 'paradox in citizenship education',

> With highly variable approaches to citizenship education, that take place informally (in cafeterias, hallways, sport centers, parking lots, websites, television, film, religious, organizations, neighborhood and families) there is significant learning about what it means to be an active citizen that takes place. There is a powerful, site variable, dynamic and difficult to define

citizenship education curriculum that develops, in addition to or in spite of school curricula. (p. 321)

Bernard-Powers recognizes that citizenship education takes place in multiple spaces (both inside and outside of school) and is shaped by multiple experiences and identities. Therefore, citizenship education must be changed to take this into account and find ways to make connections between the multiple definitions of citizenship that students are learning and enacting.

There has been cultural (Rosaldo 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997; Ong, 1996), feminist (Collins, 2009; Voet, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Zinn & Dill, 1999), and queer (Schmidt, 2013), discourses of citizenship that have been constructed as a result of unfulfilled promises by the nation state that has led to different forms of civic agency, identity, and membership. These shifts have merged with new notions of transnationalism and have led to new meanings of citizenship, in both practice and education. Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) argue that these new discourses of citizenship raise important questions in terms of "…identity (who we are as citizens), membership (who belongs, and the location of the boundaries), and agency (how we might best enact citizenship)" (p. 657). These are significant questions for teachers to consider: How do we teach citizenship in a way that validates and attends to different experiences and identities and creates a sense of belonging and unity?

Dilworth (2004, 2008) defined multicultural citizenship education as the communal task of teachers and students critically examining the curriculum, themselves,

and others through multiple perspectives. An important part of this framework is having students develop the capacity to view and understand the world from multiple historical, social, and political perspectives while recognizing the need for group action to extend justice and equality for all (Banks and Banks, 1997; Dilworth, 2008). Multicultural citizenship education involves helping student acquire the knowledge, skills, and values to succeed in an increasingly global society (Banks, 1997). This means redefining the traditionally "personally responsible" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) notions of citizenship (as voting, paying taxes, and obeying laws) and engaging in community building through dialogue and deliberation to solve political issues and social problems (Dilworth, 2008; Marri, 2005). More importantly, multicultural citizenship is an opportunity to fight assimilationist notions of citizenship and instead legitimize the rights of citizens to hold allegiances to both their cultural and political communities (Banks, 2008; Dilworth, 2008; Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997).

Ladson-Billings (2004) called for a "new citizenship" education that integrates social, cultural, political, and legal concerns into the classroom and curriculum. Pang and Gibson (2001) offer the following description on what it means to be a citizen in our pluralistic society;

> Understanding with it means to be a citizenry in a Constitution democracy- in a racialized society- challenges us all... Civic education with a view of social justice helps to uncover and confront the inconsistencies between the ideals of equality and pluralism, and lived experiences of many of its citizens. (Pang & Gibson, 2001, p. 37)

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I echo Pang and Gibson's vision of civic education and propose that social studies teachers incorporate notions of social justice as citizenship education into their classrooms. Teachers must teach students to recognize that structural issues exist in both the public and private spheres that can lead to oppression and the silencing of voices. It is important for teachers to view the act of teaching as political (Apple, 1992; Bartolome, 1994; Freire, 2007; McClaren, 2005) and that their decisions about what and how to teach has ramifications in terms of issues of power, representation, recognition, and how students view themselves as citizens of this nation. Bickmore (2008) wrote, "teachers' and students'/citizens' agency is shaped and constrained by the currents of power surrounding their social positions, identities, and contexts, as well as by their education" (p. 155). Rarely do teachers discuss the structures of racism, patriarchy, or heterosexism with students even though student's everyday lives, experiences, and identities are affected by these oppressive structures.

A social justice framework for citizenship education would promote notions of *critical patriotism* (Tillet, 2012) and teach students to hold the government accountable for failing to live up to its failing ideals of equality (Pang & Gibson, 2001). While patriotism is believed to be an essential component of citizenship, however it is also the duty of each and every citizen to individually and collectively question the actions and decisions of political leaders when it negatively affects groups or communities. Citizenship education must reject 'picture perfect' narratives of democracy and citizenship and instead, students need to learn the "messiness and difficulties of a

pluralistic democracy that does not currently work well for all citizens" (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Discussion and dissent are necessary components in the preparation of future citizens (Hess, 2004; Parker & Hess, 2001). It is the vital that it be the responsibility and duty of each citizen to participate in a democracy through multiple venues (protesting, marching, petitioning the government, or digitally in cyberspace). The task for social justice citizenship educators is to teach students to question and juxtapose different stories, narratives, and discourses that are privileged by social institutions. The role of our future citizens is to not only have the knowledge about history and procedural knowledge on how the government works, but more importantly how to express their opinion as the first step to enacting meaningful change (Bickmore, 2008).

Teaching citizenship as social justice involves giving "access… and transformation (building upon diverse students' and communities' distinctive dynamic and multidimensional cultural knowledge) to overcome inequities and build a new, inclusive social order" (Bickmore, 2008, p. 158). Teachers must recognize that students enter into the classroom with familial, cultural, and community knowledge about the present reality and the past that must be valued and incorporated into citizenship lessons and discussions. Therefore students' cultural and communal knowledge should be seen as a significant part of the citizen identity development for students.

Because civic education is considered the processes that affect a person's beliefs, commitments, and actions as members of their community, I consider civic education to be an integral part of citizenship education. Social justice citizenship also acknowledges

the reality that students can have dual citizenship or identify as citizens in multiple spaces (i.e. countries, or citizens of their cultural community and the nation state). Because cultural community citizenship is part of a person's identity as a citizen (see Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997; Spinner, 1984), social studies teachers need to be sure to teach multiple notions of citizenship to students.

Moreover, communal and social justice notions of citizenship must also include notions of community uplift and how students can work towards the betterment of their communities. Students are rarely aware of the structural policies and practices that exist that can negatively impact their community. Students ought to be made aware of these practices and learn how to take action. So often citizenship education and efforts to teach for social justice fall short because they fail to lead students to action. Bickmore (2008) acknowledged this and wrote,

> Democratic social justice describes behavior, not merely ideals or beliefs. Understanding, believing in, or even knowing how to achieve equity, freedom, or transparent decision-making is not sufficient to make them happen: They also require patterns of action/participation. (p. 155)

Well-meaning teachers often believe that teaching for social justice means teaching *about* social issues and inequities or teaching students awareness and tolerance. The purpose of a framework for social justice citizenship education is to inspire students, as future political citizens, to exercise their voice and take action to create a more equitable classroom, school, community, country, and world.

The reality is that this framework for citizenship and civic education largely takes place outside of the school in community-based organizations (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Historically in the African American community, churches and religious based groups have been the ones to preach and take action against moral injustices. Community organizations run by community members have also taken up the call for social justice and have provided urban minority youth a network and experiences to collectively engage in social justice work. Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) conducted a four-year study examining how through urban youth organizations young people experience "critical civic praxis" as a way to understand and work towards creating social change (p. 699). The youth centers in the study did this by having the youth engage in real-world issues that effected their everyday lives through dialogue and then helped them formulate strategies and solutions to the problems in their neighborhood and communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). While community spaces such as these are important in providing a space for youth to engage in praxis however, schools should also be incorporating the same type of civic practices and education into their content courses and curriculum. The social studies curriculum must be altered to allow for this type of civic praxis and engagement between students and their communities.

African American teachers as citizenship educators

While traditional schools have failed to incorporate notions of social justice in citizenship education, African American schools historically have been sites of critical civic praxis and Black women teachers have been the ones to facilitate this type of

learning. The history of African American schooling is filled with rich stories of teachers going above and beyond the call of duty to educate the future citizens and leaders of their communities. Although African Americans attended segregated schools afflicted with grossly inadequate facilities and resources, African American schools were remembered in the community for having an atmosphere of "support, encouragement, and rigid standards combined to enhance a students' self worth" (Walker, 1996, p. 3). Black teachers have historically played a significant role in the education and well being of the Black community. They were considered "agents of change" and remembered for their "mother-like or father-like behaviors" that were "well trained, dedicated, and demanding" (Walker, 1996, p. 3). Black teachers were known for taking a personal interest in their students, even if it mean spending their own money or time outside of the school day (Walker, 1996; 2001). To them, teaching was more than a job: it was a calling and a way to serve and uplift the African American community. African American teachers often believed that it was their responsibility to make sure that children "reached his or her highest potential" (Walker, 1996, p. 158). These teachers taught their students the importance of community, racial pride, and perseverance in the face of adversity as a result of growing up in a segregated world.

Although African Americans existed as second-class citizens, it was Black women teachers who were charged to educate Black students on how to be citizens in both the United States and the Black community. For example, Nannie Helen Burroughs was an educator, clubwoman, organizer, and leader in the African American community of

Washington D.C. at the turn of the last century (Harley, 1996; Murray, 2012). Burroughs created an alternative curriculum to uplift, educate, and inspire African American girls by teaching them a history where their ancestors and descendants were positively represented (Murray, 2012). She used the performance of a pageant to teach her students about the contributions of Africans and African Americans throughout history as a way for them to develop racial pride. *When Truth Gets a Hearing* was written by Burroughs and performed by her students four times between 1916 and 1930 (Murray, 2012). The aim of the pageant was to empower students by combining the past triumphs of Africans with the contemporary problems that African Americans faced in the United States (Murray, 2012). In addition to showcasing the contributions of Africans/African Americans throughout history, she also reconceptualized the role and representation of Black women in history. She highlighted the stories of Black women leaders throughout world history and their many contributions. Black women were also portrayed as valuable laborers in both the public and private spheres. The pageant was an attempt to challenge the negative representation of African Americans women as non-citizens and instead demonstrate how they were instrumental in the American citizenship narrative.

Septima Clark was another African American educator and civil rights advocate that is often overlooked in American history. Scholars often refer to Clark as the "mother of the civil rights movement" (Tyson & Park, 2008). September Clark was a teacher, activist, leader, and member of the NAACP. Because of her membership and work combating segregation in her community, she was forced to end her forty-year career as a

public educator. She was later offered full time employment as the Director of Workshops at the Highlander Folk School (Rouse, 2001). But Septima Clark is most known for establishing "Citizenship Schools" which not only taught students the knowledge needed to register to vote, but also trained students how to become local leaders in the civil rights movement. The citizenship school curriculum included how to register to vote as well as acquiring literacy skills. Clark believed that citizenship training was crucial to empowering both African American women and men. Clark designed the schools to utilized teachers from the community to teach others the skills they needed to survive and participate in the democratic process. She recognized that illiteracy was condemning many African Americans to a lifetime of sharecropping and poverty that stemmed from slavery. The citizenship schools attempted to disrupt this cycle of poverty by having caring people from the community teach literacy and leadership skills that would empower members to help uplift their communities. Clark believed that gaining literacy skills and understanding what it meant to be a citizen would lead to the liberation for African Americans (Rouse, 2001).

According to Rouse (2001), Clark is not widely recognized as a "leader" in the movement because women's activities did not fit the traditional definition of "leadership". Instead, her work and contributions were viewed as "supportive" of the leadership provided by the men. Septima Clark was also vocal in speaking out against the patriarchal structure in civil rights organizations that neglected the voices of women. She often protested that women were ignored, lacked any kind of voice, and overlooked for

leadership positions. Clark (1978/1990) later wrote, "I see this as one of the weakness of the civil rights movement, the way the men looked at women… I found all over the South that whatever the man said had to be right" (p. 79-80). Clark fought for the empowerment and uplift of the Black community, but also the public representation of women within civil rights organizations.

Though these two women lived and taught in different time periods and geographic locations in the United States, they utilized their positions as teachers (coupled with their history of community activism) to uplift African Americans and empower Black women. Both women found ways to teach their students to recognize and challenge structural issues and inequities (Burroughs through the performance of the pageant and Clark via citizenship schools). They also understood the importance of highlighting the voices, histories, and contributions of African American women.

Contemporary practices of African American women teachers

In the present day while there is a noticeable absence of African American women teachers represented in the field, the existing research literature on their practices is truly remarkable. The current literature shows that contemporary African American women teachers share many of the same views and practices of teaching and uplift as their predecessors such as Nannie Helen Burroughs and Septima Clark. In their study on African American women teachers Dixon and Dingus (2008) found that the teachers in their study viewed the profession as "more than just a job" and described teaching as "empowering" and "life-altering work". The literature also finds that Black women

teachers view teaching as a spiritual endeavor (Dixon & Dingus, 2008) or a "sacred calling" (Irvine, 1999) and therefore felt as if they had an obligation to treat children, families, and communities with the highest amount of respect and humanity. As Dixon and Dingus recalled, "teaching provided the opportunity to heal souls, imparting encouraging words for spirits wounded by racial discrimination, poverty, and miseducation across generations" (p. 827).

Several scholars have documented the practice of African American women viewing themselves as "othermothers" (Casey, 1993; Collins, 2009; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Irvine, 1999). These are women who feel they have a shared responsibility in the social and emotional development of all children in a community (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Collins, 2009). "Othermothering" has been a strategy Black women have drawn on to help other women and children survive a history of physical, emotional, economic, and political oppression (Collins, 2009). Irvine (1999) reported that "othermothering" involved essentially "adopting" all students and treating them as they were your own. The practice of caring often played a significant part in their roles as "othermothers". Irvine (1999) described the teachers in her study as, "mission-driven spiritually grounded, African American teachers" who were characterized by students as "…strong, yet compassionate disciplinarians who were often revered by their students" (p. 251).

Scholars have also report that African American women teachers view teaching as a way to not only serve their community, but lead to the uplift of African Americans

(Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Walker, 2001). Beverly Gordon (1985) wrote the following of the contributions of African American teachers:

> African American cultural knowledge itself can be uniquely emancipatory for African Americans- because it is born out of the African American community's historic common struggle and resistance against the various oppressive effects of capitalism and racism which have kept them in a subordinate position in American position. (Gordon, 1985, p. 7)

The work of Black teachers in uplifting the Black community is, as Dixon and Dingus (2008) argue, "a continuation of the legacy of Black womanhood" (p. 818). This is an extension of the historic practices of African American women working to improve their communities and be recognized as American citizens.

Keeping with the tradition of racial uplift Black teachers believed there to be an activist component to teaching. The literature demonstrates that African American womanist teachers engage students in a curriculum that emphasizes social justice and wages daily wars in an effort to combat and dismantle racist beliefs imposed on children (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008). Dixon and Dingus also found that a number of teachers participated in protests in the outside the school community. African American teachers in the literature understand the political nature of teaching and were not limited by the assigned curriculum. They found ways to circumvent and include lessons that would lead to the development of an intelligent and critical citizenry who were committed to their community.

Because African American women teachers collectively come from a rich tradition of teaching, it is disconcerting that they are underrepresented in the social

studies literature. This is problematic because issues of injustice are often seen as important to teachers of color and they will often make an effort to legitimize the knowledge and experiences of their students (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005). Researchers have documented the many ways that teachers of color are able to mirror family and community practices in an effort to make connections between student's home lives and the school culture/community (see Howard, 2002; Salinas & Castro, 2010; Villegas, 1998;). They also have the ability to act as cultural mediators/brokers between the school and the parents of students of color (Villegas, 1998; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). This allows for increased communication and participation between teachers and parents in the education of their children. These teachers have also been known to use their personal histories and weave them into the curriculum (see Salinas & Castro, 2010) as a means of challenging the dominant historical narrative and validating their experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how African American women social studies teachers conceptualized and taught the notion of citizenship. While plagued with a collective history of civic estrangement in terms of identities as citizens (Tillet, 2012), this study signifies the importance of how African American women understands the many complexity of citizenship and teaches it to their students. I argue that as a result of their multiple intersecting identities, they chose to utilize a critical approach to citizenship that counters traditional understandings of citizenship. By studying African American women, I seek to shed light on how multiple intersecting identities (and the experiences that arise from such identities) positively influence the many ways teachers conceptualize and teach critical social studies constructs. Additionally, this study illuminates how teachers are drawing on multiple sources of knowledge and ways of knowing in how they enact citizenship education. Finally, this study could help lead to a more inclusive understanding of citizenship that would begin to mirror the diversity seen in American classrooms.

This chapter will address the research design I used to answer the following research questions:

1. How do African American women conceptualize the notion of citizenship?

2. How do the intersections of their identities both influence and complicate how they understand and enact notions of citizenship in their social studies classrooms?

Because of the nature of these questions and the complexity of studying both intersectionality and citizenship, the constructivist paradigm framed this qualitative case study and research design (Merriam, 2009; Thomas, 2011). In this chapter I will cover the following topics: (1) research paradigm, (2) conceptual framework, (3) case study research methodology, (4) participants and school context, (5) data collection and issues of trustworthiness, (6) data analysis, (7) researcher positionality, and (8) pilot studies.

Research paradigm

Merriam (2009) wrote that qualitative research seeks to understand how people interpret and construct their worlds and what meanings they assign to their own experiences. This type of interpretive research operates under the assumption that an individual constructs reality and that there are multiple truths or interpretations of a single event. This view differs from the traditional positivist/post-positivist paradigm that aims to predict knowledge while the constructivist paradigm seeks to understand a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). This paradigm is based on the claim that knowledge and meanings are socially constructed by human beings as they interact with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1997). Crotty (1997) characterized ontology as the study of being. It is concerned with 'what is', with the nature of existence and the structure of reality.

Thomas (2011) made the following observation about knowledge and truth,

> … It is not simply 'out there'; it is different for each of us. It cannot therefore be adequately studied using the methods of the natural scientists, with talk of variables and quantification- a wholly different mindset and set of procedures is needed for inquiring into it. (p. 125)

A singular objective reality does not exist and it is the researcher's purpose to unearth meaning from multiple constructions of knowledge. Epistemology refers to the "nature of the relationship between the knower or would be knower and what can be known?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 201). The symbiotic relationship between the researcher, the participant, and the research allows for a more personal method of data collection. It is the role of the qualitative researcher to not find or discover knowledge, but to help construct it. Finally, Dezin and Lincoln (1994) described the work of a qualitative researcher as to "study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 2). This methodology allows the researcher to understand the meaning of a situation based on their personal experiences. Thomas (2011) contends, "… much can be gained as we add a separate viewpoint-one that moulds and melds the experiences of others through our own understandings" (p. 7). Qualitative research is a type of inquiry that is premised on a "transactional nature" between the researcher and the participant(s) that must "transform ignorance and misapprehensions (accepting historically mediated structures as immutable) into more informed consciousness (seeing how the structures might be changed and comprehending the actions required to effect change)" (Guba & Lincoln,

1998, p. 206). In qualitative research there is a dialogical interaction with the participant so they can play a part in the construction of knowledge based on their own reality.

While my work is constructivist in nature, I do find that it is better situated within the critical paradigm. The purpose of the critical paradigm is to critique, challenge, transform, and empower (Merriam, 2009). Crotty (1997) characterized this paradigm as

> A contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and research that challenges… between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression… between a research that accepts the status quo and a research that seeks to bring about change. (p. 113)

Critical research is rooted in the work of Karl Marx (Marx & Engeles, 1848/1992) and his analysis of the socioeconomic conditions and class structures that existed in Europe (Crotty, 1997; Merriam, 2009). In the field of education, critical research is also heavily influenced by the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and his work in transformative and emancipatory knowledge (Freire, 1970/2007). In his role as an educator teaching poor and illiterate Brazilians to read and write, he developed a system of teaching literacy that allowed students to "read the word and the world". This led to the emancipation of the community through their engagement in critical thinking (as a process of transformation), *praxis* (reflection and action), and developing a *conscientisation* (an awakening or increased consciousness) (Freire, 1970/2007). Emancipatory and transformative education allows for the humanization of marginalized communities, and represents a call for educators to teach their students the skills to think critically as part of the "quest for mutual humanization" (Freire, 1970/2007, p. 75).

Bartolome (1994) extended Freire's work and urged teachers to adopt a humanizing pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. Humanizing pedagogy involves the creation of a learning environment where the existing knowledge that minority and low socioeconomic students bring with them into the classroom is valued and utilized in their learning. Teachers play a crucial role as "cultural mentors" by not only teaching students about the dominant culture, knowledge, and discourses but more importantly in creating spaces of learning where students learn to empower themselves (Bartolome, 1994, p. 188). Through the use of humanizing pedagogy, teachers begin to create a learning environment based on the mutual respect for one another, dignity, safety, and self-empowerment.

Engaging in critical research allows multiple voices, experiences, and epistemologies to be represented in academic spaces. My position as a critical researcher gives me the opportunity to critique issues of power (i.e. who has it and what societal structures reinforce the distribution of power) that can disrupt, complicate, and inform the worldview and experiences of my research participants. As a teacher researcher I consider myself to be a "passionate participant" (Lincoln, 1991): engaged in the process of facilitating a reconstruction of the multiple voices and perspectives of participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Lather (1986, 1991) reminds us that research should inspire people to both change and better understand the world and those who are in it. She wrote,

> For praxis to be possible, not only must theory illuminate the lived experience of progressive social groups; it must also be illuminated by their struggles. Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be

open-ended, nondogmatic, informing, and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life; and, moreover, it must be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed. (Lather, 1986, p. 262)

Feminist research is situated within the critical paradigm and represents a view of the world where "gender is the categorical center of inquiry and the research process… feminist researchers use gender as a lens through which to focus on social issues" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 3). Research is considered "feminist" when it is grounded in a theoretical tradition that privileges women's issues, voices, and lived experiences. Feminist research is meant to counter a global system of knowledge production that has been dominated by western and masculinist research methods. Western methods historically have been imperialistic in nature and have resulted in the reproduction of colonizing ideologies and perspectives that has silenced marginalized populations (Napes & Gurr, 2014; Smith, 2002). Feminist research does not aim to "correct" or "supplement" existing research by including women. Instead, it is a paradigmatic shift in the way we conceptualize and perform research that gives attention to the lives and experiences of women.

While feminist research has attempted to explore the situated knowledge of women in an effort to challenge patriarchal views of reality and the world, it fails to document how the different tenets of a woman's identity could influence knowledge construction. Because I seek to work with African American women with different backgrounds and experiences, I needed a research paradigm that would attest to notions of intersectionality. According to Leith Mullings (2000), Black feminist research differs

from traditional feminist research because it is grounded in the distinctive intersections of race, class, and gender that materializes from the experiences of African American women in communities of resistance. This type of research emphasizes the collaboration between the researcher and the participants in brining the experiences of Black women to the forefront. Black feminist research also requires the researcher to be cognizant of the long history of oppression and resistance experienced by the African American community. This is done partly to protect against further oppression, but also so that the experiences of the research participants can be placed within the context of the community history. The researcher must not only be aware of such a history, but also mindful of it when conducting research and attempting to represent that community. Finally, this research should inspire praxis and lead to the empowerment of both women and their communities (Mullings, 2000).

Conceptual framework

My dissertation research utilized several important bodies of research and knowledge in the formation of my conceptual framework. In the previous chapter, I reviewed the major theoretical underpinnings of citizenship, intersectionality, citizenship education, African American women teachers, and new ways of thinking about citizenship in the social studies. I will now combine that literature and explore how those individual components provided a theoretical lens for the framing of this dissertation study. Maxwell (2005) defined a theoretical framework as "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your

research" (p. 33). A theoretical lens allows the researcher to focus on specific pieces of the data that helps enlighten and reinterpret notions of both the occurrence in the study and the theories the researcher used to make sense of the phenomenon.

Three bodies of research helped inform my study's conceptual framework: (1) Black feminist thought and the importance of African American women's epistemological standpoint, (2) the multiple intersections of a person's identity (I will focus on the intersection of race and gender), and (3) lived experiences as valid sources of knowledge that can help inform how teachers understand and teach critical social studies constructs.

FIGURE 1

Black feminist thought

- Knowledge is created through differing standpoints

- Black women define their own reality
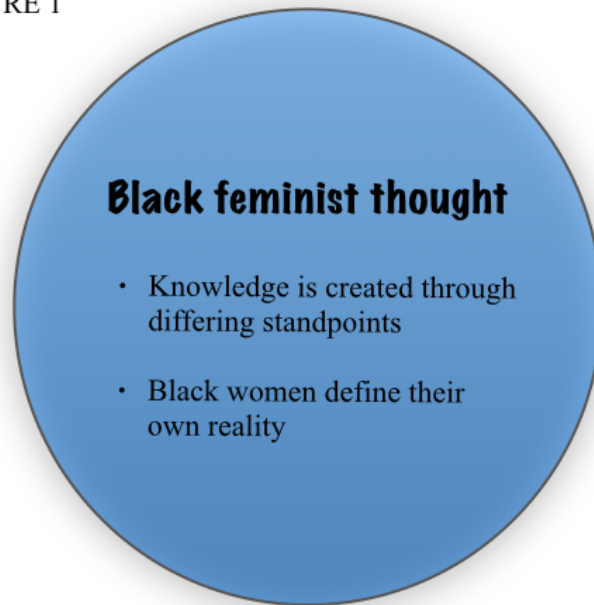
Black feminist thought comes from the feminist body of work on standpoint theory. Standpoint theory has been described as an interpretive framework "dedicated to explicating how knowledge remains central to maintaining and changing unjust systems of power" (Collins, 1997, p. 375). Black feminism was created in an attempt to

reconceptualize ways of knowing, producing, and validating knowledge (Collins, 2009; Napes & Gurr, 2014). This worldview has been shaped by two central understandings: that knowledge is situated and perspectival and that there are multiple standpoints from which knowledge is produced (Harstock, 1981). Standpoint theory is rooted in the Marxist idea that an individual's lived experience structures their understanding of their social environment (Hesse-Biber, 2013). It is believed that by placing value on those who are victimized by oppression, the voices of the oppressed will be integrated into mainstream dialogue. Standpoint theory argues that as a result of relations of dominance and subordination, marginalized populations develop a perspective of life in the United States that differs from that of men and middle and upper income Americans (Collins, 2009). Napes and Gurr (2014) referred to this as a "double vision" that allows marginalized groups to understand various social contexts because they not only experience their own realities, but also witness others through their interaction with dominant groups.

Patricia Hill Collins (1997, 2009, 2013) expanded upon standpoint theory and applied it specifically to the experiences of African American women. Black feminist thought offers many important contributions towards extending our understanding of the connections between knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. This framework addresses the ongoing feminist epistemological debate concerning ways of assessing "truth". She argued that revealing new forms of knowledge allows subordinate groups to define their own realities and determine their own truths.

Additionally, Black feminism empowers historically oppressed groups by allowing them to define their own realities and placing value on their knowledge and experiences. Collins (2009) wrote,

> Black feminist thought cannot challenge race, gender, and class oppression without empowering African American women. Oppressed people resist by identifying themselves as subjects, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story. (p. 34)

Historically, those in power have made attempts to suppress the knowledge produced by oppressed groups as a way to subjugate entire communities and bodies of knowledge in order to reinforce a hierarchal social structure (Fannon, 1952/2008; Freire, 1970/2007; Mohanty, 2003). Black feminism places the experiences and knowledge of Black women at the forefront and allows them the opportunity to define their own realities.

It is important to note that a fundamental principle in standpoint theory is that groups have shared histories based on their similar social locations (in terms of relations of power). Standpoint is constructed through historically shared group-based experiences (Collins, 1997, 2000; Napes & Gurr, 2014). For that reason it is important to understand that not all individuals within the group have the same experiences and we cannot interpret them that way. Collins (2009) contents that using the collective group [African American women] as a point of focus provides a space to account for individual agency.

FIGURE 2
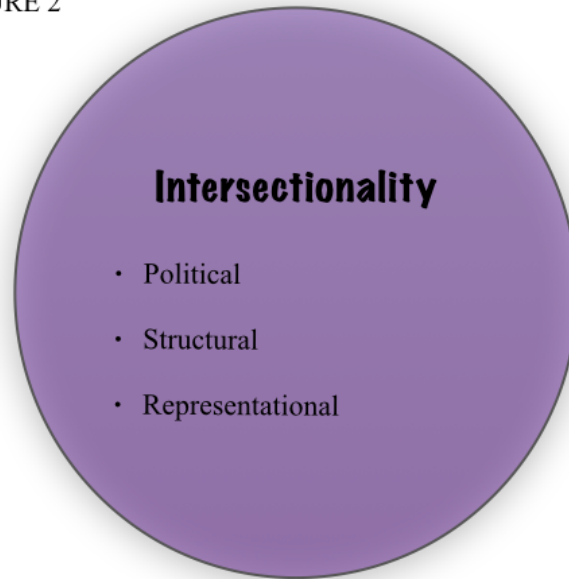
Intersectionality

- Political
- Structural
- Representational

Black feminist thought represents a paradigmatic shift in how we conceptualize oppression. Collins (2009) argued that we must adopt a worldview that views race, class, and gender as three interlocking systems of oppression. There have been many documented instances throughout history of African American women articulating the experience of being both African American and woman and society's failure to recognize the interlocking oppressions Black women face (see Beverly Guy-Sheftall, 1995). Legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) has written extensively about intersectionality of identities and oppressions in the legal and political realm. Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions such as race, class, gender, and sexuality. Collins (2009) wrote the following about intersectionality for African American women:

> Instead of starting with gender and then adding in other variables such as age, sexual orientation, race, social class, and religion, Black feminist thought sees these distinctive systems of oppression as being part of one overarching structure of domination. (p. 222)

She used the term *matrix of domination* to understand how these intersecting oppressions are organized in particular ways that reinforces structural oppression and hegemony in multiple ways and spaces. For example schools, housing, higher education, and the government are all spaces and institutions where Black women have been subjected to multiple forms of oppression on account of the intersections of their identities.

Crenshaw (1991) reported three different dimensions of intersectionality that could account for the experiences of women of color. *Structural intersectionality* recognizes that women of color have social locations (e.g. race and gender) that intersect and causes qualitatively different experiences for different groups of women. *Political intersectionality* challenges the notion that women of color must choose one tenet of their identity and political agenda over the other in representational politics. For example, Crenshaw (1991) used the example of African American women being forced to choose racial over gender politics while working in civil rights and women's organizations. *Representational intersectionality* challenges the cultural representation of women of color in society. This has included Black women (both in the past and present) working to disrupt negative representation of African Americans, women, and African American women. Not only do African American women attempt to eliminate these negative images but to redefine Black womanhood.

FIGURE 3

Experience

· How subjects are constructed
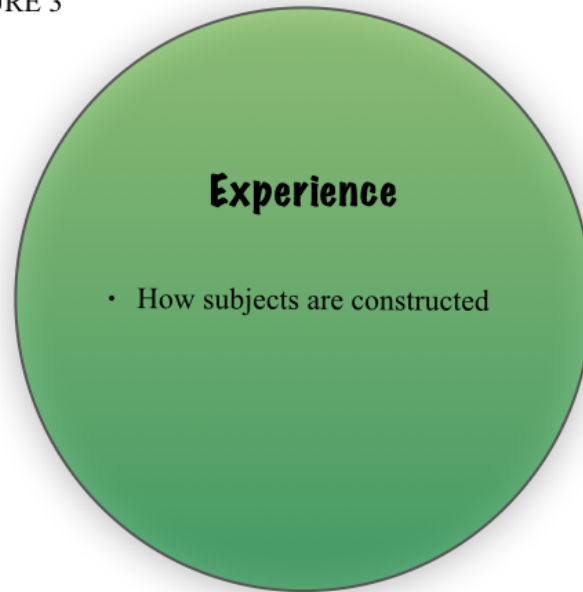
Raymond Williams (1985) used the term *experience* to refer to the knowledge gathered from past events, whether by conscious observation or by reflection. Knowledge develops in a complicated and sometimes contradictory way as a result of lived experiences and the sociohistorical/sociopolitical contexts (Napes & Gurr, 2014; Scott, 1991). Scott (1991) wrote, "experience can both confirm what is already known (we see what we have learned to see) and upset what has been taken for granted... Experience is a subject's history" (p. 793). Moreover, experiences, along with the constructed views of the world, can also make visible the existence of repressive mechanism.

By using the framework of intersectionality, African American women are given the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences that stems from the unique intersections of their race and gender. Because African American women have historically suffered oppression on account of intersectionality, their experiences, voices, and ways of knowing have remained hidden throughout history. The voices and actions of

African American women have taught us that their experiences (in the past and present) continues to shape how they construct knowledge and view the world.

Scott (1991) advocates for the uncovering of silenced histories of women because they can reveal that the lived experiences of women were full of acts of resistance and consciousness raising. Collins (2009) rightfully asked for us to consider, "how have African American women as a group found the strength to oppose our objectification as "de mule uh de world?" (p. 92). Collins was referencing the work of Zora Neele Hurston (1937/2006) and her analysis of Black women as the "de mule uh de world". Hurston was speaking to the collective experience of Black women being used, abused, and for being everyone to everybody (Bethel, 1982; Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011). A number of Black feminist and womanist scholars have used the work of Hurston (and countless other Black women writers) to understand how experiences of struggle created the conditions for Black women to engage in acts of survival as a form of resistance (Bethel, 1982; Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011; Walker, 1983). As Scott (1991) reminds us, "subjects do have agency. They are not unified, autonomous individuals exercising free will, but rather subjects whose agency is created through situations and statuses conferred on them" (p. 783). Therefore, the many experiences of African American women have shaped their epistemological standpoint and has allowed them to embody a sense of agency and activism.

FIGURE 4
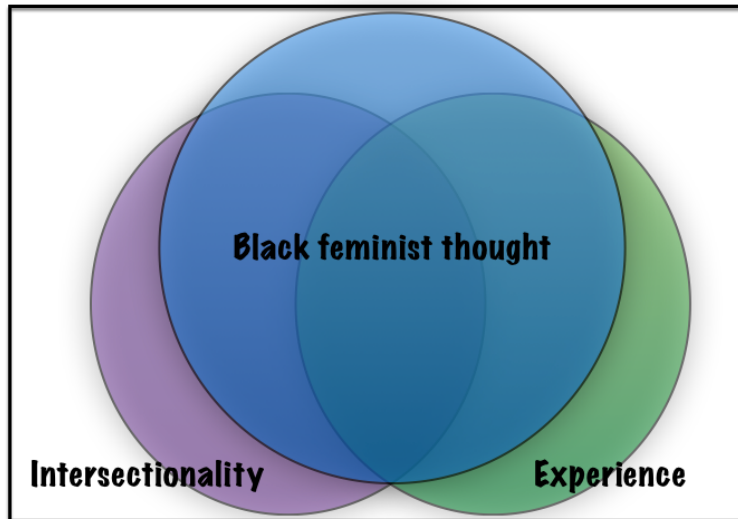
Black feminist thought allows us to understand how the experiences of African American women, along with the multiple intersections of their identities, have helped shape how they view, understand, and interact with the world around them. This is especially true for teachers. Because social studies teachers are charged with helping prepare future citizens in our democratic society, it is imperative that we seek to understand the ways in which their intersecting identities impacts how they conceptualize and teach the notion of citizenship. Because African American women collectively experience/have experienced structural oppression in multiple ways and those experiences impact how they view the world, I make the case that they will teach citizenship in ways that best align with their experiential knowledge.

Case study research methodology

This dissertation study was conducted using case study research methodologies in examining the knowledge and experiences of African American women social studies teachers. The Black women social studies teachers teaching notions of citizenship at

Downton High School served as my bounded system. Cresswell (2007) elaborates on what constitutes a case study by defining it as follows:

> …The investigator explores a bounded system (*a case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. (p. 73)

Case study allows the researcher the opportunity to vigorously explore the cases using multiple sources of data as a way to fully understand a moment, occurrence, or phenomenon. Shields (2007) argued the following of the importance of qualitative case study research:

> The strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference-ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically- and most importantly, humanly. They do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be discounted. They do not attempt to simplify what cannot be simplified. (p. 13)

The researcher is given the opportunity to focus on a single instance where much can be learned about a case through the use of rich, colorful, and thick descriptions for the reader to enjoy (Merriam, 2009). While case study research does not have specific research methodologies (Merriam, 2009; Thomas, 2011), the researcher has the freedom to adopt multiple approaches, tools, and sources of information (based on the research questions) to successfully study and report on a case.

I conducted a multiple case study (Merriam, 2009; Thomas, 2011) on how three African American women social studies teachers understood and taught citizenship based on the intersection of their identities. I wanted to conduct a multiple case study because it

gave me the opportunity to engage in a cross-case analysis about the practices of these teachers.

Recruitment and selection of participants

I wanted to work with African American women teachers in part because of my own positionality as a biracial/bicultural woman. But more importantly, I was inspired to do this work because of two extraordinary African American women whom served as my colleagues, friends, and models of exemplar teachers during my four years as a middle school teacher. I watched day in and day out how these women reasserted different voices and perspectives into their curriculum in order to show the complexity and diversity of the American experience. These women were active members of their school and surrounding community. Whether they were helping coach the neighborhood track team or sing in their church choir, they were always around students and helping others. Moreover, these women demanded excellence from every single student and had the gift in being able to connect with students, even those who had been beaten down by the school system. I had seen many times when these teachers were able to help uplift students and make them realize their own self worth.

The selection of a sampling of participants was initially problematic due to the sheer scarcity of African American social studies teachers in my immediate vicinity. Therefore, I traveled nearly 200 miles to a suburban city to find a majority African American school district that had an ample number of prospective participants. Once I found my ideal district, I utilized snowball-sampling methods to locate possible

participants to work with (Merriam, 2009). The school district representative I had been in communication with informed me that I would not be allowed to directly contact principals and ask permission to conduct research on their campuses. They put me into contact with the district human resource representative who would make inquires on my behalf. While I was uneasy with not being allowed to seek out participants for myself, the human resource representative was terribly kind and eager to help me locate participants for my study. She contacted every principal in the district and forwarded him or her a letter I had written detailing the study, who I needed, and what would be required of her. However, because it was the spring semester and standardized testing was occurring, only five school principals (out of 12 schools in the district) gave me permission to conduct research on their campuses.

Each principal gave me the name(s) of teachers who met the aforementioned criteria that I had provided in my letter. I had a list of eleven teachers to choose from to include in my study. But after I sent out personal emails to each teacher introducing myself and outlining my study, I only heard back from seven teachers. My next step was to visit the seven teachers at their school, but I was only able to meet with five teachers who agreed to participate in my study (despite several failed attempts). At last, I had five teachers (1st grade, two 9th grade, 11th grade, and 12th grade teachers) at two different schools and so I immediately started collecting data. I spent five days a week, eight hours a day at the schools for about six weeks. I spent most of my time in the high school classrooms because the first grade teacher only taught social studies two or three days a

week for the last 30 minutes of the school day. In the end, I purposely decided to use only three teachers (9th grade, 11th grade, and 12th grade) to serve as my cases.

Participants and school context

This research study occurred in the spring of 2014. The teachers highlighted in this study all taught in a suburban school district, located in a large state in the southwest United States. This study was conducted in Downton Independent School District (Downton ISD) (pseudonym), located in the suburb of Downton (pseudonym). This suburb was purposely selected because it is a majority-minority community with an administrative and teaching force that is predominately African American. In full disclosure, I must admit that Downton is my home community. I attended Downton schools from pre-kindergarten until I graduated from Downton high school (DHS) in 2004. To revisit Downton schools ten years later to conduct my dissertation research has meant so much to me. Downton was where I first began my educational journey as a student, and in some ways it will end here.

Downton is a small suburb located twelve miles south of a major metropolitan city in the southwestern United States. In the last three decades, Downton has experienced dramatic demographic changes. In the 1990 census Whites constituted 75.97% of the city's population, but that figure had declined to 48.83% by the 2000 census, and then 23.16% in 2010 (US Census Bureau, 2013). At the same time, African Americans went from 20.83% of the population in 1990 to 45.53% in 2000, and 68.60% in 2010 (US Census Bureau, 2013). Downton transitioned from being labeled "diverse"

in 2000 (with a population that was 55% non-White) to "predominately non-White" in 2010 (with an 83% non-White population) (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013).

As a result of the increased number of African American residents settling in the Downton community, Whites began to move out of the area. Downton was experiencing "White flight": the evacuation of White families as a result of the growing minority population in the suburbs. According to Downton's 2012 Academic Excellence Indicator System report, the school district had a total of 9,400 students: 78% African American, 16.4% Hispanic, 3.7% White, and 1% two or more races, 68.8% economically disadvantaged, 6% English language learners, and 36.7% deemed "at risk" (TEA, 2012).

Because of the rapid increase in racial and economic diversity, school officials were unprepared and did not know how to serve a majority-minority student body. Adam Strayhan (pseudonym) is a young African American attorney who attended Downton schools during this time period of rapid transition. Mr. Strayhan was first elected to the Downton ISD school board in 2009 and currently serves as the school board President. He acknowledged that while Downton was experiencing racial and economic demographic changes, the school and community officials (who were predominately White) ignored the problem and failed to address the situation.

> I think the one thing we can't ignore and have to face upfront is the demographic make up of the school and the community. That is something that people were afraid to talk about for a long time because it is a sensitive topic and people were not willing to accept the fact that it happened…With the change of demographics we also had an income drop… So you had district leadership that had been in the "Old Downton" refusing to deal with the new change, and you had a school system trying

to perform like it did in the old system and the kids could not function in it. So you saw test scores and SAT scores decrease, college admissions decrease, and a tremendous amount of faculty and leadership turnover. You saw a whole litany of issues because of the racial and economic components. (Strayhan interview, 04/06/14)

As Mr. Strayhan had mentioned, Downton ISD experienced declining accountability scores over the past two decades. In the mid 1990s the district was rated "academically acceptable" by the state Education Agency (TEA, 2012), but was considered "recognized" from 1999 to 2002. From 2004 to 2009 it dropped down to "academically acceptable", and then up to "recognized" in 2010, but in 2011 it was back to "academically acceptable" (TEA, 2012). It is also important to note that Downton ISD has had five different superintendents/interim superintendents in the last fifteen years. While high teacher and administrative turnover is considered common for urban/ minority-majority schools, scholars have acknowledged that it could be a possible reason for poor school and district performance on standardized tests (Carter, 2013; Eaton, 2007).

In 2009 Downton community members began becoming more and more active in Downton schools. Several African American community members (and DHS graduates) moved back to Downton and ran for community and school district leadership positions or started volunteering in schools. Strahan believed that the Downton community wanted more for their kids and therefore, took a more active role in their education. The newly elected Downton officials decided to take a new approach in the education of their students. In 2011 Donwton ISD broke ground on the $20 million dollar high school

expansion adding 165,000 square feet of classrooms and practical learning areas to the campus (Strayhan interview, 04/06/14). This new addition was named the *Downton High School College and Career Academies* and gives students the opportunity to earn college credit and an associate's degree without losing the traditional high school experience. Around the same time district officials also created a magnet program at DHS and implemented S.T.E.A.M (Science, technology, engineering, art, and math) programs at the middle school level (Strayhan interview, 04/06/14). According to Strayhan, all of the innovative changes in Downton ISD was aimed at giving Downton students more opportunities to explore their options and equip them with the skills needed for success.

All of the participants included in this research study taught at Downton High School. I will describe the participants below, although more specific information will be given in *Chapters Four, Five, and Six*.

Lexi Harper.

Lexi Harper (pseudonym) is a young African American woman who has served as a teacher at DHS for seven years. At the time of this study, she taught economics and Advanced Placement micro/macro economics to high school seniors. In addition to her teaching duties she also served as the head girls soccer coach and one of the senior class sponsors. What is unique about Ms. Harper is that she was a 1999 graduate of DHS and is currently an active member of the Downton community. After her high school graduation Ms. Harper attended a large state university and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in both Economics and Government and also completed secondary social studies teacher

certification. She admitted that returning to Downton to teach was not necessarily intentional. After she graduated from college she began substitute teaching in Downton and learned that her former coach and mentor at Downton was retiring. Her mentor mentioned that she had a job for Ms. Harper if she wanted it, and Ms. Harper accepted. A few years ago Ms. Harper earned her graduate degree in Education Administration and is considering becoming an administrator.

The first time I met Ms. Harper it was 7:40 in the morning and she was sitting on top of a student desk in her soccer attire, attempting to explain to her first period economics class the importance of loanable funds (Harper classroom observation, 03/27/14). When you enter into Ms. Harper's classroom you get a sense of warmth and community. Her room was decorated with a mixture of economics posters, inspirational quotes, and memorabilia from different universities. Her front White boards were filled with supply and demand charts alongside hundreds of photos of both current and former students. Her students were accustomed to visitors coming in and out of her classrooms, so my presence was hardly noticed. During my time with her I noted multiple students, former students, and community members visiting Ms. Harper and her students. Her door was always open and ready to greet new visitors with a smile and invitation to take a seat and join in her economics class.

Zabrina Ellison.

Zabrina Ellison (pseudonym) is a tall and very composed African American woman who had been a teacher in Downton schools for ten years. At the time of the

study, she taught 11th grade United States history and one section of world geography. Ms. Ellison also lived in the Downton community with her three children (who were in elementary, middle, and high school) who attended Downton schools. She was raised by her single mother, a military woman, and recalled frequently moving around the country. Ms. Ellison has a Bachelor of Arts degree in History, a Masters degree in Education Administration, and is currently working on a Doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Ms. Ellison's classroom had very much a "college going" atmosphere. She had college posters and books about different universities in various locations in her classroom. She had an entire White board dedicated to "community events" that listed the dates of school board meetings, AP tests, college entrance exams, a young men's leadership event being held at the school, and other events happening in Downton. She also had books and posters that celebrated cultural differences. For example, she had a poster hanging prominently in the front of the classroom that stated, "everyone is different, respect the differences". A poster of President Barrack Obama was also featured in the front of the classroom, close to the door. There were dozens of books all around the classroom with titles ranging from "The struggle for Black equality", "Black faces of war", "Black America", and "The Hispanic conditions: reflections on change and identity in America" (Ellison classroom observation, 03/27/14). She also had a number of historical primary sources taped on the wall with student work.

Regina Beason.

Regina Beason (pseudonym) had over twenty-five years of public school teaching experience. This was her fifth year teaching ninth grade world geography at DHS. While Mrs. Beason had spent only a short amount of time at DHS, she had been a member of the Downton community for nearly twenty years. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and a Masters degree in School Counseling. Prior to teaching at Downton, Mrs. Beason had served for fifteen years as a high school counselor and then lead counselor for a large metropolitan urban school district, twelve miles north of Downton. In this position she described her role as training counselors from over twenty district high schools, counseling students, and community outreach. Prior to becoming a high school counselor she taught middle school social studies in that same urban district.

My first impression of Mrs. Beason was that "she ran a tight ship" and "did not have time for foolishness" (Beason observation, 03/26/14). Mrs. Beason had a commanding presence and demanded excellence from each of her students. She believed in the importance of an education and did not let anything (or anyone) get in her way of providing that service to her students. Her room was simply decorated with student work and class projects. She had a few world maps covering one side of the wall and African masks on the other side (both student projects from the previous semester). Her desk was in the front-right corner of the room and she only used it when she needed to call parents to inform them of the poor choices their child was making. Other than that, I almost never

saw Mrs. Beason sit down because she spent the entire class period walking up and down the rows, assisting students, and teaching about the world.

Data collection and issues of trustworthiness

When engaging in feminist research, it is critical for us to consider how we can make sure that the meanings derived from the data and research site are accurate. Researchers within the positivist paradigm usually question the trustworthiness of qualitative research because positivist concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way. Nevertheless, because in qualitative research we have the possibility to misrepresent and abuse the realities and perspectives of marginalized populations, it is important for researchers to take the necessary steps to ensure reliability. Conducting case study research does have a few limitations and issues of reliability that must be addressed. A major concern for some is that in case study research the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. This could be problematic because the researcher must rely on their instincts throughout the research process, which could create a problem in terms of ethics (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, the researcher must be aware of their own biases that can affect both the research process and final product.

Guba and Lincoln (1985) proposed that qualitative researchers take necessary steps in order to conduct a trustworthy study. Credibility is the first criterion and the qualitative equivalent of validity. Credibility determines if there is a relationship between the way a participant sees social constructs and how the researcher represents their perspectives (Mertens, 2010). Peer debriefing is one way to build credibility in the

research findings because it forces the researcher to step out of the context of which they are studying and debrief with a colleague as a way to provide a sounding board for feedback. I engaged in peer debriefing several times throughout the research process. I found it helpful to seek insight from different colleagues and members of my dissertation committee about my research study.

Prolonged engagement was another way to build trust and offer some context during the research study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The participants in my study were observed consistently throughout the duration of my study. Because of the high school block schedule, combined with standardized testing and end of the year events, each teacher was observed two to three times a week for six weeks (at least 11 observations).

Transferability was achieved through the use of thick descriptions. Thick description takes the reader on a journey into the research setting by providing them with enough detail for the reader to be able to make connections between the research participants and their own lives (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). I provide thick descriptions as a way for the reader to understand how the teachers understood and taught notions of citizenship in their social studies classrooms.

Triangulation of multiple sources of data was used to corroborate findings. Qualitative research requires that the researcher use multiple sources of data in order to gain a correct understanding of the phenomenon that is being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Miles, Hubberman, & Saldaña, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In this study I used multiple sources of data including semi-

structured participant interviews, classroom and school observations, field notes, and classroom and school site artifacts.

Member checking was a critical part of the research process and another way for me to ensure trustworthiness. Member checking allows the participants the opportunity to have a say in the researcher's interpretations during the data collection/analysis process (Erlandson et. al, 1993; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Because I used feminist research methodologies, I made sure the participants had a voice and active part in the entire process. For example, the participants were given their interview transcripts, copies of observation field notes, as well as my initial findings to ensure that I had accurately represented their words and experiences.

Interviews.

Because the nature of qualitative research is to interpret a phenomenon, it is crucial that the researcher seek out the voice and opinions of the participants. deMarris (2004) defined an interview as "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (p. 55). The purpose of an interview is to find out a special kind of information about what a person is thinking or feeling. Merriam (2009) wrote that interviews are necessary since we cannot observe a person's feelings or how they interpret or understand the world around them. Additionally, interviews give us the opportunity to learn about the participant's past that the researcher would not be able to observe. In feminist research, interviews serve the purpose of "uncovering the subjugated knowledge of the diversity of women's realities

that often lie hidden and unarticulated" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 184). Interviews offer the

researcher a chance to explore issues that are important to women's lives, or are focused

on issues of social justice. Additionally, interviews seek to understand the "lived

experiences" of an individual and the knowledge they bring to a specific situation (Hesse-

Biber, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews offer more flexibility than structured interviews.

Merriam (2009) wrote that semi-structured interviews use questions that are either

flexibly worded or questions that are more or less structured. Hesse-Biber (2014)

described this as, "questions on-the-fly, throughout the interview" (p. 186). These

interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues that the researcher wishes to explore.

The worded questions or order are not necessarily planned ahead of time. Rather, they are

guided organically by the flow of the conversation. Hesse-Biber (2014) also noted that as

a researcher you still have an agenda and a list of questions/topics to cover, but there is

room for spontaneous questions based on the direction of the conversation.

For this dissertation project, I conducted five semi-structured interviews with each

participant. The first interview was informal and occurred prior to classroom

observations. In that initial interview, I asked the participants basic questions about their

background, what they teach, their students, and a little about their curriculum. The

remaining interviews occurred about once a week throughout the data collection process.

In those subsequent interviews we discussed the participants' childhood, how they came

to teaching, teaching experiences, their students, current events, and how they defined

and taught citizenship (see appendix for interview protocol).   The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and given back to the participants for member checking.

Classroom Observations.

In addition to interviews, field observations provided another rich source of data for this study. In order to attain credibility in this research, a prolonged engagement at the research site was needed in order to learn the culture of the social setting as well as provide an opportunity to build trust and rapport with my participants (Erlandson et. al., 1993). Stake (1995) wrote that observations permit the "personal capture of the experience [where researchers can] interpret it, recognize its contexts, puzzle the many meanings while still there, and pass along an experiential, naturalistic account" (p. 44). The work of a researcher is to reconstruct the constructions of the participants in a way that the reader can verify. This involves becoming the "eyes, ears, and perceptual senses for the reader" and making an effort to "step out of themselves so that they can view life through the eyes of the respondent" (Erlandson et. al, 1993, p. 25). The researcher must be descriptive so that the reader can fully understand what and how something happened. The use of rich and descriptive language was an opportunity to build transferability of the findings for the reader.

I conducted multiple classroom and school observations. Because I was in Downton for around six weeks, I was able to spend every day in the schools. While at the school I took detailed field notes documenting the activities of students and the teachers. I also documented the class and school culture and climate as well as the interactions

between the participants and the students. I also snapped pictures of student work and the physical classroom space. At the end of the school day, I took notes in my electronic journal about what I had observed that day and how it related to the participants constructions of citizenship.

Artifacts.

Multiple researchers agree that no single piece of data is enough to draw conclusions or make claims (Erlandson et. al, 1993; Merriam, 2009; Mertens, 2010; Stake, 1995). It is important for a researcher to collect and analyze multiple sources of data because they offer opportunities for thick description for the reader as well as helping to establish an audit trail to insure triangulation of research findings (Erlandson et. al, 1993). Triangulation helps establish credibility by using multiple sources of data methods to insure the researcher's meanings and conclusions are accurate (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). While qualitative researchers do not promise that observations or artifact analysis are free from their own judgment (Erlandson et. al., 1993), confirmability guarantees that the data and the researcher's interpretations did not come out of thin air. Instead, the data can be tracked to its source (Erlandson et. al., 1993) and the logic used to interpret the data is made explicit to the reader (Mertens, 2010). In addition to interview data and classroom observations, I gathered multiple artifacts from each classroom and the school such as student work, community event posters, teacher lesson plans, email correspondence, and pictures of classroom posters and realia.

Data analysis

108

Miles, Hubberman, and Saldaña (2013) suggest that data analysis should occur simultaneously with data collection. The process of data collection and analysis allows the researcher to go back and forth between thinking about the existing data and how to collect better data while still in the field. Analysis of the data occurred on a continuous basis during this dissertation study. One of the initial steps in the data analysis process is the creation of codes for the data that is collected as a way to summarize certain pieces of data (Miles, Huberman, Saldaña, 2013). The coding process often involves deep reflection, analysis, and interpretation of the meaning of the data. Saldaña (2013) defined codes as "… a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3) Coding is analysis and a way for the researcher to examine and make sense of the data by categorizing similar data that relates to the research questions, constructs from the research literature, and/or conceptual framework (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Codes are also used as a way to condense the data in a way that the researcher is able to retrieve the most significant data quickly.

The second step in data analysis involves grouping smaller pieces of data into patterns, categories, themes, or constructs. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) refer to this process as *pattern codes*. Pattern codes are important because they condense data into smaller units, allowing the researcher to engage in analysis, and can also lay the groundwork for a cross-case analysis by permitting the researcher to see common themes. Creating themes within each case requires the researcher to build triangulation across

multiple sources of data (e.g. interview transcripts, classroom observations, artifacts, etc) to determine which themes are noteworthy and related to the study's research questions (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995).

During the coding process, I first reviewed the data in its entirety without coding. I then examined the data a second and third time and began assigning codes to specific pieces of data. A fourth and fifth review was performed and it was then that I began to generate pattern codes/themes based on the codes (Creswell, 2007; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). I then used the codes to establish categories of meaning that appeared across the three cases and multiple sources of data (i.e. artifacts, interviews, observations). For example, when analyzing Ms. Harper's data she gave the following response when I asked how she incorporated notions of citizenship education into her senior economics class.

> When you said you wanted to study how I teach about citizenship I was really worried because I don't really talk about citizenship. I talk more in lines of the community and how you can be personally responsible to the community. I don't know if that makes sense. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

This piece of data was initially assigned the codes of "citizenship" and "community" (Vickery interview analysis, 08/17/14). It was later placed under the pattern codes/themes of "citizenship as community" and "traditional notions of citizenship-doesn't teach". The same process was repeated for each participant. I later found that the codes "citizenship" and "community" also appeared across Mrs. Beason's and Ms.

Ellison's data. This process not only allowed me to organize the data, but also perform a cross-cases analysis.

Cross-case analysis allows for a deeper understanding and explanation of a phenomenon. Merriam (2009) noted that cross-case analysis occurs in two phases. In the first phase the researcher analyzes each case separately. Then, the researcher synthesizes the analysis from each case. I approached cross-case analysis by studying each case separately and then looked for themes that cut across the three cases (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Conducting a cross-case analysis of the data "enhances generalizability or transferability across other contexts" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). While some scholars would argue that generalizability or transferability is neither applicable nor appropriate for qualitative studies, the question may arise when a researcher defends their work and their findings. Therefore, I also utilized Yin's (2003) guidelines for high quality case study analysis: I analyzed and coded each piece of evidence collected before themes were assigned, I considered multiple explanations for the findings, and my own knowledge and experiences were used in the analysis of the data.

Researcher Positionality

As a feminist and qualitative researcher, the purpose of my research is to work with communities to engage in social transformation and community uplift. This involves working in close proximity with historically marginalized communities and populations. For those reasons, it is crucial that I engage in the practice of reflexivity as a way to

understand how the intersections of my identities (along with the knowledge that arises from my experiences) can influence my research and relationships with participants and research sites (Hesse-Biber, 2014). James Banks (1998) argued that the journeys of researchers greatly influence their values, research questions, and the knowledge they build. I am a biracial woman of color and a former middle school social studies teacher. The multiple intersections of my identities have, at times, enabled me to experience both privilege and oppression at different times and spaces throughout my lifetime.

Flores (2001) argued that as educators we cannot separate ourselves as social beings from our own beliefs since knowledge construction occurs within varying sociocultural contexts. We derive meaning from situations based on our own histories, experiences, and beliefs. Feminist research is grounded in the theoretical tradition that, according to Hesse-Biber (2014), "privileges women's issues, voices, and lived experiences" (p. 3). My decision to situate my research in feminist epistemologies and methodologies is based on Kenway and Modra (1992)'s stance that

> Feminism is premised on the recognition that gender is a phenomenon which helps to shape our society. Feminists believe that women are located unequally in the social formation and are often devalued, exploited and subjugated. Education systems, the knowledge which they offer and the practices which constitute them, are seen to be complicit in this. (p. 139)

As a former public school teacher, I have witnessed the school system marginalize certain student voices, bodies, and experiences in an attempt to maintain the existing power structure. As a teacher, I myself have experienced role entrapment as a woman of color

112

(Madsen & Mabokela, 2000) and have been silenced and ignored by my fellow teachers and school administrators. It is for those reasons that I use my research as an opportunity to explore the multiple ways in which teachers have successfully challenged these oppressive practices and use their social studies classroom as a space of community and resistance.

With that said, I am concerned about my position as a researcher and my ability to engage in this type of research in communities of color. My gender, mixed race heritage, and socialization in a White and African American household all interact in complex ways that makes me feel like an "outsider-within" (Banks, 1998; Collins, 2009) in the ways that I experience and interpret reality. I am also uncomfortable with my position of power as a researcher writing and publishing my interpretations of my African American participants and communities.

Historically marginalized communities have had a tremulous history with researchers misrepresenting their knowledge, experiences, and histories. I struggle with issues of representation in the academy and the risk of the investigator presenting themselves as an authoritative representative of the subaltern consciousness. Villenas (1996) compared researchers to colonizers when they fail to question their identities and positions of privilege and how their writing could perpetuate "othering" and deficit thinking, "by objectifying the subjectivities of the researcher, by assuming authority, and by not questioning their own privileged positions, ethnographers have participated as colonizers of the researched" (p. 713). Those who engage in feminist and social justice

research must not only be aware of this troubling history, but also actively combat colonizing practices and work towards community uplift.

Pilot Studies

My initial interest in exploring teacher's notions of citizenship first began when I was a second year social studies teacher, which coincided with my first year in graduate school. My experience as a social studies teacher involved my ability to navigate being one of the few teachers of color teaching in a predominately low-income and majority-minority school. As a woman and teacher of color, I noticed that my approach to conceptualizing the social studies curriculum differed greatly than my other White colleagues. When teaching history, I utilized multiple perspectives and primary sources to have my students construct the historical narrative using their existing knowledge. I also made sure that my students were able to see themselves reflected in the social studies curriculum.

I was also fascinated with the construct of citizenship and how it was taught in social studies classrooms. This was around the time when national debates were occurring on who should become American citizens and politicians suggested making it harder for certain groups to gain American citizenship. While they referred to citizenship as a "legal status", I understood this as an attempt to position certain bodies as "outsiders" and exclude them from belonging to the nation state. I wanted to investigate how teachers thought about citizenship and how it was taught in their social studies classrooms. My first two research studies featured White participants who claimed to

embrace multicultural approaches to citizenship. However, I quickly discovered that in practice they struggled with how to integrate different notions of citizenship into their classrooms.

It was not until I entered the doctoral program that I truly began thinking about how a teacher's identity could impact their curricular and pedagogical decisions, in terms of how they conceptualized and taught notions of citizenship. It was then that I became interested in exploring how African American women teachers' thought about notions of citizenship. I began studying two African American women social studies teachers. These participants and studies continued to add to my body of knowledge of citizenship in the social studies because they made me realize how the intersection of identities (particularly race and gender) complicates how a person conceptualizes the construct. One participant explicitly stated that she rejected traditional conceptions of citizenship because they did not apply to her as an African American woman (see Vickery in press). She argued that since the voices and experiences of Black women are ignored in society, the traditional definition of citizenship meant nothing to her. This study introduced me to the literature on Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) and womanism (Walker, 1983) in teaching as well as the notion of intersectionality (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; hooks 1984; Lorde, 1984). This work completely transformed the ways in which I understood dominant systems of knowledge, reality, and the importance of allowing Black women to define their own truths.

My earlier research studies provided me with a sense of solidarity with the women I interviewed because the interviews often turned into "consciousness raising" (Collins, 2009) spaces. Additionally, it made us realize that other women of color shared similar experiences and we were able to learn from one another about survival in predominately White spaces and how to combat oppressive school practices that negatively harmed our students. While these women taught justice oriented stances of citizenship in predominately White spaces, I began to wonder how do African American women social studies teachers conceptualize and teach citizenship in majority-minority schools and communities? How do their multiple identities and experiences influence their conceptions of citizenship in those spaces?

CHAPTER FOUR: CITIZENSHIP: REJECT AND REVISE

Introduction

From the analysis of the data three themes emerged describing how the three participants conceptualized and taught notions of citizenship in their social studies classrooms. The first theme involved the ways in which the women recognized the traditional societal definition of citizenship as a legal status (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Marshall 1950/1998) but rejected said definition because it did not align with their knowledge and experiences as African American women. The second theme demonstrated the ways in which the participants defined citizenship as participatory and community centered in their classrooms (Avoseh, 2001; Knight & Watson, 2014). The final theme examined how a Black feminist ethic of caring (Collins, 2009; Thompson, 1998) shaped why and how the participants embraced and taught transformative notions of citizenship.

The construct of citizenship and what it means to be a citizen are complex ideals in which multiple manifestations exist within society and have also changed over the course of American history. Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) and Kymlicka and Norman (1994) both acknowledge that citizenship in a democracy is considered a membership/legal status to the nation state as well as a "desirable activity" that comprises possessing knowledge of and participating in the political process (e.g., voting, serving on a jury, running for office). The future of the American democratic state depends upon

the active participation of future citizens. Therefore, according to the authors, schools are responsible for instilling citizenship knowledge and values in the young people who will someday take their place as guardians of democracy.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1994) states that the purpose of the social studies is to help young people develop the capacity to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens in a culturally diverse and increasingly interdependent world. According to this national council, the social studies classroom is a critical space where students learn to make informed decisions that would benefit society while learning how to exist as citizens in an increasingly culturally and globally diverse world. Despite the changing discourses around the construct of citizenship and who is considered a citizen (Rosaldo, 1997) as a result of the recent influx of immigrants, the activism of the "Dreamers," and the threat of global terrorism, as well as the increasingly diverse makeup of the American citizenry, many social studies classrooms continue to promote uncomplicated, often patriotic views of citizenship (see Barton & Levstik, 2004) that fail to discuss its complexity and purposely omit the sustained activism of many historically marginalized groups to gain recognition and legal citizenship. A number of scholars (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Hahn, 2008) have noted that citizenship education in social studies classrooms privileges Enlightenment ideas on citizenship in both elementary and secondary schools in addition to civic republican literacy (i.e., facts associated with American history and government), all premised on students building a patriotic identity that unifies them as Americans.

Although most Americans would like to believe that citizenship is national and is blind to differences, history teaches us that there is an "ascriptive" aspect to U.S. citizenship that involves race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and religion (Crocco, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2008; Tillet, 2012; Urrieta, 2004). Therefore it is crucial to consider how multiple groups understand and experience citizenship differently from the dominant notion of citizenship as a legal status or participatory act. Salamishah Tillet (2012), for example, argued that a fundamental contradiction exists in post-civil rights American politics, in which African Americans possess full *legal* citizenship (as a result of post-civil war and civil rights movement legislation) while simultaneously experiencing what she referred to as "civic estrangement." While African Americans hold legal citizenship, which entails the right to vote and participate in the government, they experience *civic estrangement* because they have been and continue to be marginalized and omitted from the American narrative and are not accurately represented in the civic myths, monuments, and public memory that are all meant to promote an American identity (Tillet, 2012). This causes African Americans to develop a "double consciousness" (DuBois, 1903/1994) in terms of citizenship, positioned as both American and African American (i.e., citizen and non-citizen).

As a result of this double consciousness of citizenship, African Americans (both in the past and present) have been known to engage in the practice of *critical patriotism*:

> Unlike civic myths, this democratic aesthetic neither encourages idolatry
> of the nation's past nor champions a blind loyalty to the state. Staunch
> allegiance and an inflexible attachment to the country are the normative

119

terms of patriotism, but dissidence and dissent, what I call "critical patriotism," form essential components of this democratic aesthetic's discourse. (Tillet, 2012, p. 11)

Tillet argues that critical patriotism is an essential part of our democracy. As a result of African Americans' experience of second-class citizenship and civic estrangement, critical patriotism allows citizens to critically engage in the meta-discourse of the American democracy and hold the democratic state to its founding ideals.

Furthermore, studies have documented the ways that historically marginalized individuals and communities experience dissonance between their knowledge of the societal understanding of citizenship in schools—as both a legal status and participatory ideal (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994)—and their own understanding and experiences with citizenship (Levinson, 2012; Rubin, 2007). In her study on the civic identity and knowledge of youth, Rubin made the case that sociocultural constructions of citizenship and civic identity are formed through the lived experiences of individuals. Some students experienced *congruence* in terms of citizenship, but others experienced a *disjuncture* between (a) the ideals of the U.S. and (b) their own experiences and those of their community. Although the urban youth in her study experienced disjunctures that were locally constructed and situated in structural inequities, it was promising that these same students expressed a sense of empowerment and desire to become actively involved in social change.

Unfortunately, multiple and alternative bodies of knowledge, experiences, and understandings of citizenship that students carry with them into the classroom are

oftentimes devalued and ignored by teachers. Despite the changing makeup of the American citizenry and progressive discourses surrounding the construct of citizenship in our larger society, many social studies classrooms continue to promote an uncomplicated, often patriotic view of citizenship that excludes many students (Marciano, 1997). We must begin to ask how we might move away from traditional notions of citizenship and instead embrace the complexity of the construct and encourage teachers to critically interrogate their own understandings of citizenship and teach their students to do the same.

Ladson-Billings (2004) called for a "new citizenship" education that integrates social, cultural, political, and legal concerns into the classroom and curriculum. This new citizenship education must consider how different groups experience the construct of citizenship and how they in turn teach it to their students. For example, the intersections of race and gender have given African American women a unique perspective on American citizenship (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; hooks, 1999). Black feminist thought is useful as a framework for conceptualizing a new citizenship because it places the experiences and community knowledge of African American women at the center of analysis and promotes the idea that social change can only occur as a result of the changed consciousness of individuals to actualize a transformative and "humanist vision of community" (Bartolome, 1994; Collins, 2009). This framework for citizenship would lead to the empowerment of communities of color that have typically been positioned outside the traditional realm of citizenship.

The research questions that guided this chapter sought to understand the ways in which African American women conceptualize the notion of citizenship and how the intersections of their identities both influence and complicate their understandings of citizenship. The first theme explored in this chapter found that all three participants noted that the traditional definition of citizenship involved an individual citizen's membership to the nation-state, as well as the performative aspects of citizenship (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Marshall, 1950/1998). They also noted that the definition and qualifications of United States citizenship have changed over time based on structural forces in society (Turner, 1993). Moreover, the women recognized that citizenship, as a bounded membership to the nation-state (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Kymlicka, 1995), was not congruent with their own experiences as African American women. For those reasons, they rejected the traditional definition of citizenship and instead opted to teach a different definition of citizenship that encompassed the collective experiences of African Americans.

Citizenship, as defined by the larger society

When first asked how society defines citizenship in the United States, all three teachers acknowledged that it is often thought of as a bounded membership between an individual and the nation-state (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Marshall, 1950/1998). The participants recognized that citizenship had been understood in the larger society as legal status and membership to the United States. Lexi Harper initially described the concept of American citizenship as "being born here" (Harper interview, 05/23/14), and Regina

Beason stated, "Now, citizenship is determined either because you are born here or you are naturalized" (Beason interview, 05/27/14). Mrs. Beason reiterated the fact that the concept of citizenship has shifted over time to meet the needs of a changing society. For example, she illustrated this point by telling the story of her niece, who was born on a U.S. army base in Germany:

> What makes a citizen? She [her niece] was born in Germany, but does that make her a German citizen? But she was on the [U.S.] army base, so she was born actually under the American flag but born in the federal jurisdiction in another country. . . . So I think we have to first look at citizenship in terms of your parents' status and then according to the law. (Beason interview, 05/27/14)

Both Ms. Harper and Mrs. Beason acknowledged that American citizenship is considered a legal status granted to individuals who are born inside the jurisdiction of the United States (both within the continental U.S. and abroad). Ms. Harper initially only defined citizenship as a legal status that is given to individuals at birth when born on United States soil. It was Mrs. Beason who hinted not only at the many technicalities involved in legal status citizenship but also at the historical shifts in the construct of citizenship. She noted that "now" (i.e., in the present day) there are multiple paths to acquiring U.S. citizenship (via birth or naturalization) and that the processes have changed over time based on changes in the positioning of the United States on the world stage.

In addition to defining citizenship as a legal status, all three participants understood the changing construct of citizenship and believed that in the dominant

123

societal discourse citizenship is also constructed as a "desirable activity" (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994) that includes the performative duties, characteristics, and responsibilities of a citizen (Parker, 1996, 2008). Zabrina Ellison defined American citizenship as having "pride in your nation" (Ellison interview, 08/19/14). Mrs. Beason and Ms. Harper also believed that citizenship included possessing and displaying national pride. Ms. Harper simply stated, "I just see it as . . . being patriotic" (Harper interview, 05/23/14), whereas Mrs. Beason described the different attributes and aspects of citizenship: "patriotism, nationalism, loyalty, character, respect, and how to interact and engage with one another" (Beason interview, 05/27/14). While possessing pride in one's nation is an individualistic act, Mrs. Beason went further and added that citizenship also entailed how a person interacts with others, thus moving the duties of a citizen from individualistic to collective.

Ms. Harper and Ms. Ellison also noted that there was a performative aspect of citizenship that was expected of each citizen. Ms. Ellison followed her initial statement by listing the duties of a citizen, such as "voting, jury duty, and volunteering," and suggested that citizens have fought throughout history to have personal freedoms and they must take pride in being productive citizens (Ellison interview, 08/19/14). Ms. Harper stated that citizenship is not only about the service an individual performs (either to the nation-state or local community), but that citizenship can also be a performance where citizens are judged according to how often one displays and performs those duties:

Because then I think back in the days what I did for my country like did I serve, did I serve in the army, did I serve in the community? Now, I feel it is about who is more patriotic defines who is a citizen. So do I carry my flag on my car? Or do I salute the flag? Do I carry myself correctly? I think it's not so much about serving anymore as much as who can scream the loudest anymore. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Both Ms. Ellison and Ms. Harper recognized that citizenship also requires performances or duties that are expected of each and every citizen. As part of traditional social studies curriculum taught in both elementary and secondary settings, citizenship education is often comprised of the transmission of U.S. heritage (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994), loyalty to the nation-state (Barton & Levstik, 2004), as well as highlighting "unity, consensus, and the responsibility to society" (Hahn, 2008). This form of civic education is reduced to teaching students "blind patriotism" (Kent, 1999) and individual rights (Avery & Simmons, 2001; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

This understanding of citizenship as patriotism and allegiance to the nation-state aligns with most critiques of the traditional social studies curriculum (Loewen, 2007) and citizenship education that is taught in schools (Hahn, 1999, 2002, 2008). Mrs. Beason acknowledged that schools serve as sites of social reproduction and are expected to teach young people dominant societal values. She stated, "Because in education all we are doing is highlighting what society is dictating and are laying the foundation of what it is. What we are doing is identifying and placing a name on the process and the people" (Beason interview, 05/27/14). Mrs. Beason was referring to the role both teachers and schools play in teaching societal knowledge and values that represent the values and

perspectives of those in power—stated plainly, that which is considered legitimate knowledge. This knowledge is transmitted to students via the hidden curriculum and taught as standard canonical knowledge (Apple, 1992, 2000, 2004; Carter, 2013; McCarthy, 2005). Instead of creating a critical citizenry (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Kent, 1999), students are taught blind patriotism and lessons on individualism and individual rights, all prepackaged and disguised as citizenship education.

All three teachers noted that their students learned the traditional performative and patriotic knowledge associated with the societal definition of citizenship (Beason interview, 05/29/14; Ellison interview, 08/19/14; Harper interview, 05/23/14). Ms. Harper and Mrs. Beason noted that their students practiced displaying traditional aspects of citizenship daily through the recitation of the pledge of Allegiance every morning and at school events (Beason interview, 05/27/14; Harper interview, 05/23/14). The daily exposure to citizenship as described by both Ms. Harper and Mrs. Beason aligns with Hahn's (1999, 2002, 2008) and Piscatelli's (2003) critique that citizenship education in schools is often reduced to patriotic symbols and individualistic performance rituals.

Ms. Ellison recognized that another component of the citizenship education curriculum involved teaching character traits and how to behave in society. She said, "I believe my students come in class with a basic understanding of citizenship to behave good in society and to follow the laws" (Ellison interview, 08/19/14). The citizenship education that Ms. Ellison described resembles what most refer to as "character education," which has a prominent place in American public schools (Hoge, 2002;

Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). Character education, which often masquerades as citizenship education, privileges certain qualities, traits, or cultural knowledge and reduces citizenship education to the influencing, controlling, and policing of certain bodies in order to succeed in the school environment (Hoge, 2002). While certain citizen traits are *explicitly* taught (such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, abstinence, and non-violence), other American values are *implicitly* taught and reinforced through the hidden curriculum (such as individualism and superiority of capitalism) (Apple, 1992, 2000, 2004; Carter, 2013; Hoge, 2002; McCarthy, 2005). Moreover, these character education programs and curriculum most often find their way into majority-minority schools, where students are explicitly and implicitly taught traits and values that privilege individualism, personal responsibility, and submission (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Westheimer & Kahne, 2000, 2002). These values represent the perspectives and norms of White middle class culture, and this approach to citizenship/character education is part of the history of schooling in this country and is aimed at assimilating and suppressing non-White bodies and knowledge[3].

The social construction (and disjuncture) of citizenship

Bryan S. Turner (1993) examined citizenship from a sociological standpoint and argued that it should be considered as a set of practices that defines a person as a member of society. According to this line of thought, a "set of practices" suggests that citizenship

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[3]See the work of Grande (2004) and Lomawaima (1993a) on Native American boarding schools, Anderson (1988) on African American industrial education, and San Miguel & Valencia (1998) on the history of Mexican American schooling

127

should be understood as a social construction that changes as a result of political events and discourses. From this definition of citizenship, one could infer that the meaning of the term would differ based on the social location, knowledge, and experiences of individuals—in particular, those who come from historically marginalized communities, such as women, African Americans, the poor, immigrants, and others. The participants in this study were aware of the dominant perspective and definition of citizenship that was to be transmitted to students; but at the same time, they recognized that because of their positions as African American women and the knowledge that comes from that standpoint, there was a disjuncture, a dissonance, between the two sets of knowledge.

Ms. Harper struggled with making sense of the cognitive dissonance between the two understandings of citizenship when she stated, "For me, citizenship. . . . I think that we all have this different view of what it looks like because of our experiences" (Harper interview, 05/23/14). In this statement, Ms. Harper expressed her belief that citizenship is socially constructed and differs for each person as a result of their experiences. While she acknowledged the societal understanding of citizenship as a legal status and performance, in her eyes, she viewed citizenship as something each person understands and experiences differently. Mrs. Beason used the enslavement of Africans and African Americans at the founding of the country to illustrate how, as an African American woman, she made sense of the dissonance of citizenship:

> Because they [African Americans] were considered property, like land, like clothing . . . they were not considered citizens. They were not because they were looked upon as property and not as a person. . . . For citizenship,

we have to be a person; I don't think they gave citizenship to animals . . . so public opinion is going to change public policy but for the most part they were considered property and because they were considered property they were actually, law being as such, under Master Johnson's name, Master Burns' name, and they were property of that plantation owner. (Beason interview, 05/27/14)

Like Ms. Harper, Mrs. Beason recognized that the construct of citizenship not only changes but is guided by social, political, economic, and cultural values and discourses (Kahlberg, 1993; Turner, 1993). Mrs. Beason used history to illustrate how public opinion impacts public policy and citizenship in reference to the seventeenth century decision to legally enslave African Americans and grant them the legal status of property (see Takaki, 2008).

For centuries under the colonial structure, Africans and African Americans were denied their humanity and were legally positioned as the property of Whites, forcibly stripped of their name and identity and given a name by their master (Cesaire, 2000; Collins, 2004; Fannon, 1952/2008; Mills, 1997; Roediger, 2010). Mrs. Beason also mentioned the use of the historic practice of negative racial ideologies, where African Americans were represented as animal- and savage-like to justify their subjugation and the denial of basic (legal, economic, or recognition) citizenship rights (Collins, 2004; Fannon, 1952/2008; Hunter, 1998).

Ms. Harper espoused the strongest sentiments when asked to trace the changing nature of American citizenship as both a legal status to the nation-state and/or performance. She said,

In the beginning [the founding of the United States], I think citizenship started out as this very thing that was defined by whether you're a man, whether you were White. . . . I feel like citizenship—for people of color and for women, we didn't always have this citizenship right. They used to say to people, "Well, you're not a citizen, because you're not from here: You came here, you immigrated here." Which is stupid because we all immigrated here because we weren't here to begin with. There were people here before we got here, and we just pushed them out of the way and killed them. . . . But I think over time citizenship has expanded to more people. It's not just White and male anymore. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

She first began by detailing the historic qualifications for American citizenship rights and status, as well as how it has changed over time based on political or social discourses. Ms. Harper considered citizenship as a historical and social construct that has been shaped by political struggles in an effort to bar certain bodies from gaining access to citizenship status and rights. She noted that while citizenship was initially granted to "White men," later certain immigrants from different countries (eastern European, Chinese, and Latin American) were excluded based on their immigration status and country of origin. She identified the contradiction in the argument to exclude people based on immigration status because "we all immigrated here to begin with," hinting that there was another reason for the denial of citizenship status. Ms. Harper recognized that the construct of citizenship was intentionally created by White men as a way to purposely subjugate populations and to elevate the societal position of White men.

Immediately after making that statement she recalled that the original Americans who inhabited this continent (Native Americans) were also denied citizenship and were instead forcibly removed from their land and killed because of their non-White status and

refusal to assimilate to American cultural values and norms. Using the example of Native Americans demonstrated the length to which the government went to defend the sanctity of American citizenship and their perceived right to property. When White European explorers first settled in North America, they created the construct of citizenship and set the conditions that would lead to the supremacy of White men and the violent subjugation of non-Whites and women, even though Natives Americans were the original inhabitants of the Americas (Mills, 1997; Roediger, 2010). This helped create the formation of Whiteness as a social construct and as a precondition of American citizenship (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Roediger, 2010; Urrieta, 2004). Even though she admitted that over time more groups have been granted legal citizenship status and rights, Whiteness continues to endure as the primary and desired qualification for full citizenship status.

After tracing this history (based on her own knowledge and experiences), I wanted to know what citizenship meant to her as an African American woman. In her above statement, Ms. Harper briefly noted that historically you had to be a "man and White" to be a citizen, thus barring everyone who did not have those intersecting identities. In thinking about how she experienced citizenship, she stated that she, as an African American woman, was not typically seen as a citizen because she was neither White nor male:

> I think people tend to question my citizenship more . . . or maybe not
> question it, but maybe I think part of citizenship is this idea of patriotism
> —now, especially. So I feel like they're more likely to question, "Well, is
> she a true patriot? Is she true to this country?" . . . I think the majority
> population thinks automatically if you're the majority group, you're

White, then you are considered a citizen: There's no question about your patriotism and your citizenship. We've all had different experiences so citizenship looks different. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Ms. Harper felt that her non-White/non-male body disallowed her from being seen as a citizen. She was describing the experience of *civic engagement* (Tillet, 2012) and the fact that although African Americans have legal citizenship and rights, they are not considered legitimate members of the nation-state. Normalizing Whiteness and maleness as attributes of citizens means that those who do not meet those qualifications are not considered legitimate citizens. Therefore, the burden of proof falls upon them to prove their status by engaging in the performance of patriotism.

Mrs. Harper gave additional examples of what she considered the exclusivity of citizenship being a raced and gendered construct that prevented certain bodies from participating or being seen as legitimate citizens in public political spaces (Yuval-Davis, 1997):

I think that when you're not White and sometimes even female they will exclude you. Because I see how sometimes they treat Hillary Clinton, and it upsets me. . . . And so I think that's why there's this struggle, because we have the White male idea of citizenship, and you're trying to assimilate all these different groups into what that looks like and we all look different. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

In this statement, Ms. Harper was directly referring to the racial and gendered ascriptive qualifications of citizenship that keep racial minorities and women from participating as citizens. She used the example of former Secretary of State and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton to illustrate the inability of women to fully participate in public

political spaces. According to Ms. Harper, ascriptive notions of citizenship (race and gender) are still used as barriers to keep certain individuals from being viewed and treated as legitimate representatives of the U.S. body politic. The second half of Ms. Harper's statement alludes to the assimilation requirement of citizenship for non-White and non-male bodies to legitimately participate in public political spaces. However, while individuals can be forced to adopt White middle class values, beliefs, and mannerisms, they still are unable to shed their raced and gendered bodies and thus remain in a constant state of civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012). Because of her personal familiarity with this exclusion from citizenship on account of race and gender, Ms. Harper concluded that this was the reason why citizenship differs based on one's social location and experiences.

Ms. Ellison also expressed the feeling of civic estrangement in the way that she was viewed as a non-citizen. She very pointedly stated, "The world is full of people who do not see me as an equal. I have to work extra hard and stay focused on my goals" (Ellison interview, 08/19/14). Ms. Ellison believed that as an African American woman her raced and gendered body was not considered equal to other bodies in society and therefore *she had the burden to prove* her worth by working twice as extra hard to achieve her goals. It appeared that Ms. Ellison was cognizant of the negative public representations and discourses surrounding the bodies of Black women (being represented as the Mammy, Jezebel, or Sapphire) that result in their positioning as non-humans and non-citizens (Collins, 2005; Harris-Perry, 2011; Sewell, 2014). However,

133

while she acknowledged that society did not view her as an equal human being, she did exhibit agency in her resilience and her ability not to let it deter her from her aspirations.

Ms. Harper also noted how, as an African American woman, the structures of racism and patriarchy continue to negatively impact how she is positioned in society, as well as the changing nature of that oppression:

> For us—I'm referring to minorities and women—we haven't had it [citizenship status and rights] for that long. I know to me, racism still exists. Sexism still exists. I can see it, but not in the same sense that my grandmother can see it or my parents can see it, because it looks different now. It's evolved into something that's not always out there in your face. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Ms. Harper named the racial and patriarchal structural forces that are at play in preventing minorities and women from achieving full recognition as citizens. She also noted that although these structures have remained intact for a long time, they continue to change and manifest in different ways in order to exclude certain individuals from participation or recognition in the public sphere.

Ms. Harper also took care to note that there was a struggle between these multiple constructs and definitions of citizenship. While she was pushing for the construct of citizenship to be more inclusive of different experiences and perspectives, she still felt that a majority of Americans who are in positions of power desire a narrowed definition of citizenship that promotes a single, color-blind understanding and image of what and who is a citizen. Ms. Harper critiqued such attempts:

> And I think that's the problem with nowadays, you want to have this post-racial citizenship but we don't want to see race. Just because you like

President Obama doesn't mean there's this post-racial America. And we don't really want there to be a post-racial America. . . . They want to see this assimilation of everyone and that be the citizenship, is that we're all assimilated, but we're also different. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Ms. Harper critiqued the widely held belief that as a result of the election of President Obama we live in a "post-racial" society where the racial problems of the past no longer exist because a majority of Americans elected an African American man into the highest political office in the country (Associated Press, 2008; Barnes & Shear, 2008; Nagourney, 2008). In her statement, she negated the desired belief that our society had reached a moment when race no longer mattered. Ms. Harper contended that we should not strive towards being "post-racial" because that would signify that the assimilation precondition for citizenship had been achieved and that cultural differences had been eliminated.

Mrs. Beason also recognized that giving up one's home culture and adopting the dominant culture is often a prerequisite for American citizenship. She noted that it frequently happened to her students and had unfortunate consequences:

The children see acculturation in the different cultures of immigrants and how they change. They can give you example of Sasha[4] [pseudonym]. . . . Last year, many of them, they used her—,she is a young lady she is Arabic —and she still wears a head wrap but she does no longer, she doesn't, she wears jeans. So that's assimilation and acculturation is when they fully immerse and I can give them examples, some of the children say, yeah, like my parents, still they can't speak English but I speak English because I was from the culture, although they weren't born here, they have taken on this language and they have vacated their own language and their culture and values. (Beason interview, 05/27/14)

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[4] Sasha was a former student of Mrs. Beason's.

Schools have been known to ignore the culture and cultural knowledge of students and oftentimes positions their culture as outside the norm (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas, 1988). This results in students who display cultural attributes in schools (such as language, dress, religion, customs, etc.) feeling "othered" and different from other students. For African Americans in particular, Ladson-Billings (1995) believed that "the dilemma for African American students becomes one of negotiating the academic demands of school while demonstrating cultural competence" (p. 476). African American students are burdened with the dilemma of having to adhere to White cultural norms in order to be successful in school. This illustrated that citizenship, for women and minorities, is more than about legal membership, but a longing for a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and camaraderie, and the price was giving up your cultural identity. Mrs. Beason stated that this was a common experience for her students who feel pressured to give up aspects of their culture in order to succeed in society.

Unfortunately, vacating one's language, public cultural beliefs and values, and changing the style of dress does not always guarantee acceptance and automatic access to recognition as citizens. As a result of the narrowed and traditional definition of citizenship that students are implicitly taught in society (as well as in schools), in order to have a chance at success later in life, students must assimilate to a form of civic identity that excludes their experiences and histories and encourages individualism. The traditional definition of citizenship forces young people to make a choice between

136

society's vision of what a citizen is and should be versus the values and beliefs of their family and cultural community.

Discussion

In sum, all three participants were able to identify the changing nature of citizenship as both a legal status and performance that emphasizes individualism, blind patriotism, and character education. All three women recognized that, traditionally, citizenship is understood as legal status given to an individual at birth when born within the jurisdiction of the United States. The manner in which the participants described citizenship aligns with Turner's (1993) consideration of citizenship as a social construction that has changed over time as a result of political struggles and discourses. The participants recognized the multiple manifestations of citizenship that exist in society, as both a legal status as belonging to the nation-state and as a performance of patriotism. These exhibitions of citizenship have developed and changed throughout history and have been influenced by political, economic, and social battles and discourses, thus resulting in a hybrid form of citizenship that promotes individualistic values and demands the blind allegiance of citizens.

While the participants alluded to the dominant citizenship narrative that is transmitted to students, it was Mrs. Beason who noted two important phenomena that impact how she understood citizenship. First, she saw the many ways in which citizenship (as a legal status) changes over time. She also noted the different ways that people can become American citizens (through birth or the naturalization process). This

137

acknowledges the expansion of legal citizenship rights over time as a result of the changing body politic (Kymlicka, 1995), but also of who is considered an American citizen. Second, Mrs. Beason recognized that citizenship values that are taught in schools mirror the values of the dominant society. She was alluding to her belief that schools serve as spaces of social reproduction through the teaching of the hidden curriculum.

The participants also acknowledged that in exchange for legal citizenship, individual citizens are expected to engage in certain duties (e.g., voting or serving on jury duty) as well as possess and display patriotism (e.g., by reciting the pledge of allegiance or displaying the American flag) and loyalty to the nation-state. Moreover, the participants noted that their students were exposed to this form of citizenship education in K–12 schools that reinforced the notion of blind patriotism in addition to the traits and values that citizens should display in public.

Building upon the existing knowledge that schools serve as institutions that reproduce societal values and norms, Ms. Ellison believed that her students were exposed to a citizenship education curriculum that emphasized notions of character traits and how to behave in the public sphere. The character education curriculum taught to non-White bodies has been a part of the schooling experience for historically marginalized communities since the mid nineteenth century (Anderson, 1988; Grande, 2004; Lomawaima, 1993a; San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). In his history of the education of African Americans in the South after the civil war, James Anderson (1988) wrote that a majority of the planter class viewed the education of African Americans as a threat to

their economic, political, and social lifestyle, which was dependent on the exploitation of Black bodies. Therefore, wealthy planters financed industrial schools for African Americans, where the students were exposed to a curriculum premised on maintaining the White racial hierarchy and the subjugation of African Americans. Industrial schools were spaces where African Americans learned that their new role in post civil war society would be that of exploited laborers (Anderson, 1988). The modern era of schooling continues this tradition of schooling for historically marginalized student populations. The curriculum in majority-minority schools is designed around teaching to the test, remedial skills, industrial skills, and low expectations (Au, 2008).

Ms. Harper suggested that there had been changes in the performance of citizenship over time. She stated that military service and community service were once considered acceptable displays of citizenship and loyalty to one's country. However, she noted that in the present day, displaying symbols of citizenship or taking part in performances is done in a way that is competitive—to show who is the better citizen. In order to be considered a citizen (regardless of legal status), certain people feel the need to *prove* that they are citizens by engaging in the performative aspects of citizenship, such as displaying and saluting the flag or behaving in an acceptable manner. How the participants made sense of the traditional dominant understanding of citizenship is significant because it signified how their own experiences and historical knowledge is not represented in the traditional understanding of citizenship. This in turn leads to their

perceived "double consciousness" (DuBois, 1903/1994; Tillet, 2012), of being legal, de jure citizens, but suspect, de facto non-citizens nonetheless.

Moreover, all three participants identified the tensions between how they made sense of and experienced citizenship as African American women from the citizenship experiences of the rest of society. When asked if the traditional construct of citizenship was important for them to teach as social studies teachers, both Ms. Ellison and Mrs. Beason conceded that they still needed to teach it because students needed to adopt a double consciousness in terms of American citizen identity (DuBois, 1903/1994; Tillet, 2012) in order to succeed in the outside world (Beason interview, 05/27/14; Ellison interview, 08/19/14). It is interesting to note, however, that in all of my classroom observations of the two women, I did not witness any instances of the teachers explicitly teaching or students engaging in conversations about the traditional definitions of citizenship (as a legal status and as a performance of patriotism).

Ms. Harper had a slightly different response to the question. When asked if the traditional definition of citizenship was important to her, she stated, "I never thought about it. I've never just thought about citizenship . . . because I really don't care" (Harper interview, 05/23/14). She followed this statement by unapologetically declaring,

> And that's how I see citizenship . . . because we aren't part of that traditional idea of citizenship. And I kind of want to say to the people in charge, "What did you think?! Like, you excluded us from this for so long as being citizens, so now, you want us to be patriotic?" They need to understand it looks different to us because of what we've been through compared to what you've been through! (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Ms. Harper used that moment as an opportunity to publicly reject the traditional understanding of citizenship because African Americans collectively experienced what Tillet (2012) referred to as *civic estrangement*. Although African Americans have legal rights, they continue to experience marginalization because of their exclusion from public memory (which helps form a national identity), but also because of how certain bodies are privileged over others. Ms. Harper also stated that because of the history of civic estrangement in terms of citizenship, those in charge need to recognize that citizenship looks different to historically marginalized groups as a result of their exclusion from citizenship and their efforts to achieve recognition.

The participants also noted that the traditional definition of citizenship is aimed at promoting a singular narrative and history of the nation-state and what it means and looks like to be a U.S. citizen. While the participants understood that they possess legal citizenship rights and status on account of birth, they believed they were not publicly recognized as citizens on account of being African American women. This is in part because the traditional definition of citizenship failed to acknowledge their exclusion and their fight for citizenship, in both the past and present.

Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) documented that conservatives and civic republicans were critical of multiculturalism and multiple definitions of citizenship because they argue that they promote disunity and unpatriotic attitudes and reflections on the nation-state (Schlesigner, 1991; Ravitch, 1993). Instead, those in power make efforts to promote color-blind understandings of citizenship in ways such as controlling the

curriculum to promote a single narrative and perspective on the past. This color-blind notion of citizenship is only achievable through the assimilation of non-Whites. All three participants recognized the assimilationist precondition for citizenship and the ways that it manifested in the larger society, their own lives, and their students' lives. Promoting assimilation through the control of the curriculum and constructing a historical narrative that omits diverse groups results in the civic estrangement of countless groups because of their inability to see themselves reflected in the public civic myths, monuments, and public memories that promote an American national identity (Tillet, 2012).

The shifting constructs of citizenship and of who is considered a citizen further demonstrate the constant correlation between citizenship, intersection of identities, and notions of power and privilege in society, as well as its failure to consider how the structure prevents certain bodies from participating and being recognized as citizens. Mills (1997) used *racial contract theory* to explicate how White supremacy, as a political system and power structure, limits and manipulates the construct of citizenship based on societal and political discourses. This contract is continuously evolving and being rewritten based on the sociopolitical needs of society. Carole Pateman (1988) argued for the existence of a *sexual contract* that failed to include women within the original social contract; therefore, women laborers are particularly suppressed and devalued within a capitalist structure.

However, both the racial contract and the sexual contract are theoretically limited to understanding the construct of race and the presence of White supremacy within the

142

American political, social, and economic structure and the roles of women as citizens within the capitalist structure, respectively. Therefore, we must use both of these frameworks, along with Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) and Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) notion of intersectionality, to understand how the structures of racism and patriarchy complicate the experiences of African American women in different spaces and how those structures evolve over time. Because of the "double jeopardy" (King, 1988) of dual discrimination on the bases of race and sex that Black women encounter as a result of their intersecting identities, we must recognize that African American women understand and experience differently than Black men or White women. For example, both Ms. Ellison and Ms. Harper rejected the traditional definition of citizenship in part because of its inability to take into account the structures of racism and patriarchy that prevent them (as Black women) from achieving recognition as citizens.

It is important to recognize instances of resistance in the ways in which the participants rejected the traditional notion of citizenship for failing to include the experiences or knowledge of historically marginalized groups. All three women, at different times, engaged in the practice of critical patriotism (Tillet, 2012) in the ways in which they critiqued the traditional definition of citizenship for not taking into account their histories or experiences. Moreover, all of the women drew on tenets of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) by placing their own experiences as Black women at the center of analysis in order to critique the construct of citizenship. Black feminist thought places the experiences and community knowledge of African American women at the

center of analysis and recognizes that, for Black women, race, class, and gender are inseparable tenets of their identities (Collins, 2009). Since all three participants were African American women who taught in a predominately African American school, they used their own personal knowledge of history, their experiences, and those of their students and the community to construct a different understanding of citizenship that diverged from the traditional understanding. Because of the awareness of this history, it is only fitting that these teachers would reject the traditional definition of citizenship and gravitate towards a more inclusive definition of citizenship that better aligns with the collective experiences of African Americans and the Downton community.

CHAPTER FIVE: "I WORRY ABOUT MY COMMUNITY": COMMUNITY CENTERED NOTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

Introduction

Because of our increasingly diverse society, many have argued for the reconceptualization of a construct of citizenship that better represents the experience of minority groups (Banks, 2008; Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Rosaldo, 1994, 1997). A number of scholars have critiqued the Whitestream and patriarchal definition of citizenship for its failure to include the voices and experiences of non-Whites and women (see Elshtain, 1981; Harris-Perry, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2008; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997; Yuval-Davis, 1997).

For example, African Americans have collectively experienced civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012) because, although they hold legal citizenship, they are not seen as legitimate citizens in the public sphere. Spinner (1984) argued that traditional liberal citizenship had failed African Americans because it ignored three important tenets that impact how African Americans see themselves as citizens: Traditional citizenship (1) is premised on individual rights (which had been denied to African Americans), (2) failed to acknowledge histories of oppression, and (3) did not recognize communal membership (which are important lines of support in African American communities). It is no surprise that Ladson (1984) found that African Americans' loyalty was to their cultural community first and to the nation-state second. These are all factors in how and why a

double consciousness (DuBois, 1903/1994), or dual sense of citizenship, persists among African Americans (Tillet, 2012).

Because of this purposeful omission of multiple histories, voices, and community knowledge, historically marginalized populations have taken it upon themselves to reconceptualize citizenship frameworks that are more inclusive and to recenter citizenship on communal/community membership in a way that recognizes cultural identity as being an integral aspect of citizenship (see Dilworth, 2004, 2008; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). For example, Latina/o scholars first introduced a cultural citizenship framework as an attempt to recognize their complex experience with citizenship in regards to culture, phenotype, representation, and language (Flores, 1997a; Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). Cultural citizenship is an attempt to examine full citizenship and membership. It also promotes cultural community membership as a valid form of citizenship (Flores, 1997a; Ong, 1996; Rosaldo, 1994).

There has been significant work exploring the duality of citizenship and how different communities and societies have adopted communal notions of citizenship. Avoseh (2001) theorized about citizenship in African societies:

> A communal view of life . . . is an imperative for active citizenship in traditional African societies. In this view of life, the individual makes conscious efforts to be aware of the existence and interests of others and therefore she/he "lives and lets others live." (p. 480)

According to this line of thought, active citizenship requires that an individual's actions simultaneously promote and attend to the needs of the community. Avoseh argued that

this communal approach to citizenship places humanity at the center of nation building and citizenship.

Knight and Watson (2014) built upon Avoseh's (2001) citizenship framework in their study on African immigrant youths' experiences in the United States in terms of civic learning and engagement. The authors found that the young people learned civics in particular situated contexts and through familial and community relationships, both of which led to participatory communal citizenship. Although Avoseh and Knight and Watson used participatory communal citizenship to attend to the experiences of African immigrant youth, community-centered understandings of citizenship and learning can be extended to make sense of how other third-world communities conceptualize and experience citizenship in the United States (for a discussion of Third World feminism as it relates to U.S. citizenship, see Mohanty, 2003). A number of scholars have noted how the community structure has traditionally been important to African Americans (see Spinner, 1984) and has continued to serve as a site of strength and camaraderie since the days of enslavement, particularly for women (Collins, 2009; Hartman, 1997). That is why I employ Avoseh's and Knight and Watson's participatory communal citizenship framework in this study.

Rethinking citizenship education in schools

Educational scholars and teachers continue to present new ways of transforming teaching and the curriculum to value the cultural communities of students and to incorporate critical historical thinking (Salinas, Blevins, & Sullivan, 2012) and multiple

perspectives and understandings of citizenship in their classrooms (Banks, 2002; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009a; Pang & Gibson, 2001). In her three-year study of eight effective teachers of African American students, Ladson-Billings (2009a) found that the teachers engaged in what she referred to as "culturally relevant pedagogy." Culturally relevant pedagogy is an attempt to incorporate a child's home/community culture seamlessly into the school culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers who utilize a culturally relevant pedagogy hold high expectations for all their students, believe that students should be prepared to take on community and social responsibilities, and value the wealth of cultural resources that are part of students' own histories and backgrounds (Villegas, 2002).

Django Paris (2012) offered a critique of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009a) and its limitations in practice where teachers use the students' culture as a bridge to teaching the traditional canon or historical narrative. Paris (2012) made the case that culturally relevant pedagogy does not go far enough in encouraging students to sustain and maintain their home culture and language and does nothing to curtail assimilation. He proposed that teachers instead adopt a *culturally sustaining pedagogy* to help support their multicultural and multilingual students while fostering cultural pluralism (Paris, 2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy attempts to promote a humanizing approach to education in which students are viewed as valuable human beings and not as non-human, empty vessels (Bartolome, 1992; Freire, 2007).

Social studies education scholar Paulette Dilworth (2004, 2008) introduced the notion of multicultural citizenship education as a framework for integrating multiple notions of citizenship into the social studies classroom. She defined multicultural citizenship education as a communal task for teachers and students to critically examine the curriculum and their lives through multiple perspectives. Multicultural citizenship education involves helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values to succeed in an increasingly global society (Banks, 2008). This means engaging in community building through dialogue and deliberation to solve political issues and social problems (Dilworth, 2008) and combating assimilationist notions of citizenship to legitimize the rights of citizens to hold allegiances to both their cultural and political communities (Banks, 2008; Dilworth, 2008).

It is crucial that teachers teach their students to recognize and name the structural issues that affect their lives and their community. Moreover, students must also be compelled to take action to enact change within their communities.

African American women teachers uplifting their communities

In her powerful book examining the education of African American students in a segregated school and community, Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) chronicled the significantly historic role African American schools have played in the education and uplift of the Black community:

> The memory of inequality is thus not inaccurate. However, to remember segregated schools largely by recalling only their poor resources presents a historically incomplete picture. Although Black schools were indeed

commonly lacking in facilities and funding, some evidence suggests that the environment of the segregated school had affective traits, institutional policies, and community support that helped Black children learn in spite of the neglect their schools received from White school boards. (p. 3)

Walker argued that although Black schools were in dire condition, the teachers supported, encouraged, and held high standards for Black students that heightened their sense of self-worth. These teachers went above and beyond the traditional duties of a teacher to provide African American students with the education that would not only allow them to compete intellectually with White students but also prepare them to become effective leaders in their communities and hold their heads high with racial pride.

African American women teachers come from a historic tradition of being able to resist the subjugation that permeated the school and other social structures while simultaneously preparing students to become activist citizens. At the turn of the last century, many African American women teachers were active in the Black women's club movement that fought for supporting African American men and advocated for empowering Black women, as well as for the uplift of their community (Brown, 2006). Black women teachers used their experiences of fighting for social justice to inform how they taught activist notions of citizenship to African American youth (see Harley, 1996; Murray, 2012).

The existing research on Black women teachers shows that contemporary educators share many of the same views of teaching as their predecessors. Scholars have documented the multiple ways that African American women teachers understand the

political nature of teaching (Knight, 2002) and adapt their curriculum and pedagogy in a way that they believe is best for their students (Beaubouef-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Gordon, 1985; Thompson, 1998). These teachers have found ways to circumvent the curriculum in ways that aid in the development of intelligent, critically conscious, and community-centered citizens.

Audrey Thompson (1998) used a Black feminist ethic of caring (Collins, 2009) to conceptualize how African American women teachers practice caring as a way to uplift their community. For example, a number of scholars have theorized about the well-known practice of "othermothering" (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Irvine, 1999), which is described as a feeling of shared responsibility in the social and emotional development of all children in a community. Irvine reported that othermothering involved teachers' essentially "adopting" all students and treating them as if they were their own. But upon further examination, othermothering can be seen as communal childrearing and a form of community uplift. This model of caring and childrearing creates a woman-centered "fictive kin" (Stack, 1974) network of women engaged in the communal practice of raising future citizens, which represents a challenge to conventional models of childrearing. African American teachers in the research literature, both in the past and present, have been known to utilize an ethic of caring in their ability to go above and beyond in their role of educating each African American student to "reach his or her highest potential" (Walker, 1996, p. 158).

The research question that guided this chapter was this: How do African American women conceptualize and teach notions of citizenship? Although the three participants were cognizant of the dominant definition of citizenship (as membership to the nation-state as well as the performative aspects of citizenship), these women refused to accept this understanding of citizenship because of its failure to incorporate African Americans' past and present experiences of civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012). The data revealed that the participants rejected the Whitestream understanding of citizenship and instead sought ways to utilize community and cultural knowledge as foundations for a new vision of citizenship education. The teachers believed that belonging to a community was a fundamental component of citizenship. In integral aspect of community membership was finding ways to care about and uplift that community. Finally, developing a strong cultural identity was seen as part of the way students felt connected to the community.

Conceptualizing communal citizenship

When asked how the teachers would describe their ideal definition of citizenship—that is, in a way that aligned with their experiences and those of their students—all three women described a citizenship that involved people experiencing a sense of belonging to a particular community. With nearly twenty-five years of teaching experience to her name, freshman world geography teacher Mrs. Regina Beason cited human nature as a way to describe how society should think about citizenship. She stated, "I think man always had a sense of belonging . . . even in early civilizations, . . . and although they may not have wrote everything, . . . they had a sense of

citizenship" (Beason interview, 05/27/14). Mrs. Beason made a connection between citizenship and humans' desire to experience a sense of belonging that has been present since the beginning of time (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Mrs. Beason thought of citizenship in terms of a relational sense of belonging. Hall and Held (1990) and Yuval-Davis (2006) argued that feeling a sense of belonging as citizens was particularly true for those who have been marginalized in society and positioned outside of citizenship. For centuries, citizenship has been a construct controlled by those in power and used as a way to exclude certain bodies from attaining citizenship status and rights. For those who were excluded, their desire was to be included and to have an active role in the nation-state.

Junior American history teacher Ms. Zabrina Ellison cited her experience as a member of her sorority as a way that she preferred to think about citizenship (Ellison interview, 08/19/14). When asked what she valued about her membership in her sorority, she said that she appreciated the sisterhood aspect and that she felt a sense of belonging and camaraderie with her sorority sisters—a sense that was built in part by serving others and giving back to the community (Ellison interview, 08/19/14). She acknowledged that she shared with her students about her sorority membership as a way to teach about community, service, and contributing to society: "I like to share community service stories that I complete with my sorority. I also emphasize to students joining a fraternity/ sorority is more than step-shows[5]; however, it is about a sense of community and service"

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[5] A performance that features a group (or individuals) dancing while using their bodies as instruments.

(Ellison interview, 08/19/14). To Ms. Ellison, ideal notions of citizenship were very much like her relationship with her sorority sisters.

In particular, Ms. Ellison mentioned that "sisterhood" was essential to how she viewed herself as a citizen in that particular community. Ms. Ellison's sorority gave her a community and "sisters" that offered her companionship and an opportunity to experience citizenship. Black women's relationships with one another, in both formal and informal organizations, offer opportunities to "affirm one another's humanity, specialness, and right to exist" (Collins, 2009, p. 113). Women-centered networks and "fictive kin" relationships (Stack, 1974) offer Black women a community of support and uplift as well as a space to collectively cope and resist oppression (Collins, 2009). When describing what citizenship meant to her personally, Ms. Ellison described a fictive kin network of support and uplift. Citizenship, Ms. Ellison believed, should provide that same sense of belonging, support, and uplift. Moreover, an important part of her affiliation with that community was engaging in community service. This suggests that in exchange for membership and a sense of sisterhood, service was an expectation and responsibility for her (as a member). Through her membership in her sorority, Ms. Ellison was able to view citizenship as communal and not just as being an individual entity.

Both Mrs. Beason and Ms. Ellison described notions of citizenship as communal and experiencing a sense of belonging to their community. Ms. Ellison and Mrs. Beason noted that relationships between individuals were part of belonging to a community and citizenship. Mrs. Beason stated that desiring belonging within a community was a part of

154

human nature but also how citizenship was created in early societies. Ms. Ellison valued the sisterhood aspect of citizenship in her sorority and her relationship with her sorority sisters and the service they provided to the community. Community is often characterized as a feeling of companionship with others as a result of shared attitudes, interests, and goals. Members of a community often develop relationships with others that create a sense of belonging to that group and space.

Senior economics teacher Ms. Lexi Harper was a bit more direct in rejecting the Whitestream definition of citizenship as membership to the nation-state premised on blind patriotism and individualism. Similar to the other two participants, she also described a communal understanding of citizenship:

> When I look at the dictionary definition of citizenship I don't really define it that way myself. To me, that isn't really all that citizenship is what the dictionary says it is. I don't really think about that definition too much, and it's not that big of a deal to me. It's just like what all that matters to me is what's happening with the people I'm around. Because to me, I worry about my community and that's pretty much it. I do get concerned especially because we're so focused on things at the individual level too much instead of community. . . . Maybe if we discussed it more, then they would start thinking about, well how does what I do or what I'm doing affect the larger community? (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Ms. Harper rejected the dominant individualistic notion of citizenship to the nation-state that is privileged in society and taught in schools. This aligned with Spinner's (1984) argument that traditional liberal citizenship has mostly failed African Americans because it is based on individual rights and actions and does not take into account cultural group membership or historical oppression. For that reason, Ms. Harper preferred to define

citizenship at the communal level—because she valued her community. In agreement with with Spinner's (1984) critique of citizenship, Ms. Harper criticized the notion of citizenship and dominant societal values because it encourages people to adopt individualistic attitudes and dispositions where citizens are ignorant of how individual and structural decisions, actions, and policies affect the community.

Instead, Ms. Harper described a communal framework of citizenship and how it looked in her own life and community:

> Like if to me, I'm very into like the collective idea where my kids are your kids. And here, even though Downton has lots of problems just like any other school district, I do feel like a lot of the teachers and parents are like that kid is also my kid. So, I really do like when I talk to parents, I do have a sense that they really want all of the kids to do well and I know a lot of parents that know somebody else's son or they talk and treat them like they are their own kid. (Harper interview, 05/19/2014)

Ms. Harper appreciated the sense of caring that was present throughout the community and that everyone looked out for each other. This demonstrates an example of active citizenship where humanity is at the center of citizenship and that being a citizen involves caring about others and the civil interactions between individuals in a community (Avoseh, 2001).

Moreover, Ms. Harper believed that the practice of collective child rearing was present in the school and surrounding community in the way the teachers, administrators, and parents took care of the students. While Ms. Harper described this practice as "collective child rearing," in essence she viewed her role as a teacher as that of being an othermother (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Collins, 2008; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Irvine,

1999). Michele Foster (1993) wrote that the practice of Black women teachers using familial terms in relation to their students is a longstanding practice in African American communities. Ms. Harper continued the tradition of teaching and valuing community as a site of citizenship. By discussing collective childrearing as an enactment of citizenship, she was asserting the importance of relationships as a fundamental component of citizenship.

Ms. Harper elaborated and described what "collective childrearing" and citizenship in her community looked like:

> So like for me, an active member of my community doesn't mean I just vote locally, but actually I go out and I like go to soccer games or I talk to people, you know, not just at my school but I know what's going on in the community. Like, I know they're concerned about this, this, and this in the community. It also means that, you know, the people in the community, you know each other. You know, like if I go out to the store that I might see people that I know and I can communicate with them. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

Ms. Harper's understanding of citizenship included being active and participating in the community, as well as the relational aspects. This was comparable to Ms. Ellison's description of citizenship in that their definitions were community-centered and that they privileged relationships with fellow members/citizens and participation in community events.

Ms. Harper rejected the traditional individualistic and national construct of citizenship because of its failure to take into account notions of community as a valid form of citizenship. Moreover, she also believed that community-centered citizenship

157

required for each person to be conscious of what was occurring in the community and of how their actions affected the community. In Avoseh's (2001) framework on citizenship in African societies, he wrote that individuals developed a communal perspective on life and that active citizenship grew out of each person's being conscious of the existence of others and of how their actions affected others in the community. Ms. Harper's perspective of citizenship was similar to Avoseh's in that she was attempting to move beyond individualistic perspectives on citizenship into one that is based not only on community but also on the relationships between people in the community.

Teaching community-centered citizenship

Because communal-centered citizenship is premised on developing a sense of belonging, it can also be seen as a form of active citizenship (Flores, 1997b). Active citizenship goes beyond merely acknowledging communal membership; it includes *actively* working to uplift and serve that community. While it is important for social studies teachers to conceptualize more critical notions of citizenship, their ideas must be translated into practice in order to challenge mainstream discourses of citizenship. Giroux (1980) insisted that teachers were the starting point for any transformative theory of citizenship. The three participants in this study found different ways to integrate and teach communal notions of citizenship into their lessons and classroom discussions. For example, Ms. Harper noted that she used her bell ringer warm-ups as a way to teach students lessons about their community and their roles as citizens:

I think also part of being in the community is being informed. So, I'm a news junkie and so like I use MSNBC Learn a lot in my class for bell ringers and I try to inform them and they don't care but I try to make them care. Like, I try to show them how what's happening on the news affects you and if it affects you and then it will affect your community. And so I try to do that a lot because I feel like the worst type of citizen is the uninformed citizen and I know that's terrible to say. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

Ms. Harper believed that students should know not only about community events, but more importantly how what was happening in the mainstream news (e.g., political, economic, social policies) could affect their community. In order to facilitate those conversations, Ms. Harper regularly integrated current events into her classroom as way to encourage students to learn about the world around them and how policies and actions affect their lives and the community. She stated that she made conscious decisions to bring in current events about economic issues that were relevant to the students' lives (Harper classroom observation, 05/07/14). For example, she once led a discussion about the protests that were occurring throughout the United States by Wal-Mart employees calling for a living wage. She felt that this was an important event because there was a Wal-Mart where a number of students and their families worked less than two miles from the school. The purpose of the discussion was for students to learn about issues from different perspectives, as current and future consumers and citizens, in order to form their own opinions about matters, but also to think about issues in the context of what impact they will have on the community. She stated,

But I can't stand—like you can believe all you want to believe, and I understand that people have different beliefs—but at least be informed!

Try to know and understand why you believe in something and not just regurgitate what you hear. . . . So I had to explain that to them [the students] that when you're shopping just because Wal-Mart is one of those big stores, think about what its presence means to the people in a community. I was like, before you say, "I love Wal-Mart because Wal-Mart has these low prices," why does Wal-Mart have a low price? Don't just like assume that Wal-Mart is cheap but also ask, why can they be so cheap? What do they do to the stores in the community when they come in and why do some people not like Wal-Mart? So, those are discussions that I try to have with them as it relates to citizenship. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

Ms. Harper felt that it was important to include discussions such as these into her economics class because these were issues that would affect their community and her students as they made critical decisions as consumers (Harper interview, 05/29/14). She was trying to teach students to recognize the structural issues that affect their lives as students (Dilworth, 2008; Pang & Gibson, 2001) as well as their community. Ms. Harper used discussion as a way for students to examine the social, political, and economic realities of the world they inhabit (Dilworth, 2008) and how structural forces impact their community. Ms. Harper initially noted that her students' initial reaction was to think about their own lives (Ms. Harper stated, "I was like, before you say, 'I love Wal-Mart because Wal-Mart has these low prices'"), and she wanted them to take a step back and think about the effect that a structure (such as Wal-Mart) had on the community entity and its citizens.

Ms. Harper believed that an essential component of a community-centered notion of citizenship involved moving away from focusing on individualism and instead moving towards citizens caring about the social, economic, and political strife of their Black and

Latina/o community. She introduced her students to news stories about issues that had direct impacts not only on their own lives but also on the wellbeing of their community. By framing the current event around the effect a structure has on a community of color, Ms. Harper was teaching active citizenship (Avoseh, 2001) as being cognizant of how an individual's actions must simultaneously promote and attend to the needs of the community. Ms. Harper wanted students to adopt a community-centered view of the world and consider how corporations' decisions to offer lower prices negatively impacted the wellbeing of the entire community.

Moreover, Ms. Harper attempted to examine the issue from a structural perspective by exploring the structural conditions that created the situation (in this case, the negative impact capitalism has on communities by subjugating employees) and their impact on their community. Ms. Harper was teaching students not only about moving away from seeing citizenship as individualism but also about embracing the role of citizens who recognize and critique structures that affect the community and its citizens. Cynthia Tyson and Sung Choon Park (2008) used both social justice and critical race theory (CRT) to examine what it means to be a citizen in the face of injustice. They argue that by intersecting these two theoretical frameworks, civic education could teach students to critique the racialized barriers that prevent full civic participation, as well as add social activism to civic education. Similarly, Ms. Harper taught her students a form of citizenship that was rooted in a critical examination of the structures that disadvantage

communities and their workers, but she also helped her students to develop an awareness of how to take action against such structures.

I witnessed several instances where Ms. Ellison integrated her own understanding of communal citizenship into her classroom. Because Ms. Ellison stated that she valued the service aspect of belonging to a community (in reference to her sorority membership), she incorporated service and contributing to society as important components of her leadership unit. The leadership unit in her U.S. history course was taught the last month of the school year and was an opportunity for students to learn about their future roles as African American and Latina/o leaders. Ms. Ellison designed the leadership unit using her own life experiences as well as content from a graduate course she took on leadership. She was purposeful in the fact that she wanted to make the curriculum relevant to the lives of students and create a space where students, whose voices are typically silenced, had the opportunity to be heard.

One lesson I observed had students examine the connection between community service and citizenship. Ms. Ellison began the lesson by discussing how leaders sought to contribute to society and how community service was an essential part of leadership:

> So how can you make a mark in a culturally diverse society? How can you make a mark as citizens? Those are some of the questions I am asking you. And it can begin with community service, isn't that a requirement for each of you all, community service? Yes. That is an example of making a mark in society. You can start off with community service and you can expand and do bigger things as you get older . . . and you can contribute back to society. So, the point is I want you all to be productive citizens, I'm sure many of you already are, but especially after you graduate that is very important for you all to become productive citizens. And you can do

that by making some kind of contributing mark in society. It is possible for you to do that now, even at a young age. And like I said you can start off by volunteering your time in community service, that is one way it is really important to contribute back to the community and think beyond yourself, be selfless. (Ellison classroom observation, 05/22/14)

Ms. Ellison stressed the importance of a citizen engaging in community service as a way to make a difference in their community. Similar to Ms. Harper, Ms. Ellison attempted to teach active citizenship (Avoseh, 2001) and frame leadership as premised on the responsibility and duty to serve others. Ms. Ellison valued community service as an essential component of citizenship and therefore explicitly made the connection between leadership, citizenship, and community service. She taught her students that leadership (which was a component of citizenship) required a person to be selfless and that their actions needed to help the community. Citizenship meant being concerned with a changing society and serving others.

Knight and Watson (2014) interviewed a young African immigrant woman who viewed service as a part of participatory communal citizenship. The young woman recalled being raised with a worldview of giving back as a way to honor her ancestors, family, and native country. Although Ms. Ellison does not have an immigrant background or experience, she drew from her mother's service in the military (Ellison interview, 05/16/14) and her own experience in her sorority to craft an understanding of citizenship that valued giving back to the Downton community.

This aligned with Westheimer and Kahne's (2007) *participatory citizen* category, where students were taught citizenship as a citizen engaging in community-based service.

Ms. Ellison went beyond this stance of citizenship education because the way she taught citizenship was in the context of Downton and for students to serve that particular African American and Latina/o community. Moreover, this notion of service to the community was rooted in notions of fictive kinship (Stack, 1974) and sisterhood from her sorority. Because of the raced and gendered aspect of her participation with her sorority, it represented the long tradition of Black women's organization work in activism and community uplift as citizenship (Brown, 2006; Collins, 2009). Therefore, the notion of service was thought of as a way to uplift the Downton community. Black women's work in community uplift has been a way for Black women to engage in citizenship work while being relegated to the private sphere because of the racist and patriarchal structures (Brown, 2006). Ms. Ellison's lessons on leaders/citizens engaging in community service was reminiscent of the historic practice of Black women's work in racial/community uplift.

The emphasis on creating a class community was apparent in Mrs. Beason's class from the moment I first walked into her classroom. Because Mrs. Beason defined citizenship in terms of the civil sense of belonging to a group, she took steps to ensure that each student felt part of their class community. To do this, Mrs. Beason allowed each of her classes to choose a class name that she would call them. She did this in hopes that it would help facilitate a feeling of community and allow students to feel part of the class community. For example, the class that I worked with wanted to be known as the "300

164

block"[6] (Beason classroom observation, 04/25/14). Second, Mrs. Beason implemented a policy that encouraged civility and the expectation that students must treat one another with kindness and respect. If a student insulted another student or the teacher, then that student must give the person they had offended two compliments. I was able to witness this policy towards the end of one class when students were presenting their Southeast Asia projects.

> **Mrs. Beason:** All right students you've gotta give me something.
>
> **Maria (pseudonym)** presents her drawing of two cultural symbols that represented Southeast Asia to the class.
>
> **Isaiah** (pseudonym) laughs at Maria's drawing.
>
> **Mrs. Beason**: Oh no, you know what that means! Class, what does it mean?
>
> **Class**: He gotta give her two-ups![7]
>
> **Mrs. Beason**: All right, you gotta tell her two compliments.

The student quickly gave two compliments, but when the bell rang another student made a joke at the expense of Mrs. Beason.

> **Mrs. Beason**: Okay, now you owe me some two-ups for that!
>
> **Jayden** (pseudonym): Uh . . . . You look like someone off of *Soul Train*.[8]

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[6] The class chose the name "300" after the 2006 action movie based on a graphic novel about the Spartan warriors during the Persian Wars.

[7] "Two ups" meant the student must give two compliments.

[8] *Soul train* was a musical variety television program that first aired in 1971 known for its music, dancing, and 1970s fashion. The show featured R&B, soul, disco, and a variety of other musical genres.

Mrs. Beason: (laughs) Imma miss you next year.

Mrs. Beason attempted to create a safe and supportive community environment in her classroom. The students belonged to a community culture where they were able to develop a group identity and learn to treat each other with respect and civility. The exchange represented a disruption in the class community when Isaiah laughed at Maria's drawing. In order to heal the class community, Mrs. Beason's policy of two compliments after a moment of disrespect was an effort to encourage community building and make sure that everyone felt part of their class community. This situation illustrated that, to Mrs. Beason, citizenship was more than the acquisition of civic knowledge or membership to the nation-state; citizenship involved sustaining relationships within a community and the duty of citizens to enact critical caring in their interactions with other individuals in the community, all done in an effort to build a strong sense of community.

Cultural community citizenship

A number of scholars have written about cultural community membership as being a valid form of citizenship and a way that historically marginalized groups have asserted themselves as citizens in public political spaces (Flores, 1997b; Ong, 1996; Rosaldo, 1994; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). Latino scholars (such as William Flores, Rina Benmayor, and Renato Rosaldo) have used cultural citizenship as a way for Latinos and other groups to retain the right to be different while attaining membership in society. Although notions of difference (in terms of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, and religion) have been used as qualifications to deny first-class

166

citizenship to countless individuals and groups, cultural citizenship is an effort to disrupt this cycle and prevent groups from experiencing forced assimilation in schools as a precondition for citizenship (see Anderson, 1988; Gordon, 1964; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002; Tyack, 1974). Flores (1997b) argued that cultural citizenship should be thought of as a range of different everyday activities in which groups "claim space in society, define their community, and claim rights. . . . It also involves self-definition, affirmation, and empowerment" (p. 262). The participants in this study recognized culture and community as essential components of citizenship. Each teacher found ways to purposely teach students to recognize cultural difference as a natural part of the human existence and that such differences were to be respected and maintained.

Ms. Ellison explicitly mentioned that an essential goal of her social studies class was for students to learn about cultural diversity and how to interact with and appreciate cultural differences. Cultural diversity was a central component of Ms. Ellison's leadership unit. She had frequent conversations with her students about the changing makeup of society and about the skills and knowledge that were needed in order to succeed in a globalized society. She said, "We live in an ever-changing global society. . . . The students must understand living in a diverse society deems it appropriate to acknowledge the customs and traditions of others" (Ellison interview, 05/14/14). One writing assignment had the students consider the question, "What happens when societies interact?" (Ellison classroom observation, 05/14/14). She explained to the class why this particular writing assignment and lesson was important to their lives as future leaders:

So what do you do when societies interact? As I mentioned to you earlier, when you all progress into the world, you are going to interact with people who have different backgrounds and people who have different cultural beliefs. When I say "diverse backgrounds," I mean people who have different cultural beliefs and have different religious beliefs. . . . So in the world that you are living in today, you have to be open minded and understanding that we live in a society that is very diverse and competitive, and through it all it is okay to be yourself and to be who you are. (Ellison interview, 05/14/14)

This lesson was especially important for her students because of the residential segregation of DHS, resulting from "White flight" and Black suburbanization (Massey & Denton, 1993; Orfield, 1988). The student population at DHS was approximately 94% African American and Latina/o, 36% deemed "at risk," and White students made up less than 4% of the school population (TEA, 2012). Because of *de facto* segregation, Downton students rarely interacted with different racial/ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic groups, which left them without the necessary skills needed to successfully navigate a globalized society.

Ms. Ellison also wanted her students to develop an awareness of cultural differences in the world around them. She sent two messages in her above remarks: First, they were going to come into contact with people with different cultural beliefs and backgrounds, and that they needed to be accepting of differences. Cultural citizenship argues that cultural differences are not divisive to notions of national unity and that differences are central to how members of communities see themselves as citizens (Rosaldo, 1994, 1997). Ms. Ellison was echoing a similar sentiment in her previous remarks. She was making students aware of the fact that there are cultural differences in

the world and that it was the role of a leader/citizen to know that difference is an acceptable and normal part of the human experience. Second, Ms. Ellison reminded students of their own cultural identity and that it was okay to be themselves. While Ms. Ellison did not give any historical context to her remarks, it appeared that she was alluding to the historic assimilationist policies and preconditions for citizenship (Park, 1930, 1950; Park & Burgess, 1921) that were unattainable requirements for communities of color because of the additional racial and gendered ascriptive requirements of citizenship. Here, Ms. Ellison was drawing directly from cultural citizenship in her affirmation of her students' existence as cultural beings.

Mrs. Beason noted that learning to interact with different cultures was also an important component of citizenship education in her social studies class. More specifically, "how they interact with each other and the language, their culture, and their values" (Beason interview, 05/27/14). Mrs. Beason described her social studies class as

> . . . A class where you learned about different cultures, different regions of the world, and how they interact not only with the environment but as well as how we interact with them. How cultures move from place to place and how although we are the same in one aspect where we have our traditions, families, we respect and honor our values and we want to live better and have great things. We also differ in how we reach those goals. . . . We all obtain it the same way, we all want the same things, it's just that our world views are different, and it has lot to do with our environment and our lifestyles. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Mrs. Beason made the learning of cultures a fundamental goal of her world geography class. She approached teaching geography in a way that centered on people and on how, although people differ based on cultural beliefs, there are human characteristics that link

people together. Furthermore, because interacting with different cultures was inevitable because of migration and commerce, students must learn to develop an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity:

> I want them [students] to be open-minded, not be so close-minded, because of just their experiences but through knowledge they can grow and understand what goes on in other parts of the world. . . . I try to show them how life is different and how you see things may be different from different cultures, but it doesn't make it weird. And I don't want them to learn *tolerance*; I want them to learn *acceptance* and be able to accept differences. Because we can always tolerate something, but that doesn't mean that we have accepted or respected it. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Mrs. Beason's desire for students to become open-minded stemmed from her experiences growing up during the civil rights movements[9] (Beason interview, 05/16/14). She wanted her students to move beyond the notion of tolerance and towards a more active stance of acceptance.

Mrs. Beason's stance on acceptance of differences represented a civil rights-era mentality of racial and cultural progress. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) wrote that while the civil rights movement represented incrementalism in terms of progress and equality, later movements and intellectual frameworks (such as critical race theory) are more active in their attack of the foundation of liberalism representing a racist structure. Mrs. Beason (like Ms. Ellison) failed to critique the structure for failing to be more inclusive of differences and instead only taught students (at an individual level) to be more accepting of cultural differences. However, Mrs. Beason was aware of the assimilationist

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[9] This will be discussed further in chapter 6.

nature of citizenship and society (Park, 1930, 1950; Park & Burgess, 1921) and admitted to having discussions with students about different cultural groups' inability to maintain their cultural identity living in the United States as a result of the pressure to fit in and succeed (Beason interview, 05/27/14). She stated that her students were able to give examples of assimilation in their own lives in terms of friends or family members giving up their native language, dress, or beliefs after some time.

One project for Mrs. Beason's ninth grade students required the creation of "micro societies."[10] One of the first steps of building a micro society was that the students needed to create a governing body, which included the writing of a Bill of Rights. Mrs. Beason stressed the importance of the students' creating the Bill of Rights because it represented the rights that the citizens felt were fundamental to their existence as human beings in the community and that the government must not infringe upon (Beason interview, 05/27/14). The micro society Bill of Rights created by the student governing body listed rights such as the right to vote, choice of representation, and freedom of speech (Beason classroom artifact, 05/29/14). While these rights are similar to those listed in the U.S. Bill of Rights (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), the students also included additional rights, such as the "right to keep beliefs" and the "right to be cultural beings" (Beason classroom artifact, 05/29/14). Rosaldo (1994, 1997) and Flores (1997b)

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[10] MicroSociety, Inc., is a non-profit program in schools that encourages students to apply classroom knowledge to real world scenarios through the creation of a micro society where students create governing bodies and become entrepreneurs. By participating in the micro societies, the students learn and practice twenty-first century skills in the classroom by managing their own miniature community for one period a day.

use cultural citizenship as a way for Latinas/os to claim culture as a fundamental component of citizenship. It also highlights cultural community as a valid site of citizenship. The students in Mrs. Beason's micro society were performing notions of cultural citizenship by adding "the right to be cultural beings" to their community Bill of Rights. They found it necessary to include in their Bill of Rights the right for citizens to maintain their cultural communal beliefs and identities, which they considered necessary to their existence as citizens in their micro society community. By adding cultural communal rights into their Bill of Rights, the students asserted that these rights were important to their community identity and charged the government to respect and protect those rights in exchange for their allegiance.

Ms. Harper also noted that culture and cultural identity united students in the Downton school community and was vital to how students viewed themselves as citizens. For example, observing the behavior of students during school assemblies made her realize that Downton students did not feel compelled to adhere to traditional "patriotic" exhibitions of citizenship to the nation-state. Instead, she believed Downton students valued the different cultural identities and memberships represented in the community as legitimate manifestations of citizenship.

> I don't think our kids buy in to patriotic displays of citizenship. Like, if we're doing the pledge or something, we got kids on the phone. If we're doing the national anthem I'll tell my kids, "You're supposed to take your hat off," but like they don't care. Some of them either had phones, some were laughing and playing around, but it's very different when we have cultural assemblies . . . like we used to have a Cinco de Mayo kind of program, like they'll sit and listen to that, and I think like their citizenship

is defined here [at DHS] more by where you fit in culturally. Because it's not so much that patriotism idea, even though that's I think what the American idea of citizenship is. But I think for our kids it's more of a cultural type of citizenship. It's being a part of a group culture is their citizenship membership. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

Ms. Harper observed that her students engaged in acts of resistance to traditional/ Whitestream displays of citizenship by refusing to participate in patriotic performances of citizenship. In her study on the civic experiences of urban youth, Rubin (2007) found that sociocultural constructions of citizenship and civic identity were formed and performed as a result of the lived experiences of individuals, especially for youth in urban environments. Ms. Harper's numerous statements and observations suggest that she believed that her students were cognizant that different cultures and cultural beliefs were not valued in the mainstream discourse on citizenship and therefore refused to engage in traditional performance of citizenship as a form of resistance. Students expressed cultural solidarity with their own cultural group and others who were also marginalized in public political spaces. Because these students supported the cultural performance of the Cinco de Mayo program, this was an example of students viewing citizenship as culturally based and rooted in forging a community where different cultural groups experienced a sense of belonging and recognition (Flores, 1997b).

Student participation in cultural events and rites of passage (specific to culture) was a common experience for Downton students. One student in Ms. Harper's class frequently displayed and pronounced pride in his Mexican heritage and dual citizenship. I noted in my field notes quite a few instances where Francisco (pseudonym) would "shout

out" or "represent" his borderland Mexican/American citizenship (Anzaldúa, 1987) and familial roots in Mexico (Harper classroom observations, 04/29/14, 05/06/14, 05/12/14). In response to his "shout outs," the other students would respond either by verbally supporting him (by making affirming noises), asking questions about Mexico or his family, or encouraging him to affirm his dual Mexican/American identity. I asked Ms. Harper later about Francisco and his display of cultural pride and identity, and she described Downton as being a school and community where people were comfortable expressing cultural identities.

> Because he [Francisco] is in a predominantly Black school, and the kids, they're really good about embracing each other. I think, too, if he went to maybe like a Middleton[11] (pseudonym), which is predominantly White, that he wouldn't talk about it as much. . . . But I think that if he didn't go here to Downton with these kids that he wouldn't be so overt about it. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

She expanded upon her statement by noting the sense of belonging Francisco had experienced in Downton and the openness of the school community.

> And I think here because everyone's more open about who they are, they don't really care if people do it. It's a minority school, so basically he feels comfortable with it. I think he really takes pride in being here. I've never seen anyone be afraid to express their culture, who they are, or where they're from. I've never had that with these kids, and I even have some kids whose parents are African immigrants and they'll talk to you about it and they'll bring you food. And I don't know if it's just the school, I don't know how it looks in other schools, but I know here that most of the time people are pretty open about who they are. (Harper interview, 05/23/14)

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[11] Middleton is a majority White suburb 14 miles south of Downton. Middleton is known in the Downton community as a city where a number of former White Downton residents moved to during the decade of "White flight" from Downton.

174

Ms. Harper believed that because Downton was a predominantly African American and Latina/o school and community, the people enacted the notion that citizens (both in the school and in the surrounding community) had the right to maintain their cultural identity and beliefs. The students felt comfortable embracing their cultural identity in that space because they recognized culture as a uniting entity that was central to how they viewed themselves as citizens.

Flores (1997a) believed that cultural performance was linked to cultural citizenship because it forged a collective sense of community and belonging that was shared by multiple people. The cultural performance can be seen as a vehicle to utilize culture and history to experience solidarity and pride with the community. Moreover, cultural citizenship is a form of resistance because it produces a collective sense of self that builds solidarity in communities of color. Flores (1997a) suggested that "this aspect of cultural citizenship takes seriously a community's efforts, rather conscious or not, to exert their own particular sense of self through cultural practice since these efforts are the foundation for any common action" (p. 150). Cultural identity and cultural performances were ways that Downton students expressed solidarity and uplift as a community. Their cultural communal understanding of citizenship fostered solidarity and strength within the Downton community.

Discussion

Yuval-Davis (2006) and Hall and Held (1990) argue that modern-day citizenship entails deciding who belongs in the nation-state and what signifies belonging. Yuval-

Davis (2006) wrote that the notion of belonging represents an emotional attachment and feelings of being "safe" and "at home." She noted that it was common for historically marginalized communities to have a desire to conform so as not to feel excluded from membership. While "conforming" has often taken the form of assimilation (Park, 1930, 1950; Park & Burgess, 1921), more and more communities have chosen to reject the notion of "conforming" to an unattainable ideal in order to acquire citizenship. They have instead opted to reclaim a more validating type of citizenship, where cultural and community identity are fundamental components of citizenship (Flores, 1997b; Rosaldo, 1994, 1997). Flores (1997b) stated that cultural citizenship was a way for those who had been excluded from citizenship to feel at home and free to exist as cultural beings. It also asserted that the cultural community was a safe and legitimate space to exist as citizens—both to their cultural community and to the nation-state.

The community serves as an important site of solidarity and resistance in the struggle for citizenship for African Americans because it gives them a space to enact understandings of citizenship that align with their own cultural and communal history and knowledge. William Flores (1997b) wrote that cultural citizenship allows communities the opportunity to define their own sense of self and group membership, envision the kind of society they want to live in, and interpret their own histories. While the African American women participants in this study, at times, drew on cultural (Flores, 1997a, 1997b; Rosaldo, 1994, 1997), active and communal (Avoseh, 2001), and participatory communal (Knight & Watson, 2014) notions of citizenship, their understanding and

176

teaching of citizenship was shaped largely by a Black feminist epistemological standpoint in how they conceptualized citizenship as (a) relational: creating a space where individuals experienced a sense of belonging; (b) uplifting: dedicated to the betterment and empowerment of the Black community; and (c) universal: experienced in multiple situations and contexts.

All three participants described their own personal conceptualization of citizenship as relational and based on fostering meaningful connections with others. But the ways in which they described their relationships were based on the raced and gendered notions of sisterhood and collective childrearing/othermothering (Collins, 2009; Foster, 1993, 1997). Thompson (1998) believed that it is important to view the practice of othermothering not solely in terms of caring for children, but rather as a way to sustain adult and community relationships. Collective childrearing is relational in nature because the practice of raising children is seen as the job of the community. This perspective fosters communal solidarity and provides members a sense of belonging. Therefore, othermothering can be seen as a form of community uplift because it brings individuals closer and allows multiple women to take part in collective childrearing to aid in the development of future citizens of the community. As previously mentioned, Black women's relationships with one another as othermothers or sisters provides a space to affirm one another and their right to exist (Collins, 2009). These fictive kin relationships (Stack, 1974) offer Black women a space of community support and resistance when faced with oppression (Collins, 2009).

Both representations of citizenship (othermothering and sisterhood) symbolize how groups of African American women can form relationships in community spaces that foster uplift, solidarity, and empowerment to resist objectification (Collins, 2009). The notion of uplift, belonging, and solidarity were crucial points in how the participants understood citizenship. By conceptualizing citizenship as relational, the participants reasserted relationships, people, and humanity as fundamental components of citizenship (Collins, 2009).

Because citizenship could be seen in terms of the relationships forged in fictive kin communities, citizenship could be experienced in communal and familial spaces. Knight and Watson (2014) described a participatory communal notion of citizenship in which outside school spaces were seen as valid sites of citizenship. In these spaces, civic knowledge could be learned in particularly situated contexts and through interactions with family and community members. This view not only substantiates different sources and forms of knowledge as legitimate (Collins, 2009) and that civic knowledge involves matters other than those related to the nation-state, but it also demonstrates that different forms of community (such as classroom, family, school, culture, or nation-state) can be seen as sites of citizenship.

CHAPTER SIX: "I DO THESE THINGS BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO ENTER": BLACK FEMINIST ETHIC OF CARING AND IT'S IMPACT ON TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

Introduction

The following research questions guided this chapter: (1) How do the intersections of identity for African American women teachers, along with their experiences, influence the ways in which they define and teach citizenship to their students? (2) Why and how do they teach citizenship in transformative ways? The data revealed that the participants' backgrounds and experiences as African American women significantly impacted how they understood and taught citizenship to their students. Their pedagogical and curricular decisions were rooted in a Black feminist ethic of caring and humanity (Collins, 2009; Thompson, 1998) in which Black women's cultural knowledge was privileged and utilized in the classroom as a valid source of knowledge. Because all three women lived in and knew the Downton community, they were able to draw from community and cultural knowledge in order to teach students communal and participatory notions of citizenship (Avoseh, 2001; Knight & Watson, 2014).

Black feminist and womanist epistemologies

African American women possess an incredible wealth of knowledge and experiences derived from their intersecting identities. Several scholars have documented the many ways in which they, as teachers, used their cultural knowledge as a way to

validate their existence as human beings while simultaneously uplifting the race (see, e.g., the work of Beverly Gordon, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Vanessa Siddle Walker). Audrey Thompson (1998) stated the significance of this practice and the necessity for this type of teaching for African American students:

> African American students will not receive the kind of guidance and support that they need to flourish if teachers teach them not to know or mention what their communities have taught them or what they can see for themselves. . . . Adult African American knowledge . . . is honest, but not innocent. It is capable of making meaning of experience in a way that childhood intuitions and knowledge cannot, because it is specially historical and communal knowledge. (p. 16)

Thompson argued that the teaching of African American communal knowledge is essential for the development of African Americans. She contended that African American adult knowledge is "honest, but not innocent" in that it conveys a reality specific to the experiences of the collective African American community. African American teachers in the research literature have been known to draw upon this communal cultural knowledge in order to effectively teach students about the realities of civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012) and the duality of citizenship and what those realities looked like in their own communities.

Black feminist thought is a framework that recognizes and validates the vast knowledge and experiences of African American women and how they use those experiences to enact social change in both classrooms and communities. Black feminist thought offers two important contributions towards extending our understanding of the connections among knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. First,

Black feminist thought represents a paradigmatic shift in how we conceptualize oppression by acknowledging that race, class, and gender are three interlocking systems of oppression. Second, revealing new forms of knowledge allows subordinate groups to define their own realities and determine their own truths. Resistance takes place when individuals identify themselves as subjects, define their own reality, shape their new identity, name their history, and tell their own story (Collins, 2009). Collins (1996) argued that the act of placing the term "Black" in front of "feminist" disrupts the exclusionary aspect of feminism. The goal of Black feminism is not only to create a political movement against institutional structures (economic, political, and social) but also to protect the public representation of Black women's minds, voices, and bodies (Taylor, 1998). This perspective views the experiences of African American women as normative instead of divergent from those of Black men or White women.

Womanism comes from a similar tradition of Black feminist thought. Acclaimed writer Alice Walker (1983) used the term "womanism" to represent the cultural, historical, and political positionality of African American women (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005). According to Collins (2009), Walker preferred "womanist" over "feminist" because she felt the latter addressed the notion of human solidarity. However, Walker recognized the similarity between the two terms when she suggested, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (Collins, 1998, p. 61). Like Black feminism, womanism considers empowerment and collective action as pathways to social transformation. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2005) stated that in order to understand the thoughts and practices

of African American women teachers, it is important to first contextualize their experiences within the cultural and historical legacy of the tradition of teaching. Womanism recognizes and celebrates women's contributions to the survival and transformation of their communities. Womanism also validates individual or collective wisdom that originates from the lived experiences of Black women. This "motherwit" offers a counternarrative to hegemonic notions of truth and knowledge (Collins, 2009) as well as the knowledge necessary for African Americans to survive. Finally, womanism embraces a humanist vision of humanity (Collins, 2009) that seeks to empower and restore the dignity of all humankind. By drawing on tenets of Black feminist thought and womanism, teachers are able to enact an activist and humanist standpoint with an eye towards uplifting the community.

Teacher identity

There has been an emergence of literature exploring how a teacher's identity influences her/his practice. "Teacher identity" refers to a teacher's sense of self, knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and interests. Spillane (2000) argued that what and how teachers learn is formed by their identities both as teachers and as learners. A teacher brings with her/him a unique identity as a teacher, but as more time is spent in the field, that identity is renegotiated (Agee, 2004). Agee (1998, 200a, 2000b, 2004) has documented the many ways that teachers bring their unique histories into their practice. For African American women, the "double consciousness" (DuBois, 1903/1994)—or, as Frances Beale (King, 1988) suggested, "double jeopardy"—of their intersecting identities

182

as being both African American and women has given them a distinctive perspective on the construct of citizenship (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; hooks, 1999). Delgado Bernal (2002) argued for the necessity of critical raced–gendered epistemologies in that they

> Offer unique ways of knowing and understanding the world based on the various raced and gendered experiences of people of color. In my mind, there is not just one raced–gendered epistemology but many that each speak to culturally specific ways of positioning between a raced epistemology that omits the influence of gender on knowledge production and a White feminist epistemology that does not account for race. (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 107)

These multiple intersections of identity can have an important effect on teachers and their pedagogical and curricular decisions. In her study on how a pre-service teacher negotiated her identity, Agee (2004) reported that race complicated the pre-service teacher's struggle to develop a teaching identity where she integrated multicultural texts in a White-dominated space.

Although multiple identities can cause a teacher to question their pedagogical choices, Dixon and Dingus (2008) found that African American teachers still managed to position themselves as school- and community-based advocates who played a vital role in the African American community. Moreover, the authors found a recurring view among the participants—namely, that they viewed teaching as a means of empowering African Americans and their community. Collins (2009) argued that for Black women, "empowerment involves rejecting the dimensions of knowledge, whether personal,

cultural, or institutional, that perpetuates objectification and dehumanization . . . and views the skills gained in schools as part of a focused education for Black community development" (p. 230).

In order to empower African American students and the community, a number of Black teachers will draw from their personal experiences and make purposeful pedagogical and curricular decisions to reject the knowledge of oppression. This revolutionary act allows them to teach students the knowledge and history they will need to be successful citizens.

Historic roles of African American teachers

According to Bettye Collier-Thomas (1982), education has been an enduring and consistent theme in the life, struggle, and resistance of African Americans. She once wrote the following, characterizing the history of African American women educators:

> This history of black women in education offers valuable insights into the larger role played by women and blacks in the struggle for racial and sexual equality. It illuminates the extent to which the black community was involved in the struggle to improve and "uplift" the masses. (p. 178)

Education was used as the vehicle to "uplift" their racial communities and to achieve first-class citizenship. Williams (1997) argued that African American women, in particular, worked in different spaces and interests in order to liberate the Black community. For example, Mary McLeod Bethune was an educator, clubwoman, leader, and a member of President Franklin Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet." As an educator, Bethune believed that the education of African Americans would aid their quest for first-

class citizenship (Davis, 1982). Bethune dedicated her life's work to the uplift of African Americans through access to education. She once stated, "I cannot rest while there is a single Negro boy or girl lacking a chance to prove his worth" (Davis, 1982). Bethune used her position and connections to prominent White politicians (including the President and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt) to help give African Americans access to education. It was reported that she had a hand in assisting 150,000 Black youth attend high school and over 60,000 attend college and graduate school under her leadership in the student aid program (Davis, 1982).

The work and life of Mary McLeod Bethune is one of countless stories of African American women educators and leaders going above and beyond to educate future citizens and community leaders. In her book documenting the history of an African American school and its teachers, Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) found that although African Americans attended segregated schools with inadequate facilities and resources, their schools were remembered in the community for having an atmosphere of support and encouragement combined with rigorous standards aimed at enhancing a student's self-worth. African American women have played a vital role in the education and uplift of Black communities.

In the 1980s, African American women scholars began documenting the historic work of Black women educators, past and present. A special issue of the *Journal of Negro Education* (Collier-Thomas, 1982) was devoted to exploring the impact of Black women in education. Since then, there have been several scholars who have recognized the

profound impact of historic and contemporary Black women educators in educating and uplifting the Black community (see, e.g., the work of Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant, Bettye Collier-Thomas, Adrienne Dixon, Michele Foster, Beverly Gordon, Annette Henry, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Michelle Knight, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Vanessa Siddle Walker). Interest in the topic continues to draw attention; in fact, in a recent edition, K. A. Johnson, Pitre, & K. L. Johnson (2014) critically examined the pedagogies, educational ideas, and activism of African American women educators from the 19th to the mid-20th century. Collectively, these scholars have presented narratives about numerous African American women educators who have worked hard to educate themselves in order to better serve and uplift African Americans and their communities.

To these women, teaching was more than a job; it was a spiritual calling and a way to serve and uplift their communities (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Gordon, 1985; Walker, 1996). Teaching, for African American women, was a form of activism and a way to resist the oppressive structure that marginalized Black citizens and communities. African American women have found ways to counter racist beliefs imposed on children (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008), legitimize the cultural knowledge of students (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005), and include the history of African Americans into their curriculum. In doing so, these teachers have been able to empower students by teaching them about their collective history in order to counter negative and stereotypical representations of African Americans in the traditional curriculum and society (Pang & Gibson, 2001). For example, Nannie Helen Burroughs

186

was an educator, clubwoman, organizer, and leader in the African American community of Washington, D.C., in the early 20th century. In 1909, she founded the *National Training School for Women and Girls* in Washington, D.C. As an educator and activist, she used the performance of a pageant to empower her African American students by combining the past triumphs of Africans with the contemporary problems that African Americans faced in the United States at the turn of the century (Murray, 2012). In addition to highlighting the achievements of Africans and African Americans throughout world history, she also reconceptualized the role of Black womanhood in American history by presenting the stories of Black women leaders throughout world history. She also gendered the image of labor and inserted the public and private work of Black women on equal status with that of Black men (Murray, 2012). Burroughs used the pageant as a vehicle to challenge the representations of African Americans, particularly of Black womanhood, and presented Black women as citizens equal to men.

Beverly Gordon (1985) believed a teacher's decision to privilege the cultural knowledge of students to be a profound phenomenon because

> African American cultural knowledge itself can be uniquely emancipatory for African Americans because it is born out of the African American community's historic common struggle and resistance against the various oppressive effects of capitalism and racism which have kept them in a subordinate position in American society. (p. 7)

The extant literature on African American woman educators reveals the activism that is present in their curricular decisions and actions. The decision to utilize the cultural assets of students of color is emancipatory for the fact that students of color often interpret the

omissions of non-White individuals in the curriculum as evidence of subordination. Researchers have documented numerous instances of teachers of color making conscious decisions to legitimize the cultural knowledge and experiences of their students (see, e.g., Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Gordon, 1985) in addition to making connections between students' home lives and the school culture/community (see, e.g., Howard, 2002; Salinas & Castro, 2010; Villegas, 1998). For example, Salinas and Castro (2010) studied the conscious decision making of two Latino pre-service social studies educators teaching in standards-based environments. The researchers found that these teachers often disrupted the official curriculum by drawing from their own personal histories and experiences as a way to teach issues of race and injustice. This practice of teachers of color using their cultural and community knowledge to disrupt the official curriculum is an act of resistance and a way to declare to students that their own intellectual heritage is a valid source of knowledge and has a place in schools.

Feminist frameworks of caring

A number of scholars have written about the importance of caring in order to encourage student learning. While caring is traditionally seen as "women's work" in the private sphere, which has been socially devalued by a capitalist and patriarchal society (Fisher & Tronto, 1990), Feminist scholars have attempted to reconceptualize and reassert the importance of caring in society—particularly within the context of schooling. Nell Noddings (1988) is well known in the field of education in the way she theorized feminine notions of caring. She used the term *authentic caring* as a way to describe the

necessity of a sustaining and reciprocal relationship between teachers and students that must take place in order for learning to occur.

However, scholars such as Audrey Thompson (1998) and Angela Valenzuela (1999) have critiqued the notion of caring in teaching because it operates from a colorblind perspective that fails to account for race and how it influences notions of caring. According to Black feminist and womanist scholars (Collins, 2009; Walker, 1983), the practice of caring is central to African American women and, as such, they have been known to draw from their concrete experiences what reinforces the notion of caring in the African American community. Thompson (1998) noted the differences between the two frameworks of caring:

> In contrast to most White feminist and feminine theories of care, Black feminist theories have paid close attention to the issue of race; and whereas colorblind theories of care tend to emphasize innocence, Black feminist ethical theories emphasize knowledge. Indeed, an almost defining feature of Black feminist ethical theory is that, characteristically, it is referenced to Black culture as experienced, interpreted, and reproduced by Black women and "womanish" girls. (p. 9)

The ethic of caring represents an alternative epistemology used by African American women and teachers. Collins (2009) proposed three essential components of the ethic of caring, stating that "personal expressiveness, emotions, and empathy are central to the knowledge validation process" (p. 282). Collins asserted that expressing emotions was appropriate when one was engaged in dialogue and that validating knowledge "involves developing the capacity for empathy" (p. 282). This Black feminist ethic of caring reiterates that teachers bring with them ways of knowing that are unique to

their experiences and to those of their communities. Black feminist ethics of caring are grounded in African American women's sensibilities and communal knowledge that is rooted in the need to uplift and sustain the community. This involves providing students with knowledge about racism and teaching them strategies to survive. Thompson (1998) contends that this form of caring is concerned with bringing about justice and changing society so that all citizens can succeed:

> Framed not just by the need to care for this particular child, this particular family, or this particular group of students, the Black feminist tradition of caring requires helping all African Americans to survive racism without loss of integrity; in part, this means helping to make society more just for generations as yet unborn. (Thompson, 1998, p. 10)

This form of caring emphasizes teaching African American students integrity and the will needed to endure a reality plagued by inequality. This activist and communal vision of caring is fundamental to how African American women teachers view their positions as teachers (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002).

In her study on an African American woman pre-service teacher, Knight (2004) found that the pre-service teacher conceptualized caring in a culturally diverse urban community to be rooted in individual and collective action and that she, as a teacher, had a responsibility to enact change within the school and surrounding community. The pre-service teacher viewed herself as part of the community and understood that an important part of her position was to work collaboratively with the community to improve the well-being of its citizens. Knight framed the pre-service teacher's perspective as being guided by a Black humanist vision of care. According to Knight, a Black humanist vision of care

is dedicated to enriching the lives of all humanity. She wrote, "This commitment is rooted in the motto of the African-American intellectual tradition 'lifting as we climb' which seeks the survival and wholeness of all people: male and female, children, youth, and adults" (p. 212). This vision of teaching emphasizes the teacher's role as an agent of change not only in the classroom but also in the surrounding community.

While there have been many documented cases in the research literature of the importance of teachers' exhibiting authentic and critical caring in teaching (see Casey, 1993; Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Noddings, 1988; Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999; Walker, 1996), according to Fisher and Tronto (1990), the gendered practice of caring often exhibited by women is usually undervalued within a capitalistic structure. Although society has not recognized these activist and community aspects of caring, they have been a fundamental practice exhibited by countless African American women teachers in the past and present that have resulted in the perseverance and strength of the African American community.

Emerging themes

After spending time with each teacher and her students, it was quite clear that all three women conceptualized teaching social studies and the notion of citizenship in very different ways and for very different reasons. And even though all three teachers had varying life and teaching experiences, it was apparent that their backgrounds and experiences heavily influenced how and why they understood and taught citizenship in transformative ways. All three teachers noted different events, experiences, or

relationships that helped shape how they viewed their roles as social studies teachers and how they approached teaching citizenship.

Two themes emerged from the data that demonstrated why the teachers understood and taught citizenship in a way that valued community and cultural membership. First, the teachers' identities and conceptions of their roles as citizenship educators were heavily influenced by their prior experiences and, more importantly, their relationships with family members and the community. The other theme demonstrated that all three teachers felt the urgency, the *necessity*, of teaching students about the realities of existing in an inequitable society and the knowledge to successfully navigate those waters as dual citizens.

Ms. Ellison: "It's not over"

Eleventh grade American history teacher Ms. Zabrina Ellison sat quietly thinking. She opened her mouth to speak, but then suddenly changed her mind. After a few brief moments, she smiled and then responded,

> Many of them say . . . well, I think they would say that I am stern, but flexible. I do have expectations, and I keep my expectations. However, I am flexible because I do know that students are different and I pretty much know their personalities. I know when you can walk in and you're going to have a bad day so I know how to let you be. So yeah, I think the students would say that Ms. Ellison is very stern. That she is going to keep her expectations, but at the same time, Ms. Ellison is approachable as well. (Ellison interview, 05/16/14)

Ms. Ellison was responding to a question I had asked about how she thought her students viewed her as a teacher. Her response suggested that while she wanted her students to

recognize that she had high expectations for them, she wanted them to see her as approachable. Walker (1996) wrote that the African American students at the Caswell County Training School saw their teachers' high expectations as an indication that the teachers cared for them. Vasquez (1989) noted that successful teachers of students of color could be referred to as "warm demanders," in that they held high standards for their students of color, but were willing to help students reach those standards. In her statement, Ms. Ellison expressed a similar sentiment when she stated that her students would consider her stern in her expectations, yet approachable (Ellison interview, 05/16/14).

After observing her lessons and interactions with her students, it was apparent that she had formed meaningful relationships with her students based on mutual respect and high expectations. Her classroom became a space of rigorous learning, reflection, and application, with the occasional life lesson. Throughout my observations and interactions with Ms. Ellison, her life lessons were connected to notions of leadership, "real life," and the students' roles as citizens. Many times throughout her lessons, Ms. Ellison would consistently remind students of her expectations for them. A week after her students had completed the state-mandated end of course (EOC) exam, she began class by reiterating a key theme of her leadership unit:

> It's not over. . . . But, that being said, I want us to make sure that we stay focused on the fact that it is *not* over, meaning some things I've said to you all on Monday—that to make sure that we are all on the same page,

meaning IDs[12] are still expected, dress code is still expected to be in effect, same expectations. (Ellison classroom observation, 05/14/14)

Even though Ms. Ellison was speaking in terms of students upholding school-wide expectations in terms of dress code and displaying proper identification, she was attempting to instill a lesson into her students about staying on course and not slacking off because it was near the end of the school year. She continued to remind students to keep working hard until the very end. This also fed into what she considered the importance of her social studies class.

> I want them to have the same passion that I have, I guess basically is what I'm trying to say. I just want my students to understand that they have a responsibility as students now and in the future to be productive citizens, and that takes leadership and all the things I try to implement in the classroom is what I want you to get out in social studies class. So I mean, honestly, maybe five or six years down the line, you may not remember the content, but hopefully you do remember some of those skills that I have taught you about leadership. Those are the things I want you to get out of my social studies class—not just the content, even though it is important—but there are some lifelong skills that I feel you should get out of my class as well. (Ellison interview, 05/16/14)

Family as influencing her teacher identity and notions of citizenship

Although a number of scholars have noted the occurrence of a shared cultural history of characteristics for African American teachers (Walker, 1996, 2001), I argue that the teaching style of African American women teachers is largely guided by their epistemologies as African American women and the experiences and knowledge that accompany that identity (Collins, 2009). When asked how she developed her framework

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[12] Student identification badges that Downton students were required to wear every day.

194

for teaching social studies and for her position as a teacher, Ms. Ellison noted that the women in her family were a strong influence in her life and her identity as a social studies teacher.

> I guess my mother, and all of my aunts — I have 5 aunts, they're all single, they're all strong ladies. So I saw a lot of leadership from a woman's perspective and a lot of goal setting that my aunts did. I could remember hearing them talk about what they wanted to do and I believe they really influenced how I am in the classroom as far as making sure they [students] have leadership skills, as far as letting the girls or boys these days really know that you don't have to depend on other people. I mean, I put all of that into the curriculum. And so I would just say just the influence of my mother and my aunts . . . just seeing how they went through it all: raising children on their own, no men involved, and just to see them earn their master's degree and see them going through college and so to me it was just . . . like it is understood I am going to college. My mom and my aunts did this before — it is just a matter of how can I do it successfully on my own. (Ellison interview, 05/16/14)

According to Ms. Ellison, her aunts and mother were examples of strong women who exhibited leadership in their personal and professional lives. More importantly, they served as role models of what leadership looked like for someone close to her. Her aunts embodied the image of successful African American women who, despite adversity and experiencing "life," set goals and worked hard to achieve those goals.

Although her statements above, suggesting that "you don't have to depend on other people" (Ellison interview, 05/16/14), appear to negate the previously discussed lessons and statements regarding the importance of service and community membership, they instead refer to her sentiments regarding the reality of struggle in her own life and that of the women in her family. Ms. Ellison recounted her own difficulties not only in

195

balancing life as a social studies teacher, single mother of three children, and doctoral student at a local university, but also in dealing with the reality of oppression and how others view her as an African American woman. While discussing the obstacles she faced in her daily life, she stated the biggest one she had had to negotiate was her perceived position in society as an African American woman. She stated, "The world is full of people who do not see me as an equal. I have to work extra hard and stay focused on my goals" (Ellison interview, 05/16/14). The feeling of being subjugated or seen as an outsider is not uncommon among African American women, according to Black feminist thought. The silence and exclusion of African American women in public intellectual spaces are attempts to negate the reality and experiences of Black womanhood (Collins, 2009). Nevertheless, instead of accepting this reality, Ms. Ellison implied that it motivated her to continue on her chosen path.

This acknowledgement and experience of struggle in her own life and the lessons it has taught her had been embedded into her leadership unit. For instance, in one class session, Ms. Ellison had her students reflect on different quotations and poems associated with leadership skills and on how they related to their own lives.

> The second part of the writing reflection is, "if the leader can't navigate the rough waters he is liable to sink." You are going to write down that statement. Remember, I asked you all to explain each concept and how it applies to your life. The last part is the poem, and you are to read it and write how it applies to your life. (Ellison classroom observation, 05/14/14)

The statement students were to analyze and apply to their lives was a fundamental premise throughout her leadership unit. Several times I witnessed Ms. Ellison referring

back to the reality of experiencing "rough waters" and how students should not let it deter them from their goals and dreams. She normalized the existence of struggle and treated it as something that was a common occurrence in life but reiterated that leaders needed to learn how to navigate the "rough waters" and stay on course. Her decision to teach about struggle as a normal experience for leaders was largely guided from her own life experiences.

In the second half of this assignment, Ms. Ellison had students read the poem "What Life Is All About" (Author unknown, n.d.) and make connections to their own lives. The poem attempted to move away from an individualistic and materialistic mindset towards what is important in life.

> *Life isn't about keeping score.*
> *It isn't about who you are dating, who you used to date,*
> *It's not about how beautiful or ugly you are . . .*
> *Or how smart standardized tests say you are . . . .*
> *It's not about what clubs you're in or how good you are at "your" sport.*
> *It's not about representing your whole being on a piece of paper and*
> *seeing who will accept "the written you" . . .*
> *But, life is about who you love and who you hurt. It's about who you make*
> *happy or unhappy purposefully . . .*
> *It's about who you've ignored with full control and intention . . .*
> *But most of all, it's about using your life to touch or poison other people's*
> *hearts in such a way that could have never occurred alone.*
> *Only you can choose the way those hearts are affected and those choices*
> *are what life's all about.*
> (Ellison classroom artifact, 05/14/14)

The second half of the poem sought to have the reader adopt an outlook on life concerned with a person's relationship to others and contributions to society. By completing the written reflection and analysis of the poem, the students were sent the message that while

struggle is a normal part of life, they need to be concerned with how their actions affect others and dedicate their lives to the betterment of others and society. She was once again teaching her students a communal perspective of citizenship and the necessity of students being concerned with how their actions affect and attend to the needs of others and the community (Avoseh, 2001). Furthermore, these decisions are reminiscent of the historical racial uplift discourse that African American clubwomen and teachers communicated prior to school desegregation (Brown, 2006; Murray, 2013; Walker, 1996). Working towards the uplift of African Americans is a tenet of womanism (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Walker, 1981) and an example of caring as an act of advocacy for the African American community.

Ms. Ellison's students understood the lesson of the poem and the lesson on service. One student wrote the following reflection in his journal on what he learned from the poem: "Life is not about the material things and what your reputation is in school, but more about making an impact on other people's lives and being the person that leads the crowd and not follow it" (Ellison classroom artifact, 05/12/14). From the student's response, it is clear that he was able to grasp the message of moving away from an individualistic perspective of life and instead focus outward towards caring about others.

After she taught this lesson, I asked Ms. Ellison why she decided to include the lesson on struggle in her leadership unit. She reiterated the necessity of future citizens developing leadership skills and that struggle would be part of their lives. But more

importantly, she admitted that she wanted to make the content and lessons relevant to the students' own lives and experiences:

> Well, it is the reality, basically it is what I have learned and observed and they are at the point now where they are beginning to look for jobs. It is almost summertime, so many of them are going to be seeking employment. And they need to know that the world may not always pacify them, the world is not going to be nice to you, and so I wanted them to know that. And another reason why I want them to know that is because they declared that I am so mean, that I'm so — *cold hearted* is what they say — but what I wanted them to know is that that's by far the opposite. I do these things because I know what you are about to enter: A world that is competitive, a world that will spit in your face and, you know, stab you in the back, and so I wanted to just bring that lesson in. (Ellison interview, 05/16/14)

Teaching the reality of discrimination and resilience

Life lessons of struggle and resilience were also prominent in Ms. Ellison's leadership unit. One class session focused on perseverance and how to change society. She began the lesson by asking,

> How do you go through those difficult situations or interact with different people and yet still, you can make a contributing mark in society? Has that ever happened to you? . . . The connection can be made regardless. . . . It's about perseverance and staying in tune with what you want to accomplish and perseverance. Remember, Maxwell[13] talks about those rough waters, how we are going to encounter them in life no matter what because they are a part of life. So we have to stay focused and stay set on what we want to accomplish. . . . I know I said it plenty of times, but there will be challenges that you will have, and so it will be up to you to make the right decision to stay on the path that you have for yourself. Today we are going to watch a second movie; this is *The Tuskegee Airmen*, who was a group of African American pilots who, despite their challenges or cultural diversity of the world, were able to make a mark on society. And so I am

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[13] Maxwell, J. (1998). *The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership: Follow them and people will follow you.* The class had been reading excerpts from this book throughout the leadership unit.

asking you that same question as we have already discussed previously: You already know that you will encounter several challenges, but how do you still preserve and how do you leave a contributing mark in society? That is a question that I want you all to think about, and we are going to write about it later in the class. (Ellison classroom observation, 05/22/14)

Through writing reflections and class discussions, the students were tasked with finding connections between the movie and the leadership theme, as well as its application to their own personal experiences. This reflective practice was done so that students could use examples of historical figures demonstrating perseverance and apply it to their own lives.

Ms. Ellison also added another layer to this activity by choosing to use the example of the Tuskegee Airmen. The Tuskegee Airmen were African American male pilots who served their country heroically during the Second World War. Ms. Ellison later stated that the decision to feature African Americans was intentional "to show students it is not impossible for them to accomplish their goals or be leaders in a global society" (Ellison interview, 08/18/14). In a number of her lessons, Ms. Ellison prominently featured African American historical figures as a way for students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. In an earlier lesson, the students watched a movie about Ruby Bridges and her efforts to integrate New Orleans public schools in the 1960s. Ms. Ellison later stated that she used a variety of African American historical figures and examples to show that people of all ages, genders, and races can endure hardships or trauma to change society:

> I personally like the Ruby Bridges story because it depicts a young kid who presents all the principles we have talked about. From what I have seen and read, it seems as though the students have been able to make personal connections to her story or that of the Tuskegee Airmen. I hope students understand there is no age limit on leadership. (Ellison interview, 08/18/14)

Moreover, by choosing to feature African Americans to focus on the theme of perseverance in the face of adversity, she demonstrated to students the reality of institutional racism as well as examples of resistance. For example, the students watched the movie about the Tuskegee Airmen and their experiences confronting institutional racism, segregation, and second-class citizenship. But despite these barriers, the men collectively worked together not only to combat racial discrimination in the military but also to lead the way towards the public recognition of African American valor and first-class citizenship.

In most of the classes I observed, Ms. Ellison made it a point to give students the opportunity to make connections to their own lives as a way for them to see themselves in the lessons through their written reflections, small-group conversations, and whole-class discussions. She welcomed their personal stories, and quite a few students felt comfortable sharing their own personal stories. For example, after seeing the movie about Ruby Bridges, the students were quietly writing their reflection assignment on the connections between the themes of leadership in their own lives and in that of Ruby Bridges. One young woman stopped writing and asked Ms. Ellison in front of the entire class,

> **Tori (pseudonym)**: Have you ever been discriminated against by the school you went to?

> **Ms. Ellison**: Ummm… No, not the school. Why? (Ellison classroom observation, 05/14/14)

The student then proceeded to tell a story about her mother going to a job interview and how the interviewer made what the mother perceived as snide comments about the historically Black College she attended.

> **Tori (pseudonym)**: That worries me because the school I want to go to is Dillard[14] and not a lot of people know about it and it's all the way in New Orleans. I don't want nobody to diss me when I'm at an interview. I don't want them to choose the person who went to Texas A&M over me, even though we have the same skills, just cuz they went to A&M. . . . Ugh. I don't want them to think that I'm not good enough.

> **Ms. Ellison**: Well, you know, it's just like we been talking about: Life is not fair, and put it under that category of "life is not fair." That is how it's going to be. But that shouldn't stop you from achieving your goals from going to that college. You are just going to have to keep on working hard and that'll speak for itself. Don't let that hold you back. From that experience, it should teach y'all what kind of leader you want to be based upon what you have experienced yourself. (Ellison classroom observation, 05/14/14)

This exchange represented a powerful moment, in that the student named discrimination as a way to make sense of her mother's experience and to express her concern about her own future. While Ms. Ellison admitted that she had not shared the same experience as the student, she validated Keisha's recognition of discrimination against the lack of cultural capital an HBCU has vis-à-vis a historically White institution.

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[14] Dillard University is a historically Black liberal arts college located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Moreover, she exhibited a Black feminist ethic of caring by attempting to uplift the student and teach her resilience. She acknowledged that hardships and discrimination are part of our collective experience, but they do not have to define her or limit her aspirations. Instead, she attempted to encourage the young women to be resilient and not to alter her desire to attend an HBCU. Ms. Ellison was enacting tenets of a Black feminist ethic of caring not only by providing the students with a space and multiple opportunities to connect their own stories to the lesson but also by validating the knowledge and experiences of the young African American woman and acknowledging the existence of discrimination. Additionally, she tried to teach the students a lesson about strength in the face of oppression. She taught students how to cope with racism and other instances of discrimination without losing integrity or deterring their ambitions. (Thompson, 1998)

Discussion

As previously stated, Thompson (1998) wrote of the importance of adult African American knowledge as a way to teach important communal knowledge that is necessary for the survival of African American students. She wrote that this type of knowledge is "honest, but not innocent" (Thompson, 1998, p. 16) and is a way for students to make sense of their experiences in terms of experiencing life, struggle, and discrimination. The teaching of this type of knowledge, which to some might appear to be harsh and pessimistic, is done out of love and as a form of critical caring in order to prepare students for the harsh realities of life as African American human beings. These types of lessons are taught in order to teach survival.

Ms. Ellison also used the historical examples of African Americans (such as Ruby Bridges and the Tuskegee Airmen) to illustrate examples of perseverance in the face of struggle and hardship. While Ms. Ellison stated that she was purposeful in choosing African American examples for her students to identify with, Thompson (1998) noted the significance of African American narratives of the past to inform the present:

> In Black narratives, though, integrity is likely to depend in part on remembering and reclaiming the past. In any case, the past is not fully gone, but lives on in the present. Not to know Black history is not to know oneself or the possibilities. (p. 15)

According to Thompson, Black narratives are to be remembered as an act of reclamation and to assert the presence of African Americans. Therefore, it is vital for everyone to learn Black history as a way to view oneself in another light and to better know oneself in the present day. Ms. Ellison acknowledged that "history is not just reading about dead folks. It actually applies to you today" (Ellison interview, 05/16/14). This suggests the importance of using and remembering the past in order to inform the present. By drawing on historical examples of African Americans persevering throughout history, Ms. Ellison was using the past to teach her students lessons about the reality of existing as an African American in the United States and how, despite the hardships that are to come, you can still not only succeed but help change society for the better.

The practice of African American adults passing onto the youth communal knowledge about the realities of life is done out of love and the desire to uplift the community. The examples of the Tuskegee Airmen and Ruby Bridges also illustrate the

reality of discrimination and racism as part of the African American experience.

Thompson (1998) reminded us that

> In a hostile, racist society, Black families cannot risk having their children caught unaware by racism. One of the tasks of the Black family, therefore, is to prepare children to cope: to face racism with resilience. . . . For example, African American children may be taught about economic struggle, racial trouble, and their own history as props supporting the American dream. Far from trying to protect childish innocence, caring African American adults are intent on alerting young people to the various threats to their survival and flourishing, to help them to cope with racism (and sexism) without loss of integrity. (Thompson, 1998, p. 12)

Ms. Ellison's exhibiting this level of care strongly resembles that of an "othermother" and the shared practice of community child rearing. As an othermother, the teacher essentially views her students as her own and treats them as such. I would argue that African American women teachers who take on the role of an othermother should teach students about the historic and current marginalization of African Americans in addition to life lessons about how to overcome and remain resilient. In the Black feminist tradition, this passing along of knowledge is performed as an act of love and caring for students in addition to being a way to uplift the community (Collins, 2009).

The lessons I observed in Ms. Ellison's classroom were rooted in notions of teaching adult knowledge in the form of leadership/citizenship lessons. As an African American woman and single mother, she used her experiences and her familial knowledge to shape her understanding of citizenship and how she taught it to her students. Collins (2009) wrote the following to describe the actions of a woman involved in the work of racial uplift: "On the individual level, her actions illustrate the connections

among lived experiences with oppression, developing one's own point of view concerning those experiences, and the acts of resistance that can follow" (p. 33). Similar to the woman Collins had described, Ms. Ellison also demonstrates the many connections between a teacher's lived experiences, how she formulated her own conceptions based on her unique worldview, and how it led to acts of resistance.

Ms. Harper: "This isn't necessarily how it's going to look in the real world"

Lexi Harper's 12th grade economics class is unusually quiet today. It is an afternoon in May, and while she admits that most of her students suffer from the infectious disease known as "senioritis," her students are deeply absorbed in their "bell ringer" assignment. Today's task has the students thinking about the social, cultural, and economic realities of attending college, a topic that is on the minds of this anxious class of seniors in this predominately African American high school. The students had just finished watching a spoken-word video by University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) student Sy Stokes entitled "Black Bruins" (Stokes, 2013), in which he spoke about the low percentage of African American students attending UCLA and the ramifications of their lack of representation on the elite campus. Ms. Harper's students were assigned to write their reactions and thoughts about the video and their own hopes and fears about attending college next fall. A young African American man, dressed stylishly in slacks and a checkered bow tie, breaks the silence by suddenly announcing to the class what is on his mind: "I just don't understand. You knew you were going to UCLA, where there is not that many Black students, then why didn't the guy just go to an

HBC [Historically Black College and University]?" (Harper classroom observation, 05/06/14). His fellow students nod their heads and respond in agreement. Ms. Harper, a stylish and energetic African American woman with eight years of teaching experience, adjusts her glasses and responds passionately to the class,

> That's not the point! We are in this society together and we have to learn how to work and live together. We have go to work to change this problem of who has access to higher education and who doesn't and how they are viewed and treated at those campuses. . . . It doesn't matter if this is UCLA, or any other college, we are all in this struggle together. (Harper classroom observation, 05/06/14)

Ms. Harper reported that she spoke to her students about college and life after high school every chance she could. While these talks appeared to resemble Knight and Marciano's (2013) "college talks," in which teachers and counselors work together to prepare students for college readiness and access to higher education institutions, Ms. Harper added an additional layer to the "college talk" by discussing the structural conditions that negatively impact the college experience for students of color.

These "life lessons" could happen in her economics classroom, the school hallway, the soccer locker room, or even when she was out and about in the Downton community. She recognized that a lot of her students were planning on attending a four-year college, community college, or trade school, or on joining the military, and she felt it was important to show them the different options available to them for life after high school. I witnessed several of these life lessons with different students, and they included a wide variety of issues related to life outside of high school. Several of her life talks

dealt with economic issues and financing higher education, but because all of her students were African American, Latina/o, or biracial, she discussed with them the sociocultural and economic realities of being a person of color in a higher education setting. The opening vignette represented a discussion I observed that dealt with being a person of color at an elite, predominantly White university. Ms. Harper later reflected on that conversation and stated the importance of discussing these racial issues with her students:

> So I want to try to teach them that when they step in the classroom you know, I can't teach you everything. But at least you could say, "well, at least somebody said something to me about this before." So even if we do watch a video on affirmative action or something and even if you do go to an HBCU, you should still care about the experiences of minorities in these predominately White spaces. (Harper interview, 05/29/14)

As part of her view on communal notions of citizenship (Avoseh, 2001; Knight & Watson, 2014), Ms. Harper hoped to introduce these issues to her students to expose them to the experiences of other minorities outside their community in the hope of building awareness and solidarity.

Ms. Harper viewed her actions and her decisions to have these frank discussions with her students as a necessary part of her role as an educator. Teaching students about the sociocultural realities of existing as a person of color in predominantly White spaces could be a culture shock for students, and she viewed her decision to have these conversations as a necessary part of their education at Downton High School. Thompson (1998) stated the importance of the curricular decisions teachers make in terms of educating African American students. She argued that African American students need to

be taught adult African American knowledge that is true to their everyday realities—not only as an act of caring but also as an act of necessity—for *survival*. Ms. Harper drew upon her own experiences as an African American woman on a predominately White college campus that had a history of racism and students committing anti-African American racist behaviors.

Several times throughout my interactions and conversations with Ms. Harper, she frequently discussed her desire to teach her students about life outside of Downton. Because Downton was a community that had experienced resegregation in the last twenty years and a large majority of the residents were African American or Latina/o, she felt that her students were shielded from certain racial oppressions that could occur in more diverse spaces. Since her students were seniors and most were graduating, she felt that she needed to talk with them about the realities of living and working outside of the confines of the Downton community.

> And so, I tried to show them that and we have discussions about things like that because I want them to realize that this is not necessarily how's it going to look in the real world. This is not how the real world looks; that your school isn't how the real world looks. And so you have to prepare yourself for this. I mean when you go off to school, unless you're going to an HBCU, your school is not going to look they way Downton looks. And so, I try to have that discussion with them. Some of them get it, some of them don't, but you know, you try. So, that's the best I can do is just try to inform them that, hey, this is just a small step in your whole life, and that life doesn't look necessarily like high school looks. So that's what I try do as much as possible. (Harper interview, 05/15/14)

Ms. Harper recognized that the conditions that created segregation leave Downton students without the ability to learn from and interact with people from different racial,

cultural, and economic backgrounds, a key skill that citizens must learn in this increasingly globalized society. The importance of the experiences gained from such interaction has been duly noted by a number of scholars of the political undertaking and implications of teaching (Apple, 1992; Bartolome, 1994; McClaren, 2005). Bartolome (1994) used Paulo Freire's (1987) notion of "political clarity" to refer to the process by which individuals achieve an awareness of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shapes their everyday lives, as well as an understanding of the connections between sociocultural structures and schooling. This suggests that schools serve as structures that reproduce societal inequities unless teachers attempt to disrupt this reproduction. Moreover, Ms. Harper understood that once they were in those racially diverse spaces, her students could face the harsh realities of racism and suffer the consequences of lacking the habitus necessary to gain acceptance and succeed in the foreign milieu (Bourdieu, 1994). For those reasons, she decidedly made the effort to engage in these critical discussions with her students.

The importance of familial and community knowledge and its influence on teacher identity

From my observations and analysis, it was evident that Ms. Harper's family and the Downton community had played a crucial role in the development of her teacher identity and how she conceptualized citizenship. It was her aunts that first introduced her to the idea of becoming a teacher; both aunts had been teachers and administrators in the surrounding Downton metroplex. While she credited her aunts for introducing her to the

teaching profession, she recognized her parents for instilling in her the values that she used to guide her teaching and perspective on citizenship.

> I think it comes a lot from how I was raised by my parents. My dad, for instance, when one of my brother's closest friend's mom was a single mom and he had no dad figure in his life, and so my dad took him under his wing. Like, we still helped coach him, helped him get through high school, and college. My dad was that person who always volunteered and coached all of our sports teams too. . . . I think, too, it's as part of my parents' profession, and that's why they're in the healthcare industry, is because they really believe in taking care of other
> people. . . . And also, I'm lucky enough where I know my parents' neighbors and I know my neighbors, because we kind of look out for each other. It's just what we do. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

This sentiment carried over and influenced her belief on citizenship—specifically, the communal notion of citizenship. She mirrored Avoseh's (2001) framework about citizenship in African societies being premised on a communal view of life and the individual contributing to others in the community. Ms. Harper believed that individualistic notions of citizenship did not align with her experiences or how she interacted with the world and that she preferred to center citizenship in the community and on the citizens' role to take care of one another.

The kinship relationship between Ms. Harper's family and her brother's friend also inspired Ms. Harper's view on collective child rearing being part of how she conceptualized a communal notion of citizenship. She stated, "Like if to me, I'm very into like the collective idea where my kids are your kids" (Harper interview, 05/19/14). While collective child rearing could also be seen as a form of othermothering, Foster (1993) argued that Black women teachers adopting familial terms in how they viewed

their relationships with students is a longstanding practice in African American communities (Collins, 2009). This shared practice of child rearing not only represented a personal relationship but was deeply political in its intent and practice. Collins (2009) wrote,

> By seeing the larger community as responsible for children and by giving othermothers and other nonparents "rights" in child rearing, African Americans challenge prevailing property relations. It is in this sense that traditional bloodmother/othermother relationships in women-centered networks are "revolutionary." (Collins, 2009, p. 123)

Collective child rearing dispels the mythical norm of a heterosexual nuclear family and instead recognizes alternative-kin family networks. More importantly, collective child rearing shifts the task of child rearing future citizens away from individuals and instead places this important task to everyone in the community. bell hooks (1999) claimed that communal parenting is revolutionary in nature because it relies on trusting those in the community and challenges the idea that children are the private property of their parents:

> This form of parenting is revolutionary in this society because it takes place in opposition to the ideas that parents, especially mothers, should be the only childrearers. . . . This kind of shared responsibility for childcare can happen in small community settings where people know and trust one another. It cannot happen in those settings if parents regard children as their property. (p. 144)

What is key in hooks's characterization of this practice is that shared parenting can only take place in a community setting where people know and trust one another. In an increasingly competitive society that promotes rugged individualism guided by the

capitalistic structure, these types of shared practices are often devalued or criticized because of the fundamental belief in children as the private property of their parents.

Ms. Harper connected the practice of collective child rearing to her role not only as an educator, but more importantly as a citizen of the community. She noted that although Downton had its issues like any other school or community, she felt that a majority of the parents, teachers, and administrators embraced this tradition of taking care of one another:

> And here . . . I feel like they [the administrators] do try to create this sense of the school that you need to take care of each other. I've also noticed that most of the teachers here try to take care of each other, too. . . . I do feel like a lot of the parents are like "that kid is also my kid." So, I really do like when I talk to parents, I have a sense that they really want all of the kids to do well, and I know a lot of parents that know somebody else's son or they know me and my brother because we both went to Downton High School. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

This statement suggested that the Downton school community has taken a vested interest in taking care of Downton students. Ms. Harper applied her familial values and community cultural knowledge to conceptualize how she preferred to understand and teach citizenship, as well as to how she understood her own role as a teacher and a citizen.

"I thought we was ballin'. . .but money goes down fast": Teaching about the realities of life

Collins (2013) wrote the following about the importance of African American women educators' epistemological standpoint in terms of education for African American students:

> Black women educators apparently saw education for African Americans as providing far more than just technical skills. They advocated a different model of education. . . . Black women educators certainly wanted their students to acquire the technical skills they needed for survival, but they also valued the critical thinking skills required to challenge that system of slavery. They offered a critical education. (p. 13)

While Collins perhaps was discussing the education Black women provided in the context of pre- and post-emancipation life in the nineteenth century, I argue that the same can be said of African American women educators in the present day. Fannie Barrier Williams, an early twentieth century African American educator, once described Black women teachers as "strong-willed resisters" (Williams, 1987, p. 151). As an economics teacher, Ms. Harper believed it was her role to teach her students not only the required economic curriculum needed to graduate high school, but more importantly to become resisters and acquire the financial knowledge that would give them access to the culture of power (Delpit, 2006).

During the time of African American slavery, the American economy benefited from the labor and exploitation of Black bodies. After emancipation, the capitalistic structure needed to find a new way to benefit from and exploit their labor. Charles W. Mills (1997) argued that the Racial Contract has constantly been rewritten throughout history in order for White supremacy, as a political system and power structure, to limit

214

and manipulate citizenship for African Americans. While some scholars have suggested that African American men and women continue to live in a state of subjugation and second-class citizenship in the present (Harris-Perry, 2011; Mills, 1997), Brown and De Lissovoy (2011) used *economies of racism* as a theoretical framework to understand the systemic underpinnings of "the embeddedness of race and racism in the material processes of production and exploitation that characterize capitalism" (p. 596). This framework is helpful as a way to understand how the structure of racism is an ever-present force in society that continues to exploit Black bodies to fuel the capitalistic economic structure. This can be seen in terms of the unequal distribution of wealth in society, lack of financial knowledge and access to loans, and higher interest and mortgage rates for African Americans.

On some level, Ms. Harper recognized the existence of the *economics of racism* (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011) and the unequal access to capital, the exploitation of labor, and the lack of access to financial knowledge for minorities:

> I teach the importance of investing early on and stuff now because my parents came to investing late. But also there is a big stereotype that African Americans and Latinos don't invest, which actually is not a stereotype. It's true and it's because people don't have the knowledge themselves or talk to their kids about investing and saving and stuff like that. So, that's what I try to tell them. I really want them to start thinking about investing at a young age because that's how you build wealth. Because I always tell them there's a difference between being rich and being wealthy. Being wealthy means that you have assets that continue to make money and being rich means you just have a bunch of money. I really want them to start investing because there was that stereotype of Black and people of color in general and also like there's a stereotype that we all poor so we live on social programs. A lot of people of color don't

215

live on social programs but it's just a general idea. (Harper interview, 05/19/14)

While Ms. Harper vaguely hinted at both the American financial structure withholding financial knowledge from minorities and the negative representation of minorities as being financially illiterate, it was her role as an economics teacher to provide students with the financial knowledge to interrupt that pattern and to educate the community.

> And to me, like I know you're discussing citizenship, but what I want them to understand is that as a responsible citizen, I want them to be able to go out and make a life for themselves and help the community and not have to rely on government assistance, even though there is nothing wrong with that. And here, I just want them to be good people more than anything else. Because I feel . . . like for economics, you don't really get it until they get out of here. . . . But I just want them to understand you can be and do whatever you want, but you have to make sure you take care this side of everything in order to be successful. And that's kind of how I approach economics and citizenship. (Harper interview, 05/15/14)

Ms. Harper linked acquiring financial knowledge to citizenship in the sense that by having this knowledge, students would be free from the constraints of racism and would have the ability to live their lives as free citizens and human beings. By possessing that financial and economic knowledge, students would be free from the cycle of poverty that positions the poor and minorities as non-citizens and as dependent upon government assistance. Moreover, she believed that having this knowledge would also uplift communities because citizens would be free to contribute and actively participate in communities.

Political scientist Michael Dawson (2001) used the term *radical egalitarianism* to describe the ways in which the social contract and democratic ideals were not realized in

the United States as a result of racism embedded within the structure. He asserted the existence of a belief that, by expanding the "inalienable rights" to historically marginalized groups, racial inequities would cease to exist. According to Dawson (2001), proponents of this ideology believe in procedural justice and the pragmatic belief in individual uplift. *Radical egalitarianism* can be applied to how Ms. Harper conceptualized her role and those of her students as citizens fighting to disrupt the cycle of financial inequality in their community. Ms. Harper believed that if she taught students the financial knowledge/culture of power that had been denied them on account of the racist structure, then that would help chip away at the racist structure because more minorities would have access to wealth and the power that accrues to the wealthy. Moreover, following the line of African American pragmatism in regards to liberalism, the responsibility for this uplift would fall upon individuals. Ms. Harper taught her students the knowledge needed, but she placed the burden upon individual students to share the information to help their families and their community without advocating structural change.

An example of this deliberate teaching of withheld knowledge demonstrated the ways in which she merged economic knowledge and personal experience with a critique of the economic structure for minorities. In her lesson on investing and credit cards, she shared with her students why it was important for them not only to learn about investing but also to share their knowledge with their families:

Ms. Harper: I have a mutual fund. That is how I'm going to hopefully retire some day. It's a small investment portfolio that gives you a diverse amount of stocks. Your parents probably have some mutual stocks, hopefully. Do y'all know? You should ask them.

Lucia (pseudonym): No. . . . I don't talk to them about that.

Ms. Harper: Really? Well y'all have to promise me something. Because, what we see . . . everyone in here is a minority, right? Listen, everyone promise me when you get older . . . because what we tend to see is that minorities don't talk to their kids about money and investing and stuff, and it's sad and you can go—like I'm telling you this for real—you can go to like an Alan[15] (pseudonym) or Highland Place[16] (pseudonym), where there is not as many of us walking around, and their parents have talked to them about this. These are things that you need to have discussions with your kids about, because you want to be the person that leaves something for your kids. You want to leave some stuff for your kids, and that's how money gets passed down from generation to generation, if you really want to know. Cuz if you've heard, Highland Place is "old money"; well that means is, it's been passed down from year to year to year, they call it that. Highland Place is where the old money is. Alan and Farm Town[17] (pseudonym) are "new money." Highland Place is old money, you can't live in that area and you won't find a house under a million dollars and that is because that money has been passed down from one generation to the next. (Harper classroom observation, 05/14/14)

Ms. Harper had the attention of every student in the classroom when she gave that

speech. At the end of class, Lucia asked Ms. Harper if she could email the presentation

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[15] A relatively new and wealthy suburb that is rapidly growing that is approximately 30 miles north of Downton. It has a majority White population.

[16] An older and very wealthy community located approximately 20 miles north of Downton. It is what is known in the area as "old money," where families have passed on their wealth from generation to generation. This is a majority White population.

[17] A relatively new and wealthy suburb that is rapidly growing that is approximately 30 miles northwest of Downton. It has a majority White population.

slides to her so that she could talk to her mother about investing, and Ms. Harper happily

obliged.

Ms. Harper attempted to teach students the financial knowledge needed by

designing a project where students would apply the knowledge in real-life scenarios. At

the beginning of the project, the students were provided with a packet that contained the

following information outlining the objectives and instructions for the project:

> You are now entering into a finance reality check! The objective is for you
> to see what it would take to survive in the "real world" in terms of
> personal finance. Each couple or single will have an assignment card that
> will indicate your occupations and monthly income (after taxes and
> insurance). For simplification, everyone has health insurance, lives in a
> house and no one has children (yet). You will be required to keep up with
> your bank balance. Each day you will be presented with decisions to make
> and after making these financial choices you will have to input the
> numbers and track your balance. You also have bills due at specific times
> during the week. You'll need to keep up with this and make sure your bills
> are paid on time. Since most of you are part of a married couple, you will
> also have to discuss decisions with your "spouse". There will also be
> things popping up all week that you will have to deal with like plumbing
> leaks, need for new appliances and car repair. Here are some decisions you
> will have to make: Where do you live? Do you own or rent? If you rent
> you will need to deduct $100 from your monthly income because your
> taxes will be higher as you won't have the income tax advantage of
> owning. What cars do you drive? How is your house furnished?
> Appliances? Each day you will need to decide if you are eating out or
> cooking at home for your evening meal. You will also be given
> opportunities for spending money on entertainment (concerts, sporting
> events, movies). Friday will be "date night." Those of you who have
> managed your money and time will be able to "purchase" tickets to the
> movies. If you have not managed your money, you may not be able to
> afford to go. You will be forced to "stay at work" rather than go out to the
> movies. (Harper classroom artifact, 05/15/14)

This unit represented the culminating activity for her senior economics class and was their opportunity to make sense of the knowledge they had learned this semester and apply it to real-life situations.

Every day in class, students and their partners had to blindly choose a "scenario" card that detailed the situation or decision they needed to make that day. Ms. Harper stated that she wanted to write scenarios that represented real-life issues and situations that they needed to learn how to handle. During one class, prior to pulling their scenario, one group of students chatted about the possibility of a scenario where they would win the lottery. Ms. Harper overheard this conversation and responded by stating,

> **Ms. Harper:** No one's gonna win the lottery! I told y'all the chances of y'all winning the lottery in real life are so slim that I would NEVER put that as a scenario!
>
> **Tobey (pseudonym)**: Thanks for shooting down our dreams!
>
> **Ms. Harper**: You are wasting your money on scratch offs; it's not going to happen! (Harper classroom observation, 05/07/14)

Another day in class left a second group disappointed with their scenario and credit card statement they had received from Ms. Harper and the picture this project was painting of life in the real world:

> **Ms. Harper**: So y'all pulled investment, so y'all need to decide if you want to invest in the business.
>
> **Jayden (pseudonym)**: Oh no.
>
> **Ms. Harper**: Well, it says your friend is opening up a new business and you want to invest in it. You guys would also meet once a month to go over the finances.

Jabari (pseudonym): Don't do it!

Ms. Harper: Oh wait; y'all need a credit card statement. So y'all charged $6,000 on your card but your limit is $8,000.

Roberto (pseudonym): Are you trying to make us feel broke with these scenarios? She [Ms. Harper] makes the worse scenarios ever! Why can't you be like, "It's a sunny day outside and you went out and enjoyed it and everything was on sale and discount and you used coupons and they paid you back? And a nice Samaritan bought you clothes?A

Ms. Harper: There were a few nice ones; you just didn't pull them.

Sofia (pseudonym): Yeah, right.

Ms. Harper: Wait, they just won a refrigerator.

Jabari (pseudonym): We will trade you our refrigerator for your baby.

Ms. Harper: Wait, choosing the baby scenario is a good thing? Now y'all know how expensive a baby is! (Harper classroom observation, 05/12/14)

From the students' responses and reactions to the scenarios, it was clear that the students had an unrealistic vision of the economic reality adults must deal with in their everyday lives. Ms. Harper hoped to teach students the economic reality of adulthood as a way to prepare them to be able to take care of themselves and their community. While this adult knowledge (Thompson, 1998) of the real world upset quite a few students, she felt it was crucial to prepare students to thrive as citizens in the existing capitalistic structure.

During the student presentations of their project, it was clear that they had taken Ms. Harper's lessons about economic stability and financial knowledge to heart. At the

end of each presentation, Ms. Harper asked students to reflect on what they had learned

after completing this project.

> **Ms. Harper**: What did you learn about living? What did you learn about having to live on your own?
>
> **Kierra (pseudonym)**: It's expensive.
>
> **Tobey**: You got to save money for accidents or school and other stuff.
>
> **Ms. Harper**: Is that what you are going to do? Promise me that in the real world you will budget and you have to save money because if you don't, then life happens and you're not ready. And it is expensive. Tobey, what did you learn?
>
> **Tobey**: Uhh . . . it is expensive. And spend your money wisely, because I would have rather took her to McDonald's than Pappadeux's for our date.
>
> **Ms. Harper**: Why?
>
> **Tobey**: It's cheaper.
> (Harper classroom observation, 05/16/14)

Another group echoed a similar sentiment about how life is expensive and how saving

and budgeting are important:

> **Ms. Harper**: What did y'all learn?
>
> **Brianna (pseudonym):** Life costs a lot of money.
>
> **Louis (pseudonym)**: Yeah, cuz I thought we was ballin' when I saw this [points to his salary and monthly income], but then when you start buying stuff . . . but it goes down fast. (Harper classroom observation, 05/20/14)

It was clear that Ms. Harper was successful in teaching her students the importance of

budgeting and personal finance. She believed it was important for her students to acquire

this crucial knowledge because of both societal stereotypes of minorities possessing a lack of financial knowledge and her familial experience of her parents' learning about investing and financial security later on in life. She also wanted her students to learn from her own mistakes, and that is why she frequently used her own experience—in order for her students to understand how the knowledge is applicable in the outside world.

Discussion

Ms. Harper drew heavily on her own familial and community knowledge in order to teach students about being financially secure citizens. Although her lessons and conversations with students may appear as though she was reinforcing and reproducing the traditional capitalist structure and individualistic notions of personal responsibility and citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), she was instead doing something far more significant. Ms. Harper was teaching her students the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1988)— how to live in a White-dominant society that had been denied to them and their community as a result of residential resegregation (Massey & Denton, 1993; Orfield, 1988). She not only attempted to teach her students the economic knowledge needed to "build wealth" but also spoke about acquiring wealth in conjunction with family members and the community. She encouraged her students to share the knowledge with their families and others not just as a way to build personal wealth, but also as a means to build collective wealth. It could be debated as to whether the actual content of Ms. Harper's lessons would truly teach students the tools needed to build "wealth" and not just middle-class financial knowledge, but it was obvious that she did use her own

economic cultural knowledge, coupled with her experiences, to teach students what she perceived to be knowledge that would allow them to live financially secure lives. Moreover, she continued to reiterate to students the necessity of sharing this financial knowledge with others and the importance of uplifting others to financial security.

Furthermore, Ms. Harper acknowledged the reality of inequities in access to economic capital, wealth, and structural residential segregation by stating that in the wealthy suburbs "you don't see many of *us* [minorities] walking around." Ms. Harper made the students aware of the existence of racial inequities and that racism could take the form of unequal access to economic capital and knowledge to communities of color. She utilized tenets of social justice citizenship in the ways that she explicitly discussed with students what it meant to be a citizen in a racialized society (Pang & Gibson, 2001) in her economic lessons, as well as in the opening vignette about the representations of African Americans at UCLA (Harper classroom observation, 05/06/14). She also included how lack of access to economic capital and financial literacy affected their lives, and she taught students the knowledge to disrupt that cycle of limited financial literacy.

Imparting the financial knowledge to her students could be seen as a Black feminist form of caring in education spaces (Thompson, 1998). Ms. Harper wanted to teach students the frank, harsh, and disconcerting reality of life for minorities. She did this because she cared for her students and wanted them to lead successful and productive lives as citizens. Thompson argued that African American adult knowledge is honest and conveys the reality specific to the collective experience of the African American

224

community. Ms. Harper was adamant that she wanted her students to learn about life in the real world because she recognized that they had misconceptions about being financially secure. She believed this lack of knowledge was a result of the *economies of racism* (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011) and the racial structure that benefits from the exploitation of non-White bodies while keeping minorities in a cycle of debt. For those reasons, she believed it was important as a social studies teacher to give her students this knowledge and then encourage them to share the information with their loved ones in the community.

Furthermore, Ms. Harper was enacting the pragmatic African American ideology of *racial egalitarianism* (Dawson, 2001), the belief that racial uplift was up to the individual and that in order to disrupt the structure of racism, it was important to provide marginalized individuals with the knowledge to succeed. While Ms. Harper was cognizant of the fact that the political, economic, and social structure was disenfranchising minorities and women, her solution to combating the racist, sexist, and classist structure was to teach students the knowledge that was denied to them and was crucial for their economic mobility. Unfortunately, this approach left it up to the students to spread the knowledge and enact change. While her efforts were noble, the burden to create change relied on the scattered actions of minority individuals instead of on concerted, direct attacks on the capitalist/White supremacist structure. Ms. Harper did mention in an interview that she had taught lessons in the beginning of the semester on the capitalist system and the economic inequalities the structure creates (Harper

interview, 05/19/14), but the lessons and classroom discussions I witnessed ignored economic inequalities created at a structural level. While she did critique the economical knowledge that poor communities of color did not have access to, Ms. Harper implied that it was because parents did not talk to their kids or did not have the knowledge.

Although Ms. Harper's lessons could be read as reproducing the capitalist structure and not teaching students to challenge or critique the structure, she was drawing on her personal (and familial) economic cultural knowledge and experiences to teach her economics class. She frequently brought in stories about her own financial mistakes or used lessons of success from Downton community members as valid sources of knowledge to teach students about economics and finance. Her lessons and examples for students were rooted in notions of community uplift and teaching students the knowledge needed to survive in society.

In her dual role as an othermother and social studies educator, Ms. Harper enacted citizenship education in a way that centered on the community and the role of the citizen as contributing to and uplifting the community (Avoseh, 2001; Knight & Watson, 2014). Teaching communal notions of citizenship and imploring students to share financial knowledge with their families could be read as an attempt to uplift the Downton community. While the work of African American women engaging in racial/community uplift as citizenship has changed over time, Ms. Harper viewed the cycle of poverty and lack of financial assets for African Americans in the Downton community as the area of need and used her economics class as a space to teach the knowledge needed for survival.

Her teaching represented "lifting as we climb"[18] because while she taught her students the economic knowledge they needed to socially and economically succeed in life, she also encouraged them to share the information with others in the community, thus helping to "uplift" others in the community.

Mrs. Beason: "I feel like I need more time with the children. There is so much more that I need them to learn"

The bell rings as the last few students rush through the door and take a seat in their ninth grade world geography class. One young man stands up near his seat and hurriedly tucks in his shirt, observing a requirement of the district school uniform policy. He knew that the teacher, with eyes like a hawk, would be quick to spot uniform violations, especially when the young men did not have their shirts tucked into their trousers. Mrs. Regina Beason walks into the classroom, seemingly exuding the nearly thirty years of education experience, wearing heels, a dark brown suit with a feminine design, and bright gold jewelry. She had an impressive presence as she took her place at the front of *her* classroom. She greeted the students with a simple, "Good afternoon, 300 block," and on cue, 32 students replied, "Good afternoon, Mrs. Beason" (Beason classroom observation, 05/13/14). She gave her class instructions for their bell ringer activity and the students went right to work. Mrs. Beason then started her usual rotations around the classroom: pacing up and down each row helping students, answering questions, prompting students to get to work, or issuing reprimands when they made poor

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[18] "Lifting as we climb" was the motto of National Association of Colored Women.

decisions. On one of her turns around the room she noticed a few young men who, as

Mrs. Beason remarked, were "making bad decisions" (Beason classroom observation,

05/13/14). She frowned at the group of men and stared at them with her penetrating

brown eyes and a look of disappointment. One of the young men caught her gaze and

defensively told Mrs. Beason, "Miss, I don't know the answer." Her eyes widened, as if

shocked by his response and fired back,

> Don't just sit there and wait. You have the same resources this young man
> has. The only thing that varies in this classroom is your motivations and
> your determination, that is the only thing that differs. And no one can give
> that to you. Now we can try to motivate ya, but if you don't make the
> decision to do it, it won't happen. (Beason classroom observation,
> 05/13/14)

The young men then decided to get to work, and Mrs. Beason continued her rotation

around the classroom. A few minutes later, a young woman publicly complained to the

class about the amount of work they had to do. Mrs. Beason paused, peered at the young

woman, and then responded to the entire class:

> **Mrs. Beason**: Education do not harm children. Now it might challenge
> you, it may even force you to challenge that comfort zone a little bit, and
> make you a little angry, and give you a little anxiety, but last time I
> checked it does not harm.

> **Titus (pseudonym)**: Taking in too much information does your brain
> harm.

> **Mrs. Beason**: Uh . . . no. Son, there have been millions upon millions
> upon millions of children who have taken classes and who have lived to
> tell the tale.

> **Seth (pseudonym)**: You jokin', right?

Mrs. Beason: No son, when have you ever known me to joke about work?

The excerpt above represented a snapshot into a typical day in the classroom of Mrs. Beason, a veteran social studies teacher with experience in school leadership and counseling. Mrs. Beason's approach to teaching social studies combined her experiential knowledge and her counseling training. As the snapshot shows, Mrs. Beason integrated life lessons, or as her students affectionately referred to them, *sermons*, in her teaching as a way to teach students about the importance of education and being an informed citizen. Thompson (1998) found that stories and narratives were extremely powerful tools African American teachers have used to teach students about race, racism, and racial relationships. Thompson also noted that these stories matter not only for their content, but also for how the individual student learns to read them and extract life lessons.

Familial and experiential knowledge and its influences on teaching

Mrs. Beason attributed her approach to teaching and conceptualizing citizenship largely to the important influences of the social and political conditions of her childhood, her parents' upbringing, and the stern guidance of a childhood teacher:

> Well, I actually grew up during the time of the civil rights movement, I remember the time when Martin Luther King passed, I remember how the nation. . . . I remember the news. I remember being a little girl and things were different but never felt different. My dad was always demanding that we respect all people regardless of where they are from and what they have done to you. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Growing up during the civil rights movement played a profound influence on how Mrs. Beason framed and taught her world geography course. Out of all of the events of the

civil rights movement, she noted the passing of Dr. King and the devastating effect it had on the country and on the movement itself. However, she stated that her father continued to follow the preaching of Dr. King and the importance of respecting all people. In her teaching, Mrs. Beason frequently referenced Dr. King by either using him as an example for students or referencing his teachings of acceptance for differences. She wanted to use the social studies curriculum to continue the lessons of the civil rights movement in teaching students to accept and respect differences as a foundation for citizenship.

Mrs. Beason also noted that a former social studies teacher also influenced her approach to teaching and her notions of citizenship:

> I did have a [African American] social studies teacher who he was just rough on us, on these little Black children, because he felt like we were in "lala land." I don't know where he is today. Because I don't know what he will think of these children [laughs] because he stressed and he made certain we learned about our background as far as slavery and the civil war and the civil rights movement and what it meant. But beyond that, I didn't think that I knew enough Black history, because I went to a predominantly White school, high school, middle school, except elementary where I had my social studies teacher who was, in this day in time, we would say, "off the chain."[19] He just demanded that we knew our history . . . and I was just drawn to history. And it was much later I would see different patterns and trends and how laws were made based on what was going on in the world. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Mrs. Beason revealed that in elementary school, she attended racially segregated schools where African American teachers taught her (Beason interview, 05/16/14). It was in this segregated space where she had a teacher who was "rough" on her, but impressed upon the students the importance of learning their history as African Americans. It was here

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[19] "Off the chain" is slang for a "great deal of fun."

that she felt "drawn to history," perhaps because of the positive African American centric nature of the historical narrative. Mrs. Beason mentioned that her former teacher insisted that his students know their history. Seeing yourself reflected in the historical narrative in a meaningful way can be empowering to students. This also allows students to see themselves as bona fide members of the American historical citizenship.

The civil rights movement and her former teacher influenced how Mrs. Beason taught social studies and notions of citizenship. She took a number of lessons from both her former teacher and the civil rights movement in her social studies class. For example, the civil rights movement represented a dream of living peacefully in a diverse society, based on mutual respect of cultural differences and equality. A number of Mrs. Beason's geography lessons that I observed focused on the culture of the region and on teaching students about different cultures. In quite a few lessons, she continued the theme of respecting cultural differences and the dangers of cultural misunderstandings:

> That is what I want you to learn is that yes, you are going to get information, but you are not going to get all of the information. But you are going to get enough insight so that hopefully you will understand how different cultures interact with each other, what causes problems, how you can work to resolve, because you are going to become the leaders of the world. Some of you are going to sit in these seats and make these decisions . . . and that's usually what the social studies is about. (Beason classroom observation, 05/27/14)

Mrs. Beason was preparing future leaders and citizens who would embrace cultural differences and not use them as excuses to create problems. As future leaders of the world, Mrs. Beason's students would become an informed citizenry for whom cultural

differences would be seen as the norm. Mrs. Beason taught her students these values. Her students knew how to interact and live with people from all walks of life.

Mrs. Beason's experience in a segregated elementary school aligned with Walker's research investigating a segregated school community in the time period prior to legal school desegregation. Walker (1996) found that although the schools were underfunded and under-resourced compared to White schools, the community came together to support the schools and to take part in the education of their children. The teachers in the school were focused on making sure that each student was able to reach his or her "highest potential." Although the teachers were often considered to be "warm demanders" (Vasquez, 1988) and demanded excellence from the students, this was seen by the students as a form of caring (Thompson, 1998). However, once African American schools were integrated, thousands of African American teachers lost their jobs (Cole 1986; Irvine, 1986; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; Milner & Howard 2004), and Blacks were sent to schools where they were positioned as second-class citizens and forced to learn a historical narrative that silenced African American history or distorted their representation to mere stereotypes. Mrs. Beason remembered that she attended predominately White middle and high schools that failed to teach her about her history as an African American woman.

These experiences have helped shape Mrs. Beason's viewpoint of teaching social studies and preparing future citizens. Her childhood growing up during the civil rights movement and attending racially segregated and then integrated public schools taught her

the importance of teaching students not only social studies content, but also information that will empower students to continue the work and spirit of the movement.

Mrs. Beason's approach to education

Across nearly three decades serving in public education, Mrs. Beason has held a variety of positions and roles in educating future citizens. She started out as a middle school social studies teacher and then moved to high school, where she also served as a soccer and volleyball coach, a cheerleading sponsor, or any other position where students needed her. However, she credited her time as a high school counselor and as a lead counselor for a large urban district for dramatically affecting her view on teaching and the importance of her work as a teacher. Although she was the woman in charge of all of the school counselors in the district, she viewed herself as someone who would guide her coworkers and fight with them in the trenches for whatever they or their students needed:

> So I was like the lead/supervisor. I refer to myself to the lead counselor, but I did have a supervisory role. And I say "lead" because basically I would guide them, and if they need additional help, I would go in and serve as that extra counselor different times of the year. If we had vacancies, I would become that counselor. I just never saw myself as someone in charge of others, I always wanted, okay, I will lead you and guide, we will take this path together. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Mrs. Beason's decision to reject the individualistic and power hungry mentality that so often accompanies leadership positions reflected her rejection of individualism and instead the adoption of the belief in cooperation and community. This carried over not only in how she conceptualized citizenship, but also in her role as a teacher and in her desire to work *with* individuals and do what was needed to help them succeed.

In her role as lead counselor, she was responsible for identifying and placing all of the repeat ninth graders in the school district in one of the many alternative programs so that they would have the ability to graduate from high school. She remembered that during a particularly tumultuous year for the district, the largely poor and minority community was furious with the district because of their decision to close down one of the high schools because of poor standardized test scores. The decision to close the school would scatter the students to other low performing schools outside their community. Because of the many heated protests by teachers, parents, and students, there were a lot of tensions as the new school year was about to commence. Mrs. Beason was particularly worried because she had not yet been able to locate and place dozens of students who needed to be registered at their new school. District officials worried about their attendance numbers and losing track of the students, and so Mrs. Beason made a decision: "We go to their houses. They won't come here; we got to go to their houses because we provide an important service and that's just what we gotta do" (Beason interview, 05/16/14). This anecdote illustrates Mrs. Beason's approach to teaching: The students need an education, so she will go to the community in order to reach out to students and do whatever is necessary to get them an education. District officials attempted to prevent her from pursuing this course of action because of the hostility and tension with the community. Nevertheless, Mrs. Beason went door-to-door, registering and placing dozens of students in school and community programs where they would have a chance at graduating high school.

So I told them, at that point I realized, okay this is more than just about working: This is about saving lives. Because you go out, and you actually sit with the family, and you talk to them and learn that they want their child to have an education. So I developed a different perspective of the classroom. And I always knew the role that I play, even more so then, was so important. And I was missing the children and I was in the administration still working with children but not directly on a day-to-day basis. I was still missing that camaraderie and so I told my coworkers that before I retired I would go back and teach a few more years and be with the children. And here I am. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Mrs. Beason's words and actions reflect the historic significance of education in the African American community and the role that Black teachers have played to educate and uplift future citizens. Scholars have documented the rich history of African American teachers engaging in notions of racial uplift because they understood that an education was an important way to empower communities to combat racism (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Irvine, 1986; Walker, 1996). Because of Mrs. Beason's own experience growing up during racial segregation and integration, as well as her time as an urban school counselor, she was aware of the African American community's legacy of struggle (Collins, 2009), and this knowledge helped shape a view of citizenship and the social studies as rooted in the notion of community and humanism. Additionally, working with students and their families became a way for her to engage in the practice of racial/ community uplift in the Downton community. Mrs. Beason's role as an educator was not only to teach students the world geography curriculum, but to help students receive an education that included the life skills needed to be successful citizens in an unequal world.

Disrupting structural inequities in schools

Mrs. Beason's experiences have helped her see the influence teachers can have in the lives of students. Mrs. Beason was well aware of the precarious situation students often find themselves in, and with that recognition came an awakening to the great responsibility she had in disrupting the "school-to-prison pipeline" that disproportionately targets African American and Latina/o students (Noguera, 2003):

> Well, I know each day I have a responsibility and if I don't take that responsibility seriously for the sake of the children, it will cause grave harm for them. One of the things that I had thought about this week and had thought about it since my second or third year in school, I met a lady, I guess it was my second or third year of teaching, she came in to have lunch. She came sat over by me, and seemed to have a pleasant face and we just sat and talked and I happened to ask her what was her job and she said, "I am a juvenile probation officer." I had thought about that day and time children didn't get into that kind of trouble. . . . So to hear that she said, "Well, I get them when you all have failed." And that stuck with me. Because if I can say and do something that makes a difference in a child's life, that keeps them from doing bad, then I think I've done a good job. And having dealt with so many "at-risk" students, that makes my fight even greater. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

The probation officer's presence in the school surprised Mrs. Beason and demonstrated the existence of a direct pipeline from schools to prisons. While this realization was shocking to Mrs. Beason, the officer's comment that "I get them when you all have failed" was both disheartening and hopeful on the causes and solution to halt the pipeline. This suggested to Mrs. Beason that teachers can play a significant role in helping students and families successfully navigate the murky waters of the structure of school, because students could easily end up off course and in the criminal justice system. Her awareness

of the interconnectedness of schools and prisons led to a realization of the position teachers play in deciding whether students get an education or are sent down the pipeline.

Mrs. Beason's interaction with the probation officer served as an awakening to the power Mrs. Beason had in either maintaining the system or disrupting it. She took that as a call to action, and thus began her fight to keep probation officers from ever meeting her students:

> So when a child refuses to do what is necessary or don't want to learn then I know where they can end up very easily without them knowing they made that decision. So it's not just about the lesson. That's why lot of them say, "Oh! She is going to preach to us again," because I want them to understand it's never about me, everything I do is about them. I say, so when I come in here and I am fussing and I am not fighting you . . . I am fighting you about you. I am fighting for you, and hopefully one day we can fight together. But lot of time it's not until later on when they get it, and every once in a while I see a kid get it before they go. When I see a kid get it, and I tell myself, if you win we both lose. Somebody's has got to be a winner, so let's both win. So let me win this battle so you can win the war, because if I let you win you are going to have your way, and you are not going to learn what you need. (Beason interview, 05/16/14)

Even after three decades in public education, Mrs. Beason continued to fight daily on behalf of her students. Mrs. Beason viewed her role as a fighter, an advocate for students. She understood the importance of the students' receiving an education that consisted of social studies content knowledge and citizenship training that recognized the humanity in others, but she also included a series of life lessons in the form of "sermons" meant to convey to students the importance of both book education and character education. One day she witnessed a student copying another student's homework, and that signaled to her the necessity of a sermon:

Mrs. Beason: Do not compromise yourself. . . . It's time for a sermon. Y'all are LONG overdue for a story.

Students: Uh hum. Preach it!

Mrs. Beason: This young student was very promising.

Students: Very promising!

Mrs. Beason: And he had a full ride to UNT.[20]

Students: Uh hum. Full ride to UNT.

Mrs. Beason: He decided to join . . . stop son.[21] A very promising young man. I don't think this man made a B on anything from the time he entered high school to the time he graduated high school. He had a full ride for pre-law. His second year he joined this fraternity. Became the chairperson for that fraternity. And because of a little power he took liberty of their money. Right now that man can't get a job anywhere. They put him in jail, and it was only a thousand dollars. But this young man, because he stole something that did not belong to him. He wrote a check to himself, and they prosecuted him. Put him out of college. He can't even find a job to do his community service, cuz you wanna know why? A person can . . . you can do harm to a person, serve time in jail and probably not find a job. But no business will deal with a person who will steal something or cheat. They will not deal with you because if you don't steal money you will steal resources and it all adds up to money. So you've got to be very careful when you think you are helping your friends. It's all about choices people. And we're talking about a student who was promising and right now he's struggling, struggling to find some kind of a job. This boy is 27 years old, and we're talking about copying and cheating, so we are not going to cheat. And I know you been taught, see that's what angers me, because you didn't reach this age and no one has said this to you all. You just still make the decisions not to have any regard for what's right.
(Beason classroom observation, 05/23/14)

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[20] University of North Texas

[21] Mrs. Beason paused her "sermon" momentarily to deal with a student who was making poor choices.

Mrs. Beason was speaking to a common narrative of poor decision making resulting in a drastically changed reality. She was attempting to show students that minor decisions, such as cheating, could lead to a lifetime of poor choices that could have serious consequences later on down the road. This was especially true for young men and women of color who are frequently reprimanded by law enforcement officials at a greater rate and with harsher penalties than White men and women because of the hypervisibility of people of color and harmful stereotypes associated with their raced and gendered bodies. Mrs. Beason utilized the tradition of storytelling that is prevalent in the African American community. However, this "sermon" about morality and ethics represents the practice of "communal truth telling," which is premised on the storytelling that describes communal shared knowledge of reality and the way things are. Thompson (1998) described this form of storytelling as "authors calling out recognition and empathy when the stories that are told resonate with others' experience" (p. 14).

I had witnessed several "truth telling" moments aimed at urging students to consider their own decisions and how it could impact their futures. One such conversation occurred when Mrs. Beason was teaching a mini lesson on the push and pull factors of the spread of the English language during colonization and she noticed a young woman copying another student's map. Mrs. Beason expressed her disappointment in both students for their poor judgment and used it as an opportunity to teach the class a valuable lesson on self-reliance:

> If I don't break that habit from you, I have not done my job. When you sit there and copy, you do not learn. That's right, it is easier, because someone else did the work. But you aren't learning. (Beason classroom observation, 05/27/14)

She then turned to the student who allowed the young woman to copy her map and gave her a "talkin' to":

> **Mrs. Beason**: You gon teach her how to fish or teach them self-reliance? It's okay to help them immediately, but you got to teach her how to sustain for the rest of her life. You can do this. You are not quite hungry but, you can do this. Now, why is English so widespread? They were colonizing land. What are push and pull factors?
>
> **Taria (pseudonym)**: Lack of resources, bad weather, overpopulation, famine, sickness—spread of disease, education.
>
> **Mrs. Beason**: Who gives one-word answers? I do not want one-word answers. Can I get a complete sentence? Can I get a conversation?
> (Beason classroom observation, 05/27/14)

Mrs. Beason used life lessons and storytelling as vehicles to teach notions of personal ethics and morality, which represents an important skill that is practiced in African American culture and for developing future citizens (Thompson, 1998). Several authors have used the term "warm demanders" (Vasquez, 1988) to encapsulate a teaching style that is a "tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured and disciplined classroom environment for kids whom society has psychologically and physically abandoned" (Irvine, 1998, p. 1). This style of teaching is premised on the belief not only that these children can learn but that they *must* learn; their survival depends on it. Walker (1996) wrote that the students in the segregated school said the teachers were remembered because they "didn't play," indicating an approach to teaching/child rearing full of high expectations and

caring. To outsiders, Mrs. Beason's style of teaching could be misunderstood as harsh or cold, but that assessment would be far from accurate. Mrs. Beason's approach to teaching was premised on teaching students the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as citizens in both the Downton community and the larger society. A great deal of love, support, and resilience went into each one of her lessons and sermons.

Discussion

Within the Black feminist epistemological tradition, an ethic of caring exists as a form of uplift and communal sustainability (Collins, 2009). A Black feminist ethic of caring is grounded in African American women's ways of knowing and their desire to uplift the community. Mrs. Beason's framework for teaching and for citizenship education was heavily influenced by her prior experiences as a teacher, as a counselor, and as a student attending segregated and desegregated schools. Moreover, it is also a form of activism, because this style of teaching provides students with knowledge needed to survive. Thompson (1998) wrote, "the Black feminist tradition of caring requires helping all African Americans to survive racism without loss of integrity; in part, this means helping to make society more just for generations as yet unborn" (p. 10). Mrs. Beason's sermons, lectures, and battles with students happened not only out of caring, but more importantly to teach students how to keep their heads high with pride as they go out into the world as citizens. It was not only about avoiding the prison pipeline, but about learning how to be decent human beings with some sense of pride and self-worth.

241

The students did not always make Mrs. Beason's work easy. It seemed as though she was in a continuous struggle with her students in an effort to fight for them. At the end of each class, Mrs. Beason was visibly exhausted in waging her daily war on behalf of her students. Nevertheless, she refused to give up and cited the little victories that kept her going:

> I don't know how they see me, but I would like for them to see me and that I do care although I won't give up, although I am firm with them, although I just ride them to a point and then I back off, and sometimes I don't back off, I want them to become angry because I need you to get that mad at yourself because somebody has to ride you. . . . So a hundred children will be on this floor and I made a difference in one, that's okay. There have been days like, I don't want to be here, the children are choking me, the children they draining me. And one kid comes and says something to me, and let me know, and okay, I need to be here. Forget it, Regina; it's not about you. Let it go, and deal with the children. (Beason interview, 5/16/14)

The school bell rang and the students rushed out of the classroom. A few students bid Mrs. Beason farewell as they exited the room. The door finally closed and Mrs. Beason released a deep exhale and walked slowly towards her desk. She sat down and rested her head on top of her hands and released a second deep exhale. She slowly shook her head and confided to the nearly empty room, "I feel like I need more time with the children. There is so much more that I need them to learn" (Beason classroom observation, 05/27/14). Her admission remained saturated in the quiet classroom. Moments later, students began to trickle into the classroom, excitedly discussing their projects. Mrs. Beason quietly smiled, stood up, and was ready to welcome her students.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide a better understanding of how African American women social studies teachers understand and teach notions of citizenship. More specifically, this research study sought to explore the many ways in which the multiple intersections of a teacher's identity and the lived experiences that arise from that identity influence how a teacher conceptualizes and teaches citizenship to her African American and Latina/o students. This study utilized a conceptual framework that centered around three major frames: (1) Black feminist thought and the notion that knowledge is created as a result of differing standpoints, which allows Black women to define their own realities, (2) how race and gender are interconnected and how the resulting intersectionality causes Black women to experience racism and patriarchy simultaneously and differently from White women and Black men, and (3) how the experiences of subjects help construct their identities and epistemological standpoints. Given the data presented in chapters four, five, and six, the findings address the following research questions: (1) How do African American women teachers conceptualize the notion of citizenship, and (2) how do the intersections of their identities both influence and complicate how they understand and enact notions of citizenship in their social studies classrooms?

In order to answer these questions, three themes were presented that explored the ways in which Ms. Harper (a senior economics teacher), Ms. Ellison (a junior American history teacher), and Mrs. Beason (a freshman world geography teacher) understood and taught notions of citizenship to their students. In chapter six, each teacher's story was presented as an individual case to examine how the intersection of each one's identity as an African American woman led her to adopt a Black feminist ethic of caring in how and why she taught notions of citizenship that differed from the dominant Whitestream narrative of citizenship.

The first theme, as addressed in chapter four, *"Citizenship: Reject and Revise,"* explored how all three participants recognized that the traditional definition of citizenship involved an individual citizen's membership to the nation-state in addition to the certain performative aspects or duties of each citizen (Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Marshall, 1950/1998). However, the women recognized that this definition of citizenship, as membership to the nation-state, did not align with their own experiences as African American women or with African Americans' collective history of civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012). Therefore, they chose to reject the dominant narrative of citizenship and instead conceptualized citizenship to encompass the collective history and experiences of African Americans.

The second theme, as addressed in chapter five, *"I Worry About My Community':* *Community-Centered Notions of Citizenship,"* showed that the participants' preferred concept of citizenship was communal in nature and involved people experiencing and

creating a sense of belonging to a community. In alignment with a communal notion of citizenship, the participants taught students the importance of caring for and working to uplift their community. Moreover, the teachers sought ways to leverage community and cultural knowledge as foundations for a new vision of citizenship education.

The final theme, as addressed in chapter six, *"'I Do These Things Because I Know What You Are About to Enter': Black Feminist Ethic of Caring and Its Impact on Teachers' Conceptions of Citizenship,"* highlighted the ways in which the participants' situated experiences as African American women shaped how they conceptualized and taught communal notions of citizenship. Their pedagogical and curricular decisions were rooted in a Black feminist ethic of caring (Collins, 2009; Thompson, 1998), as demonstrated by how they taught communal adult knowledge in the form of "life lessons" or "sermons" that allowed each student to learn the critical knowledge needed to exist as a citizen in multiple spaces.

These three themes and chapters emphasized not only the multiple definitions of citizenship that are being taught in schools but also the profound ways in which intersectionality of identities influences the ways in which teachers teach notions of citizenship in their social studies classrooms. The previous three chapters collectively inform the three overarching findings of this work, which are detailed in this chapter. Finding one is that the existing literature fails to attend to how teachers understand and teach citizenship that is shaped by their own notions of intersectionality. The second finding underscores that the participants in this study recognized the duality of citizenship

(Tillet, 2012) in terms of (a) recognizing the dominant Whitestream narrative of citizenship and performativity as they relate to the nation-state while (b) perceiving and teaching citizenship in their classrooms in ways that aligned with their identities as Black women. The final finding is that the participants' conceptions of citizenship were heavily rooted in their experiences as African American women and guided by a Black feminist ethic of caring (Collins, 2009). In the following sections, I will address each of these three findings. I will then examine the implications/recommendations of this study, as well as the limitations, and suggest areas where further study is needed.

Intersectionality and citizenship

Defining American citizenship is a source of political struggle (Rosaldo & Flores, 1997) that has plagued the United States since the nation's inception. Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) wrote that citizenship in a democracy typically involves conferring membership status to individuals within a political entity in exchange for their commitment to adhere to a set of principals to ensure the common good and their participation in the political process. Hall and Held (1990) also argue that citizenship entitles individuals within the political entity certain rights, but that the fundamental conflict lies in the meaning of membership to the community: Who belongs, who does not belong, and, finally, what does it *mean* to belong?

At the bequest of our White male founding fathers, the United States was founded upon beliefs that precluded groups and communities of certain racial, gendered, and socioeconomic ascriptions from attaining full citizenship rights. Over time, these

246

excluded groups fought for full recognition of citizenship; upon winning *de jure* citizenship, however, each group then had to win *de facto* citizenship, including the rights that they, as citizens, were legally entitled to enjoy.

A number of scholars have critiqued traditional conceptions of citizenship for their failure to attend to these sociocultural histories and complex notions of difference. For example, African Americans' collective struggle for citizenship has included the fight for the same legal rights as Whites, redistribution of resources, as well as the right to full recognition as human beings and legitimate members of the nation-state (Holt, 2010; Rosaldo, 1997). Feminist scholars have also criticized the notion of citizenship to the nation-state as a gendered and patriarchal construct that has forced women to remain attached to the home in the private sphere and barred from participation in the public political sphere (Assiter, 1999; Crocco, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 1999).

For African American women who have experienced both racist and sexist obstacles to citizenship, their intersecting identities and the knowledge that arises from their unique standpoint is rarely considered when investigating multiple conceptions of citizenship (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Harris-Perry, 2011). Black women are plagued by both racism and patriarchy in their exclusion from the traditional archetype of citizenship. Similar to White women, their duties as citizens have taken place in the private sphere and been rooted in their roles of giving birth to future citizens and educating them. However, there is an all-important distinction between the effects of these roles for Black women and those for their White counterparts: Black mothers are

247

expected to give birth to essentially non-citizens and to teach their offspring how to exist as second-class citizens (Collins, 2009).

Moreover, their membership to the nation-state has also been tied to the negative representations of Black womanhood that control their bodies and positions as non-citizens. Stereotypes, such as the "mammy," "jezebel," "sapphire," "welfare queen," and the "strong Black woman," have led to distorted and problematic images of Black womanhood that rob Black women of their humanity and causes them to be positioned outside the normalized representation of an American citizen (Collins, 2009; Harris-Perry, 2011). Thus, for many African American women, conceptions of citizenship are rooted in their experiences and subjugated knowledge as Black women. As political scientist and scholar Melissa Harris-Perry (2011) argued, for Black women, their lives are sites of citizenship that are often misrepresented and ignored. Therein lies a significant gap in the research literature. Citizenship is rarely theorized in ways that interrogate how notions of intersectionality of identities can influence how different communities conceptualize citizenship and experience belonging to the nation-state.

Regardless, the citizenship education that currently occurs in K-12 schools continues to center around Age of Enlightenment ideas of citizenship that emphasize civic literacy combined with students adopting a patriotic identity (Hahn, 2008; Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Parker, 1996, 2008). The only hint of pluralistic or critical notions of citizenship education typically lies in the occasional lesson or unit on tolerance for differences. The African American women teachers in this study represent an

alternative, yet valid tradition of teaching citizenship that is more relevant to their students than the Eurocentric tradition of teaching citizenship that is espoused in most curricula, written in most textbooks that address citizenship, and taught in most social studies classrooms, regardless of the lived realities of the teachers or the students. African American women social studies teachers are aware of the dominant Whitestream definition of citizenship (as membership to the nation-state and the performances attached to citizenship), but they experience dissonance when considering how that definition relates to their own knowledge and experiences with citizenship to the nation-state. As social studies teachers, they are aware of the history of African Americans' struggle for citizenship at the founding of this country, and they use that as evidence of the exclusionary nature of citizenship as well as of the way racial and gendered ascriptions have troubled people's claims to citizenship. This historical knowledge, combined with recent events involving the deaths of young Black women and men at the hands of duly-sworn representatives of the state, demonstrates that society continues to see African Americans not as equal human beings, but as something less, on account of their intersections of race, gender, and class.

Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) used the notion of political intersectionality to make sense of the countless instances of Black women experiencing both racism and sexism. Political intersectionality is a way for African American women to understand how the intersection of race and gender has led to their exclusion from recognition as citizens and caused them to experience simultaneous forms of discrimination. African

249

American women do this by drawing on the experiential knowledge of discrimination they face because of their race and/or gender. However, most African American women are not always aware that both racism and sexism could be working in conjunction to prevent them from experiencing full citizenship. Without the insight gained from taking ethnic or women and gender studies coursework, most people are not taught to understand their sense of self in terms of intersecting identities. Most African American women are socialized either to see their identities as two separate entities or to believe that they must make a choice between privileging their race or their gender.

Experiential knowledge is used by African American teachers to make sense of dominant notions of citizenship and its failure to include the inherent experiences of Black women. This causes them to consciously reject the dominant narrative of citizenship and choose not to teach marginalizing concepts to their students in their social studies classes. The explanations of the remaining two findings will shed light on how teachers may promote notions of citizenship that align with their own communal and experiential knowledge, as well as on how these conceptions of citizenship are influenced by the identities of African American women teachers.

Teaching about the duality of consciousness as citizen

Historically, African Americans have borne a split sense of identity as a result of the tensions between being a racialized other while simultaneously being an American. DuBois (1903/1994) referred to this peculiar phenomenon as a *double consciousness*. According to DuBois, African Americans have struggled with being able to see their true

selves as human beings because the White supremacist structure has systematically denied them that realization. Despite their struggles and hardships, African Americans continue to endure and only hope that one day they will be able to exist freely and equally as both African Americans and Americans without having to sacrifice any part of their identity, humanity, dignity, or rights as citizens.

This "double consciousness" in terms of a citizen identity has led historically marginalized groups to search for a new site of citizenship that can better attend to their cultural historical knowledge. Many scholars have already begun to reconceptualize the notion of citizenship in order to create a space and a sense of belonging for their own particular community in the United States. For example, Latino cultural citizenship was created as a way to recognize that cultural community membership is a valid form of citizenship (Flores, 1997b; Ong, 1996; Rosaldo, 1994). Avoseh (2001) argued that citizenship in traditional African societies centered around members adopting a communal view of the world that guided their actions and thinking. Michelle Knight and Vaughn Watson (2014) drew on communal notions of citizenship in African societies to study how and where African immigrant youth learned about civic engagement in the United States. What is significant about Knight and Watson's study is that it demonstrated that these youth learned about notions of civic engagement in schools, but more so in their community and through their interactions with community members and family (inside and outside the U.S.). Moreover, their study suggested that the immigrant youths'

identities were powerfully connected to participatory and communal notions of citizenship and civic engagement.

The work of scholars writing and theorizing alternative notions and sites of citizenship demonstrates that in communities of color, people's identities as citizens are constructed, nurtured, and rooted in their home communities; this aspect of how and why an individual feels connected in a sense that can be called "citizenship" is often ignored in schools. Flores (1997b) argued for the necessity of cultural communal spaces and the roles they play in creating a citizen identity for Latinas/os:

> When Latinos claim space they do so not for the purpose of being different, but rather simply to create a place where they can feel a sense of belonging, comfortable, and at home. . . . Cultural citizenship includes how groups form, define themselves, define their membership, claim rights, and develop a vision of the type of society that they want to live in. It includes how excluded groups interpret their histories, define themselves, forge their own symbols and political rhetoric, and claim rights. (p. 263)

Cultural and communal notions of citizenship recognize important components of identity for historically marginalized groups. For example, Collins (2009) wrote that for African American women, communal relationships were spaces to affirm one another's humanity and right to exist. By rooting citizenship in the community, individuals who have developed a double consciousness (DuBois, 1903/1994) and continue to experience civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012) have a basis for belonging that opens up opportunities to reclaim and redefine their own senses of self as human beings and as legitimate citizens in the nation-state.

African American women that understand a dual sense of citizenship are cognizant of the dominant definition and performances of citizenship expected of them as American citizens. However, examples of their lived experiences can complicate their dual identities as Black women and Americans. African American women teachers extended DuBois's notion of double consciousness by speaking about their feelings of estrangement as a result of their added gendered identity. Frances Beale used the term "double jeopardy" to speak to the dual discriminations Black women face on account of racism and sexism (King, 1988). For African American women, their racialized and gendered bodies further complicate their identities and their consciousness of being both a citizen and non-citizen.

African American women teachers recognize that part of their dual consciousness in citizenship is not just that they must teach students the knowledge and skills needed to exist as citizens in Whitestream-dominant American society, but more importantly that their relationship to their community is a valid and significant part of their citizen identity. For example, a teacher makes a conscious effort to teach her students the economic and financial literacy needed to be successful in a capitalist society, but at the same time, she insists that students share that knowledge as a way to uplift their families and other community members. Another teacher uses African American historical figures to teach students the reality of struggle and discrimination for African Americans while emphasizing the need for students to develop and use their own agency, resistance, and resilience in order to overcome the struggles and discrimination they themselves will

eventually encounter. Teaching Black students that they may face racial/gendered hardships when they graduate, but need to remain focused and not let it deter them from giving back to their community. On the one hand, these African American women teachers know that they need to teach their students the culture of power (Delpit, 2006); on the other hand, this knowledge is taught in conjunction with consciousness-building lessons that will both empower and encourage the students to uplift their own community.

A significant element of the dual consciousness of citizens is in the relational connection between a citizen and the community. What is profound about African American women teachers is that they not only situate citizenship within their community, but they incorporate and value it in their social studies classrooms. African American women teachers emphasize the importance of their role in contributing to and uplifting *their* community as well as fostering relationships with others. I note that African American women teachers are not teaching citizenship as being rooted in a generic community, but specifically in the local community. As African American women teachers, they are active members of the local community and find numerous ways to merge the outside community into their classrooms. Making a point of going into the community for resources and bringing in members of the community to speak to students allows African American and Latina/o students to see themselves and their community reflected in the social studies curriculum and further validates communal knowledge.

Continuing the legacy of "Lifting as we Climb"[22]

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[22] "Lifting as we climb" was the motto of National Association of Colored Women.

The final finding of this research is that African American women teachers utilize a Black feminist ethic of caring in their teaching of citizenship to their students. The ways in which these teachers embrace citizenship is guided by the historic tradition of Black women's collective work in racial uplift and the empowerment of Black women. Patricia Hill Collins (2009) wrote that, historically, "Black women have used their classrooms and status as educators to promote African American community development" (p. 228). Black women position themselves as "uplifters," whose role is to lift the Black community while simultaneously uplifting the voices of women (Brown, 2006; Collins, 2009). Education appears to be the prime arena where Black women devote their time and energy in doing the work of uplifting the community while simultaneously educating future citizens.

The historic and contemporary positions of African American women teachers demonstrates that their work has been rooted in community activism that is political in nature (Collier-Thomas, 1982; Dixon & Dingus, 2006; Irvine, 1986; Walker, 1996). Black educators also recognize the political nature of teaching and schooling and the importance of their work in disrupting the structures that perpetuate poverty in their community. The work of uplift has changed throughout history and looks differently based on the teachers' own knowledge and experiences and the unique needs of their community. For example, some teachers are more direct in using their positions as social studies teachers to fight what they view as injustices in their community, whereas others use lessons from their curriculum to teach students the knowledge they will need to help

uplift their communities without overtly combating the structural inequities in their community. African American women describe their role as teachers as "fighting *with* students *for* the students," because oftentimes they have witnessed students of color fall through the cracks of the public school system into the cells of the public corrections system. Because of the political consciousness and activism of Black women teachers, their students also develop a double consciousness in terms of the complexities of citizenship and an awareness of structural inequities that complicates their experiences as citizens. This new way of seeing the world is taught in conjunction with lessons of the importance of sharing knowledge with their community as a way to uplift and sustain their local community.

Political clarity (Bartolomé, 1994; Freire, 1987) refers to the process in which individuals become aware of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shape their everyday lives and the connections between those structures and schooling. Teachers become aware that schools serve as structures that reproduce societal inequities unless those teachers consciously attempt to disrupt cycles of reproduction. The African American women teachers in this study, on the bases of their positionalities as women of color and their experiences as teachers, gained an awareness of the schooling and societal structures that have harmed and continue to harm generation after generation of students and communities of color. Burdened but armed with this awareness, teachers use their social studies lessons to teach students about these structures and how to overcome the seemingly automatic and inevitable effects of systemic social reproduction.

256

I argue that citizenship education should become intertwined with community uplift. A significant part of citizenship education for students of color involves not only activism but also the teaching of survival as a racialized other (another component of the dual citizenship identity). Collins (2009) wrote, "survival is a form of resistance . . . and represents the foundation of Black women's activism" (p. 216). Part of a teacher's activism is passing on to her students lessons on survival in a society where they continue to experience both racism and civic estrangement (Tillet, 2012). Participants in the study utilized "truth-telling narratives," "sermons," life lessons, and stories as ways of teaching their students how to navigate the duality of citizenship. Audrey Thompson (1998) stressed the significance of truth-telling narratives for oppressed people:

> This sort of story teaches the reader or listener how to read, how to see or hear; it does not show things as literal truths, but calls upon the reader to engage in the process of meaning making and interpretation. (Thompson, 1998, p. 14)

The stories that the teachers tell their students come from their own experiences as women of color who are conscious of the dual experiences of citizenship students face or will one day face. Teachers share the honest knowledge with their students about the realities and struggles of life so students can reflect upon and extrapolate meaning from these stories about what it means to be a racialized and gendered other.

Thompson (1998) wrote that a key component of a Black feminist ethic of caring is the teaching of African American adult knowledge to students. While this knowledge is honest and not innocent, it is taught in order to insure communal survival and

empowerment; teachers are frank in telling their students that struggle is a part of life that includes discrimination. But they also include messages of perseverance and show examples of African Americans in history that struggled and overcame. Teachers also use "sermons" to teach life lessons that will help students succeed in school and in life. While these life lessons were taught in an effort to help uplift the community, they also demonstrated to students that Black women's cultural and experiential knowledge are valid sources of knowledge to be used in schools. The participants rooting their understandings of citizenship in their lived experiences were not only critiquing the dominant knowledge of traditional citizenship (as controlled by elite White men) but, more importantly, asserting a Black woman's standpoint as legitimate knowledge. The teachers were not only attempting to use their positions as social studies teachers to teach notions of citizenship to uplift the Downton community and transform an unjust society, they were simultaneously empowering African American women, thus continuing the legacy of "lifting as we climb."

Implications and recommendations

The findings from this study allow further reflection on the social studies curriculum as well as the support and preparation of preservice and inservice teachers. In terms of the social studies curriculum, two implications/recommendations emerge. As a result of looking at how the teachers in this study are teaching the duality of citizenship, they are doing it because it is absent from the official school curriculum. The curriculum must be altered to value multiple understandings of citizenship. Second, the existing

social studies curriculum is missing diverse voices, narratives, and even difficult histories as part of citizenship education. This too must change. In relation to teacher education, two implications/recommendations arise. First, both teacher preparation programs and teacher inservice do not ask teachers to critically explore their identities and experiences will influence their curricular and pedagogical decision-making. Second, teacher education programs and professional development do not always empower teachers to include different voices and sources of knowledge into their teaching. Teacher preparation and inservice must change in a way that prepares educators to develop a sense of self-worth and seeing the value in their inherent ways of knowing.

Citizenship education curriculum

Differing notions of citizenship

A singular rendition of citizenship is taught in schools. The construct of citizenship represents a singular voice and narrative that reveres only certain perspectives (i.e. White middle class men). This "one size fits all" approach to citizenship education does not represent the vast majority of experiences and perspectives of the students. The differences in identities and experiences often lead to multiple understandings and sites of citizenship. The fact is that these different ways of knowing and being are not seen as legitimate or relevant to citizenship.

The data analysis presented in the themes and findings of this research study demonstrates that the African American women teachers conceptualize and teach dual notions of citizenship that aligned with their identities and their community. This

259

recommendation calls for the social studies curriculum to be more inclusive in defining citizenship as taught in K-12 schools. With the increasing diversity in schools and migration and immigration on a global scale, it is extremely important that schools begin to rethink how they consider preparing future citizens to take part in a globalized society. Students are entering into our classrooms with diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, religions, family situations, geographic experiences, and immigration status and we must provide citizenship education that creates a sense of belonging not only to the nation state, but to their school and surrounding community.

Citizenship education must also embrace and celebrate notions of difference as an important part of what it means to be an American citizen. We know that it has been common practice for those in power to enact laws and policies aimed at excluding those deemed "different" and outside the "mythical norm" from attaining citizenship (Lorde, 2012). Notions of difference (in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class, religion, nationality, etc.) were seen as undesirable and unwelcome characteristics in American citizens. As previously mentioned, the existing social studies curriculum and citizenship education still promotes assimilation as a precondition for citizenship and school success. This assimilationist framework must be rejected and transformed to accommodate different cultural values and beliefs as a part of citizenship.

Moreover, it is also important to recognize that one can experience citizenship in multiple spaces and to multiple nations that does not detract from their allegiance to the United States. The social studies curriculum currently taught in schools promotes singular

histories, values, and a definition of citizenship. This causes students to choose between learning school knowledge (which leads to success), or refuse the knowledge and fail. The curriculum must be changed so that students are not forced to make a choice between their cultural and familial knowledge and school knowledge. It is imperative that schools enacting citizenship education must accept student's dual citizenship to different nation states or their cultural/ethnic or religious communities. Doing this would create a more inclusive classroom and school environment that allows different communities to finally feel a sense of belonging.

Inclusion of multiple histories in citizenship education

The second implication centers on the absence of diverse voices, narratives, and difficult histories in the social studies curriculum. The traditional narrative of American history represents a singular perspective that omits the contributions of women, the poor, LGBT, and non-White Americans. This history teaches students that diverse individuals and communities did not play a role in the creation or success of the United States. The narrative also glosses over the exclusion of marginalized communities from attaining citizenship through government practices aimed at preserving the existing power structure (which benefitted wealthy White men). The curriculum ignores how rape has been used as a mechanism of control and a way to dehumanize African American women (McGuire, 2010) or characterizes lynching as "bad men doing bad things" instead of an action sanctioned by the structure (Brown & Brown, 2010). These are only two examples of many in which the curriculum fails to acknowledge that historical atrocities were

261

committed with the full knowledge of law enforcement and the state and were committed in order to keep African Americans (and countless other groups) outside the realm of citizenship. While these are difficult histories to learn, they are important to who we are as Americans and our collective past. But this history is an important part of community knowledge for historically marginalized groups and are central to how they conceptualize and teach what it means to be American citizens.

The participants in this study used the history of the long struggle for recognition as their reason for rejecting the traditional definition of citizenship and included that history in how they taught the construct. Although the United States has gone to great lengths to deny citizenship and human rights to communities for centuries, the social studies and citizenship education curriculum must not attempt to erase that important history. New definitions of citizenship utilize that shared history of struggle and resistance to unite communities. Schools must follow suit and include this history in how they teach citizenship in the social studies.

Teacher development for teachers of color

Teacher identity

Spillane (2000) argued that what and how teachers learn is heavily influenced by their identities as teachers and learners. Agee (2004) echoed this sentiment and found that teachers bring with them a unique identity, but their identities are constantly being renegotiated when they are in the field. This work on teacher identity suggests that their sense of self, prior experiences, cultural knowledge, and beliefs are relevant to how they

262

approach teaching and impacts their curricular and pedagogical decision-making. In teacher education, a majority of the discussions and work on teacher identity centers around preparing White middle-class preservice teachers to interrogate their privilege and Whiteness in order to successfully work with students and communities of color. An implication from this study reveals that we do not consider the complexity of a classroom teacher's identity. Teacher educators are most often focused on White teacher identity and teachers of color are ignored, or it is assumed that because they are from that community, they do not need to reflect on the tenets of their identities. This is a faulty assumption, and oftentimes teachers of color have different needs and areas of growth that are neglected in teacher education and inservice programs.

We must begin to consider how to best prepare teachers of color to critically reflect on their identity and how notions of intersectionality will influence their views and positions as teachers. How can this be done in a class where there is a diverse array of preservice teachers? Furthermore, if Agee (2004) is correct in her belief that teacher identity is constantly being renegotiated, the longer they are in the classroom, the more workshops and seminars will be needed. These professional development offerings must allow novice and veteran teachers to critically interrogate the changes in the multiple tenets of their identities as teachers and how those changes will influence their teaching and relationships with students. Change is an inevitable part of life, and teachers are no exception. Teachers must be taught to constantly reflect on how life changes and experiences can affect how they view teaching and working with different communities

and populations. This is important because failing to do so could cause irreparable harm to students (e.g., treating students unfairly based on differences, ignoring community history, etc.). Teachers must begin to view themselves as life-long learners and accept that an important part of teaching involves continuing to grow as a teacher and human being.

Experiential knowledge

We know that epistemology is fundamental in teaching, yet we continue to ignore how teachers construct knowledge and what they choose to privilege or reject. We never ask teachers how and why they want to construct narratives in certain ways. From a Black feminist perspective, African American women teachers draw on a sociohistorical lens and ways of knowing (i.e., uplifting) in how they make curricular and pedagogical decisions. We can still see it today, but its roots are in the distant past. Teachers come into teaching with a wealth of knowledge and experiences that they accumulate from their various spatial and social locations. However, in the past few decades, politicians have made efforts to deprofessionalize the teaching profession by narrowing and "teacher proofing" the curriculum. Creativity, innovation, and choice have been taken away from teachers and they instead become transmitters of a particular view of the world. Because the structure of knowledge production and validation is controlled by elite White men, their knowledge is deemed as the universal truth, and the experiences and knowledge of women of color are distorted and excluded from what counts as legitimate forms/sources of knowledge (Collins, 2009).

Experience is a valid source of knowledge, and teacher education programs and ongoing professional development must begin to empower teachers of color to challenge dominant forms of knowledge so that traditionally subjugated knowledge is taught and legitimated. While there are teacher education programs and professional development courses that push social studies teachers to present critical and diverse narratives of the past, the result is that subjugated knowledge (of women of color in particular) is taught using an "additive" approach and not as part of the dominant historical narrative. Teachers of color must be encouraged by teacher educators and practitioners to challenge the prevailing knowledge validation structure and work to actively include multiple voices and perspectives.

Limitations

All research studies potentially suffer from limitations that have the possibility to impact the significance of the phenomenon under investigation. This qualitative research study was no exception. The first limitation encountered in this study was a lack of access to research participants. I made the purposeful decision to work with African American women social studies teachers partly because of my own positionality, but primarily because of their absence in the existing research on social studies teachers. While the sheer scarcity of African American teachers in general is well noted in the research literature (Cole, 1986; Irvine, 1988) and extremely problematic for the numerous benefits Black teachers bring to the profession (see Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Dixon & Dingus, 2008; Foster, 1993; Henry, 1992; Howard, 2003; Knight, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2009;

Milner & Howard, 2004; Mitchell, 1998; Walker, 1996), I could not find either preservice or inservice teachers in my immediate area that met my qualification criteria. Therefore, I had to travel 200 miles to my home community and school district to find a selection of African American women social studies teachers to potentially work with as participants.

After receiving permission from the Downton Superintendent and school board president to conduct my study, I was told that the director of human resources could be the only person to communicate with school principals for the search for potential research subjects. While I was uncomfortable with being unable to contact principals and recruit teachers myself, I was lucky in that the director of human resources was very helpful in finding twelve K-12 teachers that met my criteria, and I had permission from the principals to be on their campus. I emailed the twelve teachers and heard back from five and included them in my data collection. However, I decided to write about only three teachers for my dissertation.

The second limitation in this study dealt with my positionality as a researcher. I was uneasy of the fact that I would finally come home to Downton not as a community citizen, but as a researcher there to bring my university sanctioned knowledge to interpret what was happening in Downton schools. I did not want to replicate the colonizing of communities of color by researchers that has resulted in shame and misrepresentation. "I am a walking contradiction with a foot in both worlds—in the dominant privileged institutions *and* in the marginalized communities" (Villenas, 1996, p. 714). In order to combat this *colonizer/colonized* feeling, I made sure that I could spend an extended

period of time in Downton and the schools getting to know my community again. I would hang out in the school cafeteria, teacher's lounge, and the school office. I attended pep rallies and school assemblies, and I was also well known by students as a constant fixture in the hallways.

Another way that I made sure that I represented the community was to make sure that I asked several questions and follow up questions of the participants and Downton students and staff. I would listen to my participants to ensure that I fully understood their statements and perspectives. Another concern that plagued my mind was that I would be viewed as a suspicious insider/outsider not only because of my university badge, but more so because of my mixed race heritage (see Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, Muhamad, 2001). I was self-conscious that the combination of my position as a university researcher coupled with my biracial "otherness" would alienate me and prevent the teachers from being honest about their views on citizenship. To the contrary, all of my participants were quick to make me feel welcome in their classrooms and accepted me for who I was. They appreciated the fact that I had grown up in Downton and had returned home to conduct this study.

The final limitation was the timing of the study. Because I had to travel a great distance to find African American women to work with, I had to wait to conduct the study at the end of the university school year because of my own coursework and teaching duties. By conducting the study at the end of the spring semester, I had about a month and a half to travel and stay in Downton for the entire duration of the study. However, the

timing was not ideal because I began collecting data in the school in the middle of standardized testing and the end of the school year. Therefore, the students were physically and mentally exhausted from the grueling testing schedule and were anxious for graduation and summer vacation. While my research participants were *determined* to keep students focused to the very end, they were not always successful in keeping their antsy and energetic high school students focused on completing the task at hand. Therefore, there were times when the teacher would give me looks of frustration, indicating that I should just observe that day and not necessarily take notes. Those days were few and far between, and because I spent a month and a half at Downton High School (5 days a week and eight hours a day), I had plenty of data to use in interpreting how my participants taught and understood notions of citizenship.

Directions for future research and final remarks

Despite these limitations, this study will nevertheless provide insights into how African American women teachers draw on their multiple identities and experiences to understand and teach different notions of citizenship. The exciting, yet frustrating part of doing research is that it leads to additional questions and numerous possibilities.

First, more studies need to be conducted with African American women teachers in majority African American settings. There is so much more that can be learned about how and why these teachers teach citizenship in multiple ways. Second, the research participants were teaching in a largely African American and Latina/o community and drew heavily on teaching communal notions of citizenship. What about teachers of color

who teach in majority White schools and spaces? Do they teach in subversive and covert ways? How does their relationship with the larger school and surrounding community impact how they approach teaching citizenship? Would they consider citizenship to be communal, cultural, or something entirely different?

The participants in this study all happened to have similar social locations and backgrounds (they all identified as African Americans, women, members of Downton community for years, heterosexual, highly educated, middle class, etc.). What about African American teachers with additional layers to their identity (perhaps immigration status, sexual orientation, experience in the criminal justice system, poverty)? How would those multiple intersections of their identities impact how they approached teaching social studies? What would citizenship look like to those teachers?

The aims of this dissertation were to inspire others to seek answers to these questions (and countless others) and begin to rethink the notion of citizenship and the many possibilities of the social studies teacher, classroom, and curriculum. I also hope that this dissertation and the participants have shed light on the important work of teachers and communities of color in educating future citizens. I still remember a conversation I had early in the study with the Downton school board president about Downton's successes and failures over the years. Anthony Strayhan (pseudonym) had also attended Downton schools, and he was committed to the uplift of the community and its schools:

There is an added pressure for us [Downton school district] to not mess up as a majority-minority school district. We are constantly put under a microscope, and it seems that everyone is watching and waiting for us to make a mistake. (Strayhan interview, 03/06/14)

His words and passion for Downton have stayed with me throughout this research process. But his words also encapsulate what I have learned and seen during my career as both a public school teacher and teacher educator in terms of the high visibility and public shaming of majority minority schools and communities. They are often represented in the media as sites of violence and fear, havens for drug dealers, absent parents, and filled to capacity with kids who don't give a damn about education. However, these negative representations only serve to further marginalize these communities.

This study attempted to serve as a counternarrative to the dominant representations of these schools and their teachers. While we cannot ignore the severe inequities in terms of school funding and resources that hamper the ability of these schools to adequately educate their students, we must reclaim their representation and redefine what education looks like in these spaces. Instead of adding to the public shame of schools and communities of color, I want to share the positive stories and the wonderful things that teachers are doing in these spaces to change public education and educate future citizens. My hope is that this work will inspire others to find and share stories of educational resilience in other schools just like Downton.

Appendix

1. **Please tell me a little bit about your personal background.**

   a. Where did you grow up?

   b. Tell me about your family.

   c. What was your schooling experience like?

2. **Please tell me about your educational background.**

   a. Where did you go to high school?

   b. What was your social studies experience?

   c. Do you remember citizenship education when you were a student? What did it look like?

   d. Where did you go to college? What was your major?

3. **Please tell me about your teacher preparation program and view of teaching?**

   a. What teaching certifications do you currently have?

   b. How does your background and experiences influence the kind of teacher you are?

   c. How does it influence the kind of social studies you teach?

4. **How does being a woman impact the kind of teacher you are or how you approach teaching?**

      a. Why did you become a teacher?

      b. How does your background and experiences influence the kind of teacher you are?

      c. How would your students describe you as a teacher?

      d. Describe your role as a social studies teacher.

5. **What is the purpose of teaching social studies?**

      a. Why do you teach social studies?

      b. Why are social studies important?

      c. How do you teach social studies? How do you make decisions as to how you teach it?

      d. What impact does your background and prior experiences have on the curricular decisions you make?

6. **How do you define citizenship?**

      a. How do you define American citizenship? Historically and now. Why do you define it that way?

      b. What are the markers of citizenship or citizens in our country? (Physical, symbolic?) Ex. To be an American citizen you must (or be) …

c. Have you had any positive or negative experiences that have affected your definition of citizenship?

7. **How do you teach citizenship education?**

   a. How do you define citizenship education?

   b. Do you teach it in your class? Why or why not?

   c. How important is teaching citizenship to you?

   d. What experiences in your past (or present) or sources of knowledge have helped shape your view on citizenship or community?

   e. Tell me about your students and your school community/school district.

   f. Describe what you perceive to be your students' experience in the school community (students of color/women). Discipline issues? Disenfranchisement of women/minorities?

   g. Describe what you perceive to be your students' experience with citizenship. Why do you describe it in that manner?

   h. How does your school/department attempt to teach/convey to students citizenship values?

   i. How do you make citizenship relevant to the lives of your students?

8. **What kind of history do you teach?**

   a. Let's talk about your curriculum. What is your opinion about the dominant narrative/perspective of the curriculum?

b. What kinds of perspectives are represented/presented in your history curriculum?

c. What do you do to counter/trouble the narrative?

9. How do you define culture?

a. How important is it for you to include the teaching of culture into your curriculum? Why is it important to teach about culture?

b. How do you include students' culture into your classroom/curriculum? Specific examples?

10. Feminism

a. How does being a woman impact your teaching or curricular decision making?

b. Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not?

c. How/why do you teach about women's/gender issues?

11. Community service/civics

a. What is important to you as a social studies teacher? What are your goals as a social studies teacher?

b. How important is civic engagement/community service to you? How do you incorporate it or plan to incorporate it?

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Vita

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