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Educational Entrepreneurship As Reform Strategy for St. Louis Public Schools

from 2003 to 2009

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A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2015

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ABSTRACT

“Educational Entrepreneurship” has increasingly become a buzz word, theory of change, silver bullet for countless so called education reformers who look to fix urban education by allowing alternative routes to teacher certification, public- private partnerships and the creation of charter schools. I have chosen autoethnography to highlight critical events from my own professional experience to illustrate the effects of educational entrepreneurship on The St. Louis Public Schools. This study used critical race theory as a lens to probe my narrative not only as a participant in educational entrepreneurship but also as Black, female educator.

The end result is a reflective journey of the beginning of my professional career. I was unprepared for the complexity of feelings that emerged in completing this study. The goal of this research is to offer a counter story, my story, about the much lauded reform effort of Educational Entrepreneurship, and to foster critical dialogue about how EE policies harm Black students, families and educators.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would never have been able to finish my dissertation without the guidance of my committee members, and support from my family and husband.

I want to thank Dr. Matthew Davis, my chair, for shepherding me through this journey over the past nine year. I also want to thank my committee members, Drs. Brenda Bredemier, Karl Hoagland and Lynn Beckwith, Jr. for pushing me to persevere.

I am grateful for my family, my mother, father, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles who have encouraged me in all my academic endeavors my entire life. I wish my grandfathers were alive to see their hopes and dreams for me come to fruition.

Lastly, I want to thank my husband Terrell. He believes more in my abilities than I do at times and has never wavered in his commitment to supporting my dreams.

CHAPTER ONE-INTRODUCTION

“Why did you pick St. Louis to come and teach?”

From the moment I began my career in St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) as a Teach For America (TFA) teacher in the fall of 2003, students and colleagues both asked this question of me. It seemed unimaginable to them that a person would self-select their city and school district as a place to live and work. My response to this question was always, “Why, not?” Years later, I am still perplexed by this question. What in their experience in SLPS prompted both children and adults to determine that SLPS was not a place where one would willingly work or go to school? My quest to understand their perspective led me to study reform efforts to increase student achievement of African American students, specifically, the implementation of educational entrepreneurship (EE) as a school reform effort in SLPS 2003 to 2009. This time frame was selected because my professional experience with SLPS began in August of 2003 and my special assignment to the Superintendent ended in June of 2009.

There is a lack of commonly agreed upon definition of what educational entrepreneurship or an educational entrepreneur is. In Hess’s (2006) work, there are several definitions offered by the contributors. This study will employ a definition which builds on Hess’s from 2006. EE is the process by which the creation or development of organizations, systems or products that transform the educational landscape in an innovative manner. Individuals who initiate these ideas into actions are educational entrepreneurs. EE strands or components encompass new charter school providers,

public-private partnerships, learning tools, student support services and pipelines of human capital.

My research interest is driven as a result of personal interactions with internal actors in SLPS and St. Louis business elites. This study is based on my career experiences in SLPS and how they intersected with strands of EE in the St. Louis Public Schools from 2003 to 2009. Against this backdrop, I want to examine my experiences through a critical race theory lens to determine whether EE has provided African American students in SLPS with improved educational outcomes. I originally planned to analyze standardized test scores as the primary ideology of EE is the use of data to measure and validate a program, process or outcome, however in chapter seven, I account for the change in direction while briefly discussing the standardized achievement of scores of African American and White students from 2003-2009.

I began connecting my professional experiences with strands of EE and how despite changes in leadership in the SLPS superintendent position; EE was a consistent reform model in SLPS. I was unsure, however, if the implementation of EE was done deliberately by school administrators or the school board, or if other factors worked in concert to implement EE. At the beginning of my career, I had never heard of the term educational entrepreneur or entrepreneurship. As my career unfolded and I began attending graduate school, the more I learned about urban education, the more the term educational entrepreneur would appear in the context of education reform. I often wondered who the educational entrepreneurs were and where had the term come from. Between 1996 and 2005 the phrases “education entrepreneur” and “educational entrepreneurship” occurred only 40 times in the media outlets of the New York Times,

Washington Post, USA Today, Los Angeles Times and Chicago Tribune”(Hess, 2006 p.4). Only a handful of people had written about EE either from their personal experiences, Chris Whittle (2005) and Wendy Kopp (2001), or in academic writings Marilyn Kourilsky, William Walstad, Paul Hill and James Harvey (2003). I noticed in journalistic media accounts both locally and nationally, organizations that I was familiar with such as Teach For America, New Teacher Project, Edison, KIPP, and individuals like Wendy Kopp, Chris Whittle, Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin were being described by this terminology. I began to look for common descriptions or catch phrases to formulate my own definition and ways to connect the people and organizations to each other.

Background

The school district of SLPS has faced a myriad of challenges throughout the decade early years of the new century. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) stripped the district of full accreditation in 2002 and placed it in provisional status until 2007 when it became unaccredited. In 2013, DESE placed SLPS back in provisional status. SLPS (n.d.) has also dealt with persistently low test scores, high dropout rates and troubled financial circumstances. Compounding these challenges were the eight superintendents that have led SLPS since 2003, though two were interim and served for a combined six months (Taylor, 2008). Charter school legislation was passed in Missouri in 1999 and the first four charter schools in St. Louis opened in 2000 (Little, 2007). In 2009, SLPS served a population of 25,770 students, 81% were African American students and 68.7% were eligible for free or reduced lunch (DESE, 2014). Student achievement and graduation rates are low while dropout rates and

discipline incidents are high (SLPS, n.d). As in urban school districts across the country, factors such as white flight, continued housing segregation, and low economic foundations continue to impact the SLPS (Chapman, 2007& Jacobs, 2007).

My career trajectory in SLPS has been extremely atypical. K-12 education was not the field I had intended to be in. My original plan after graduation was to earn a doctorate in Latin American studies at a public university in northwest Texas. Both my mother and grandmother retired as elementary school teachers and I did not see their work as glamorous or ambitious, yet I became a teacher through Teach For America (TFA). I learned of TFA in the fall of my senior year of college from my roommate who had been a math major and hoped to become a math teacher through TFA. Researching the website and attending the many recruitment sessions that were held on my campus, I decided to apply and was subsequently surprised when I was accepted in the “corps” as it is called.

As a college senior, Wendy Kopp proposed Teach For America's creation in her Princeton University undergraduate thesis. She was convinced that many in her generation were searching for a way to assume a significant responsibility that would make a real difference in the world and that top college students would choose teaching over more lucrative opportunities if a prominent teacher corps existed .As a 21 year-old, Kopp raised \$2.5 million of start-up funding, hired a skeleton staff, and launched a grass-roots recruitment campaign. During Teach For America's first year in 1990, 500 men and women began teaching in six low-income communities across the country. Since then, Teach For America's network has grown to over 28,000 individuals. In 2009, more than 35,000 individuals

applied to Teach For America, a 40 percent increase over the previous year. 4,100 applicants were accepted and 4075 were placed as teachers in the TFA regions across the country (TeachForAmerica, ND).

I moved to St. Louis from a large southern city where I had attended college. I began my career in SLPS 2003 as a TFA corps member. After completing two years of teaching at a comprehensive high school and completing a master's degree in special education in 2005, I was approached by Knowledge is Power Program(KIPP) recruiters to apply for the KIPP Fischer Fellowship.

KIPP, the Knowledge is Power Program, is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools with a track record of preparing students in underserved communities for success in college and in life. Two TFA alumni, Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin, started KIPP in 1994 in Houston, Texas after completing their two year commitment to Teach For America. In 1995, Feinberg stayed in Houston to lead KIPP Academy Middle School, and Levin went back to New York City to establish KIPP Academy in the South Bronx. These two original KIPP Academies became the starting place for a growing network of schools. The Fisher Fellowship offers candidates a year-long program that prepares them to open a new KIPP school and includes intensive summer coursework in an academic setting, residencies at KIPP schools, and individualized coaching from experienced KIPP staff (KIPP, ND).

I was selected after a grueling weekend of interviews which is called selection weekend and turned down the offer. I chose instead to spend a year as a principal intern in a SLPS

principal preparation program, The New Leaders Project (NLP), a year long partnership with a large state university. I was chosen through a strenuous selection process along with 21 other candidates to complete an intense summer program, four full days of internships in school district buildings, 11 hours of attending classes on Thursday evening and all day classes on Friday. Following the year as a principal intern, I earned an educational specialist degree in education administration and held two assistant principalships before becoming a principal at the age 27.

As a first year principal, I was hired to reopen a school that had been closed for five years. At the end of the 2008 school year, SLPS, like the rest of the country was in a serious economic downturn and proposed to close schools for the upcoming school year. The Special Administrative Board (SAB) and the Superintendent decided it was not in the best interest of the school district to raise funds from the community or use district money to reopen a school while closing others (K.R. Adams, personal communication, January 12, 2009). Instead I was given the title of principal on special assignment. While on this special assignment, I began working for the current superintendent in researching school districts across the country and designing alternative governance structures for schools within the SLPS district.

After I shared my research about the existing models, the SLPS Superintendent decided that the model to pattern our alternative, innovative school structure after was Boston Public Schools BPS's pilot school model. I spent 8 months working with central office divisions and the local teacher's union in creating guidelines, manuals, and application and selection rubrics for the SLPS Independent Pilot schools as well as

meeting with leaders of the local business community to garner support for the Pilot school plan.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to define the strands of EE that were implemented in SLPS from 2003-2009 and describe through counter-stories, my professional experiences with those strands.

Review of Research

The review of research begins with a historical overview of racism in the United States. The next section describes the historical context of SLPS and the status of urban schools. The third section discusses existing research about the history and import of educational entrepreneurship. The fourth section examines the history and appropriateness of using CRT as a theoretical framework. Autoethnography as well as table top theory and policy decision making. The next few sections will introduce the concepts and theoretical frameworks used in the study.

Through autoethnography, critical life events of the researcher are told that depict how three EE stands; new charter school providers, public private partnerships and human capital pipelines were implemented in SLPS. Two Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenets, interest convergence and whiteness as the ultimate property will be used as an analytic tool to examine how racial inequality is maintained through institutions, systems and structures that on the surface appear normal. B.A. Jones' (2007) table top theory, a policy decision making model will illuminate the formal and informal forces that explain educational policies in the SLPS.

Historical Reflections

Racism is rampant within society in the United States; including institutions of education (DeCuir and Dixson, 2003). Racism began in this country during colonial times and was entrenched by codifying rules and punishments for slaves. It was during this time period that the institutionalism of racial classifications was linked to unequal treatment which marked the beginning of racial categories (Fields, 1990). Prior to the Civil War, legislation forbade African-American slaves from learning to read in most southern states (Butchart, 2007).

After the Civil War, freed slaves clamored for access to education. Schools were built, teachers hired, and students young and old attended (Butchart, 2007). In the midst of this new found freedom, Whites used terror tactics to intimidate African Americans from exercising their new rights. In spite of the obstacles, African Americans felt that obtaining an education would propel them towards an even greater freedom.

History of St. Louis Public Schools

Missouri became a state in 1821 and public schools were explicitly spelled out in the state constitution for public schools (Missouri General Assembly, 1820). Prior to 1847, there were no specific laws in place preventing the education of blacks although it was extremely unpopular (Evans, 1938). The Missouri Legislature in 1847 outlawed teaching of black children and any violators faced a fine or jail time (Smith, 2009). Throughout the time period of the Civil War, there were sympathetic whites along with African Americans who educated children often under the auspices of learning trades.

After the Civil War the St. Louis School Board appropriated funds to support the existing “Negro” schools and aided in lobbying to repeal the 1847 law (Evans, 1938).

Saint Louis Public Schools opened its first school in 1838 (St. Louis Board of Education, ND). It was not until 1866 that the board took control and responsibility for the “colored schools” (Liedecker, 1941). In 1875 changes were made to the state constitution that allowed separate free schools to be established for students of African descent (Missouri General Assembly, 1875). High schools, a teachers’ college, kindergarten, and subsequent schools were opened for the African American children between 1866 and 1937 (Evans, 1938). From 1875 to 1954, St. Louis allowed segregated education for Black children that was touted as separate –but –equal, which theoretically was to end with *Brown vs Board of Education* (1954).

In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Supreme Court ruled that separate facilities could never be equal, thus the decline of de jure racial segregation and the rise of de facto racial segregation in the nation’s schools would soon result. Maintaining a dual school system had offered unique challenges to the SLPS district in the years since the beginning of the Second Great Migration (Weathersby, 2010). The SLPS BOE had employed a desegregation consultant whose plan was approved by the BOE the week after the *Brown* decision (Smith, 2009). The plan would use existing residential racial segregation in the city of St. Louis by assigning students to school based on neighborhoods ensuring the Black and White children would continue to be educated separately (Smith, 2009).

While SLPS had guardedly and gradually integrated schools, by the 1972-73 school year, in all actuality, very little integration had taken place (Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004). “In 1972, Concerned Parents, a group founded by Minnie Liddell, filed a class action law suit against the St. Louis School Board, individual board members, the Superintendent and district superintendents“(Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004, p.80). The suit was filed on behalf of Ms. Liddell’s oldest son, Craton, and four other SLPS students contending that the SLPS were governed in such a way that systematically denied equal educational opportunities to black citizens, in violation of the Constitution’s Fourteenth amendment. For more than a decade the lawsuit remained tied up in federal court (Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004; Smith, 2009). After additional litigation, a settlement agreement was signed in 1983 by the Caldwell and Liddell plaintiffs, the St. Louis City District and the suburban districts.

The plan to desegregate the St. Louis Public schools was the most extensive plan in the nation to desegregate an inner city- public school district. “It was twice as large as the Milwaukee program; twenty times the Hartford program and five times the size of the Boston Program”(Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004, p.129). The plan included Magnet schools, improved facilities in SLPS and a voluntary transfer program where students in SLPS and neighboring county school districts could transfer between schools (LaPierre, 1987; Smith, 2009).

The Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council or VICC was responsible for managing and examining the transfer applications (Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004). By the mid 1990s there was a substantial degree of integration and thousands of students participated.

In October of 1991, the state attorney general, William Webster, moved to end the desegregation order. Intense political negotiations, claims and counterclaims peppered the 90's and in May of 1998, the Missouri General Assembly passed Senate Bill 781 (Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004, p.130).

Educational reforms such as the city school board elections, charter schools in Kansas City and St. Louis, the state board's authority to determine which school districts were "academically deficient" and authorized school district to develop incentives and reward systems for teachers.

Language was also included that in the event a school district failed to meet state standards and the state board revoked its accreditation, the district's elected school board would be dissolved and replaced by a three-member overlay board appointed by the state board of education. The bill for the first time tied student test scores to school accreditation. Under Senate Bill 781, the state could take over of a district if its test scores did not meet the state's expectations. The settlement agreement deferred a state takeover until the end of the 2001-2002 academic year (Little, 2007, p.21).

In October 2002, the Missouri Board of Education stripped SLPS of full accreditation and granted provisional accreditation status to SLPS through 2004 (Heaney and Uchitelle, 2004). In April 2003, a newly elected slate of school board member hired the "turnaround" management firm of Alvarez and Marsal to perform the temporary duties of school superintendent (Simon, 2004; Jones, 2003 & 2005). In June, a partner of the firm, William Roberti, was named interim superintendent. There was an immediate

controversy regarding how much of a deficit the district's budget was in. The outgoing superintendent, Cleveland Hammonds had said the deficit amount was \$55 million.

Roberti said \$90 million. The governor ordered an audit which concluded the deficit was \$73 million. The Alvarez and Marsal firm ran SLPS for about a year and cut \$72 million dollars. Schools were closed, school personnel were cut and some services were privatized. The community reported feeling taken over and victimized by the actions of the firm (Jones, 2005).

Urban School Reform

Urban Schools have received extensive scholarly and popular attention, focused particularly on the dismal conditions and inequitable subpar schooling in scholarly writing for decades. "The popular media often depicts urban students in such a negative light that they can be perceived as the cause rather than the effect of the challenges of urban schooling" (Foote, 2005, p.374). Nearly one-third of American public school students attend urban public schools, a category that includes both the nation's highest and lowest-performing public schools. Foote (2005) defined urban schools to schools as part of districts of 20, 000 or more students in her research. The Council of Great City Schools organization which is composed of 57 large, city school districts illustrated that demographics of urban schools in a report released in 2003, urban schools have "21 % more African American students, 14% more Hispanic students, 23% more free and reduced students and 10% more English language learners than the national average"(Foote, 2005, p.374).

Urban school districts have higher percentages of poorer and minority students and tend to have a diminishing tax base which makes them more reliant on state and federal funding (Jacobs, 2007). White flight, continued housing segregation, strapped budgets have all contributed to the current state of urban education.

While urban public schools were once a crown jewel of our public education system and a way for many Americans to climb the economic class ladder, today “inner-city school” is widely considered a synonym for educational failure. This is hardly a baseless stereotype. On the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), for example, fourth-grade students from large urban school districts scored 14 points lower than suburban students in both math and reading—a difference equivalent to nearly a year-and-a-half of schooling. Only 60 percent of students enrolled in urban public schools graduate high school within four years of enrolling in ninth grade—compared with 75 percent of suburban students (Mead and Rotherham 2008, p.8).

Large city districts appear to be crippled by ineffective bureaucracies that pit adult interests and their advocacy organizations against the best interests of students. (Chapman, 2007). In some cities, the challenges in the school district reflect larger political conflicts within the local government (Mead and Rotherham, 2008). Unequal formulas for school financing lead to urban districts receiving fewer resources than suburban peers making it harder to recruit top talent for classrooms and leadership positions (Mead and Rotherham, 2008). Urban school teachers describe classrooms as overcrowded and bemoan the increasing standards students are expected to meet with

declining material resources (Foote, 2005, Jacob, 2007).”These schools are often staffed with highest percentage of minority and low income students, tend to employ beginning teachers rather than veteran teachers, or have a higher percentage of teachers teaching outside their certification” (Foote, 2005, p.372).

A more recent evolution of reforms to fix urban education includes EE. EE is a term which encompasses several specific reforms which will be detailed in the next section.

Educational Entrepreneurship

As stated previously, urban schools confront a number of challenges compared to schools in rural and suburban areas. Conditions such as over-crowded classrooms, decrepit facilities, under equipped, teacher shortages, and poor student performance are symptomatic of most (Foote, 2007). Numerous programs have been implemented at the state and federal levels with varying degrees of success of improving the quality of education in urban schools. Over time, endless attempts have been made to change the course of education in the U.S. through real or imagined distress, changes in leadership, international comparisons and national propaganda highlighting assertions of low performing school systems (Ravitch, 2000). Over the last seven to nine years, EE is the common term applied to improve K-12 education such as alternative certification, public private partnerships, charter schools and learning tools and support services.

Hess (2006) believes that educational entrepreneurship has transitioned the field of education to a more business-focused paradigm and that strands of EE can address the conditions listed above in order to provide a better quality of education to the students in urban schools. “Unconventional thinkers have waded into the world of K-12 education,

founded influential organizations, and upended conventions. They have developed new models for delivering instruction or recruiting teachers and have applied old-fashioned practices with inspired fidelity” (Hess, 2007, p.21). Others such as Kim Smith and Julie Peterson, co-founders of the New Venture fund (2006), agreed that EE has vast potential to make a difference in the educational landscape due to focus on K-12 outcomes of systems instead of subsets of students. Furthermore, educational entrepreneurs are committed to achieving results, measured as dramatic improvements in student learning for low-income children whom they assert our educational system has repeatedly failed in large urban areas.

As stated earlier the definition for this study of EE is the process by which the creation or development of organizations, systems or products that transform the educational landscape in an innovative manner. Individuals who initiate these ideas into actions are educational entrepreneurs. Strands of EE are: new school providers; individuals/organizations that create new charter schools or charter school systems; human capital suppliers, organizations that use alternative certification to put nontraditional candidates into classrooms and principal offices and companies or individuals that offer services or tools to enhance current practice and public/private partnerships; foundation, nonprofit and business support to fund programs or projects in schools and districts. (Hess, 2006).

Traditional the term “entrepreneur” has meant someone engaged in some sort of business venture. Two significant voices on entrepreneurship are Joseph Schumpeter and Peter Drucker (Hess, 2006). Schumpeter emphasized that entrepreneurship required the processes of harnessing inventions to create new products, new means of production and

new forms of organization- and he asserted adding value to society (Levin, 2006; Hess, 2006). Drucker also tended to equate entrepreneurship with innovation, but particularly the role of management (Drucker, 1985). Though the history of entrepreneurship has been extensively researched, a complete analysis will not be done in this study, however, it should be noted that some of the precepts such as innovation and market disruption are evident in the execution of individual strands of EE. It should be noted that recent qualitative studies have attempted to link education and entrepreneurship on a conceptual level (Borasi & Finnigan, 2010; Schimmel, 2013)

The researcher could not locate one commonly agreed upon definition of an educational entrepreneur or educational entrepreneurship. Similar traits, characteristics or concepts such as visionary thinker, risk taker, collaborative appear in most of the descriptions in current literature of EE (Smith and Peterson, 2006; Mead and Rotherham, 2008; Hess, 2006). Hess the leading voice posits that EE is what K-12 education needs and the individuals and organizations who are providing human capital, services, new schools and leveraging public and private dollars are responsible for some of the best developments in K-12 education (Hess, 2007).

Educational entrepreneurs have developed reportedly new models for delivering instruction or recruiting teachers or founding influential organizations (Hess, 2006) to solve pressing educational problems. The motivating philosophy and mission, implicitly or explicitly, of this group is to achieve social justice by reshaping the United States' educational landscape by a willingness to challenge the status quo, provide quality teachers in every classroom and great principals in schools. Inherent in their missions is to question assumptions about what works in education (Mead and Rotherham, 2008).

As a rule, transparency, accountability, and performance are espoused as core values of their organizations as opposed to any one educational ideology.

These organizations see philanthropic support as essential to their initiatives, because they assert public dollars for research and development are limited and public dollars are rarely used to “test” new ideas or grow proven ideas to scale (Mead and Rotherham, 2008). Hess (2006) stated that though educational entrepreneurship is a phenomenon of the last few decades, it is still very new and has been primarily utilized in urban school environments where achievement and graduation rates have been shockingly low. Levin (2006) and Cuban (2006) argue that the “reforms” of today are recycled from previous decades and that the “reformers” are not unlike previous generations before them. Many early generational attempts to reform schools have focused on a handful of the same reforms, namely school curriculum, teacher quality, funding, textbooks, and educational leadership (Cuban, 1990; Ravitch, 2000).

The next few sections describe the different strands of EE; charter schools, alternative routes for certification, learning tools and student support services. While all of the strands are detailed in the literature review, the study focuses on charter schools, alternative certification as human capital pipelines and public/private partnerships.

Schools and Networks of Schools

The first strand of educational entrepreneurs includes individuals and organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit, who establish entire new public schools or networks of schools which are called charter schools. Minnesota passed the first charter school law as a new innovative option to improve K-12 public education in 1991 (Junge,

2014). What initially was an experiment has become a movement that serves over 2 million students (Little, 2007) .

Charter schools are by definition independent public schools. Although funded with taxpayer dollars, they operate free from many of the laws and regulations that govern traditional public schools. In exchange for that freedom, they are bound to the terms of a contract, or "charter," that lays out a school's mission, academic goals, and accountability procedures. State laws set the parameters for charter contracts, which are overseen by a designated charter school authorizer—often the local school district or related agency (EdWeek, 2011).

The Center for Education Reform, an organization that advocates for charters, states that there were over 5,000 charter schools in 39 states and the District of Columbia by January 2010, and they enrolled more than 1.5 million students (EdWeek, 2011). Charter schools can be run independently, by an Educational Management Organization (EMO) or a Charter Management Organization (CMO).

An EMO is an organization or firm that manages schools that receive public funds, including district and charter public schools. A contract details the terms under which executive authority to run one or more schools is given to an EMO. CMO is a non-profit organization that creates a group of schools with a shared educational vision and mission (Lake, 2010).

About 50% of all charter schools nationally are located within cities or urban areas. Supporters of charter schools argue that increased choice and accountability helps school districts. Opponents cite that funds are diverted from school district control and some

charters employ exclusionary tactics when serving students. There are also questions about quality in schools that are held to different and sometimes unenforced standards of accountability (Cookson and Berger, 2002).

Since their origination in 1991, charter school advocates have come from across political lines and ideologies to support the school choice movement: For liberals, charter schools provide a way to encompass notions of choice and competition. For conservatives, charter schools serve as an alternative to voucher system (Cookson and Berger, 2002). Studies have shown wide ranging results as to whether or not students that attend charter schools are performing better than students in traditional public schools (Knaack and Knaack, 2013).

Human Capital

Another strand of educational entrepreneurship consists of organizations that work to increase the supply of talented human capital into the educational landscape, and assist public school districts and public charter schools in managing their human capital needs (Mead and Rotherham, 2008). Over the past couple of decades, several leaders of urban school districts across America concluded that multiple aspects of the human capital systems in urban school districts were not functioning in ways that would help the districts improve instruction and boost student learning (Kelly and Odden, 2008). Human capital management in school contexts, have been defined as aligning educational organizations hiring approaches to that of the private sector (Odden, 2011). In many large urban districts and rural districts accomplishing this task is monumental and nonprofit organizations such as Teach For America, the New Teacher Project, the Broad Residency and New Leaders for New Schools are drafting in their opinion quality talent across the

country for teaching and leading America's school to fill the gap (Kelly and Odder, 2008). Teach For America and The New Teacher Project recruit and train teachers and the Broad Residency and New Leaders for New Schools recruit and train school leaders.

Teach for America (TFA), founded in 1990, recruits and selects graduates from some of the most selective colleges and universities across the country to teach in the nation's most challenging K-12 schools throughout the nation. TFA has grown significantly since its inception in 1990, when it received 2,500 applicants and selected and placed 500 teachers. In 2005, it received over 17,000 applicants and selected and placed a little over 2,000 new teachers. In total, the program has affected the lives of nearly 3 million students (Hannaway, Taylor and Hu, 2007, p.2).

According to TFA, at least two-thirds of all alumni work in the education system in some capacity, from teachers, to superintendents to education policy analysts once their two year commitment is completed (Kelly and Odden, 2008). New Leaders founded in 2000 by Jonathan Schnur and Mike Johnston, purports to develop school leaders around the country. Currently, there are leadership training programs in 12 urban areas (New York City, Newark, Baltimore, Prince George's County, Washington, DC, Charlotte, NC, Chicago, Memphis, Greater New Orleans and the Bay Area). Over the past ten years, New Leaders has placed program graduates in almost 800 school leadership posts (New Leaders, ND).

Founded in 1997 by Michelle Rhee, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) works with schools, districts and states to provide excellent teachers to the students who need them most and to advance policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every

classroom (TNTP, ND). TNTP is school districts, charter school organizations and state education agencies in more than 25 cities including Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Denver, Houston, New Orleans, New York, Phoenix and Philadelphia (TNTP, ND). Since its inception, TNTP has evolved alongside the educational landscape to support and facilitate reform efforts such as changing teacher tenure laws and performance based evaluation.

The Broad Residency is a leadership training program under the Broad Center for Management of School Systems that assigns residents into full time high- level supervisory positions in school districts, CMOs and federal/ state departments of education. Broad Residents obtain two years of professional development and entry to national network of education leaders (Broad Center, ND).The Broad Center is funded by the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation(Broad Center, ND).Selection criteria varies for each organization; however, the strategic recruiting,developing and retaining candidates are core functions of each the programs mentioned above(Kelly and Odden, 2008). How well school districts, CMOs and EMOs recruit, select, hire, induct, train, develop, retain and manage talent is key to meeting strategic organizational goals for increasing student achievement outcomes

Learning Tools

A third strand of educational entrepreneurs create tools that are purported to assist educators in increasing student achievement with instructional materials, online courses, formative assessments, and data tracking and analysis tool(Mead &Rotherham, 2008). In the past decade, there has been an influx in entrepreneurial ventures designed to

assist teachers in the areas of technology, assessment, and instructional planning (Hess, 2005). Wireless Generation is a company directed by Larry Berger and Josh Reibel (Wireless Generation, 2005). Neither of these two men had any background in teaching, but knew that there was a market for programming that could provide instantaneous feedback to teachers regarding assessments. By developing technology that allows teachers to immediately analyze and interpret data, Wireless Generation asserts that it has impacted schools and students by providing teachers with the tools needed to make informed decisions about instructional needs. The mClass technology provided by Wireless Generation is reported to eradicate the need for paper observations and provides storage space for data from several varieties of assessment. Once the assessment information is synced, teachers can begin utilizing the data to inform changes in curriculum and instructional support for individual students (Wireless Generation, 2005).

Similarly, Edusoft, now owned by Houghton-Mifflin, created a program that allows teachers to scan and immediately upload multiple choice assessments for data analysis. The company can also assist teachers in creating assessments that analyze students' critical thinking and other complex skills. Additionally, like many similar companies, Edusoft also provides re-teaching materials and enrichment resources.

Yet not all subsidiaries owned by education publishers are focused strictly on the data. The Grow Network, recently acquired by McGraw-Hill Publishing, provides data analysis, individualized needs assessments, and integrates a parental involvement component. The Grow Network provides a service called The Parent Network, a program designed to be used by state departments to educate parents on state standards and their students' scores in relation to those standards. (The Grow Network, 2008).

Student Support Services

The fourth strand of EE provides various student support services, such as afterschool programs, supplementary tutoring, or college admissions counseling such as College Bound. The mission of College Bound is to provide capable high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the academic enrichment, social supports and life skills needed to apply, enter and flourish in four year colleges (Mead&Rotherham,2008). College Summit provides counseling and college planning services to low-income students in the process of applying for post-high school programs. Jumpstart provides one-on-one support to pre-schoolers in Head Start by training college students in tutoring and literacy instruction strategies. All of these programs are designed to have a huge impact on low-income students, whether at the start of their K-12 education, or at the end.

Many universities and organizations have sprouted entrepreneurial ventures aimed at improving teacher and administrator quality in our public schools. Some of the most well-known are LAUNCH (Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago), EXCEL (Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership) in San Francisco, and New Leaders for New Schools (McGuinn, 2006,).

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory

In the United States the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow laws and general disenfranchisement converge to create continued unequal access to quality education despite legislation. “Historically, white power interests used considerable material and political resources that they have had to impede the academic advancement of black children” (Duncan, 2005, p.97). “In contemporary times, concepts like ‘inner city’ and ‘urban’ reiterate the terms ‘savage’, ‘primitive’, and ‘barbaric’ that are applied to certain schools and students which are pseudonyms for black schools and black students” (p.98). Critical Race Theory (CRT) is rooted in legal scholarship that maintains schools and institutions perpetuate the subjugation of interests of African Americans and other minority groups

CRT is derived from critical legal studies (CLS) and began in the mid 1970s by Alan Freeman and Derrick Bell as well as other legal scholars who were unsatisfied with established civil rights methods for racial reform (Delgado, 1995). Their studies developed into what is now known as critical race theory. “Critical race theorists postulate that racism, white privilege, and an ahistorical context dominate institutions and systems, social norms, and daily practice” (Aleman, 2007.p 5).

For the purposes of this study, I will use the following five tenets of CRT: 1) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational; 2) the idea of an interest convergence; 3) the social construction of race; 4) the idea of storytelling and counter- storytelling and

5) whiteness is constructed as the ultimate property (Bell, 1980, Parker, 1999, Lopez & Parker, 2003).

Central to critical race theory is the understanding of the pervasiveness of racism in American society. Derrick Bell (1992), one of the founding scholars of CRT, described racism as an enduring factor of American life. Richard Delgado and Stefancic (2001) concurred with Bell and contended that racism is so ingrained in American culture that it is barely recognizable. Thus, acknowledging the endemic racism American society as the first step in unveiling the hegemonic structures established in economic, political, and social areas that reinforce and maintain privilege and oppression (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001).

The notion of racism is a permanent fixture on the psyche of both the majority and minority culture. Racism is normal and such a permanent part of American life that at times it can be hard to recognize, thus making it difficult to eliminate or address (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). The ideas of “color blindness” and “meritocracy” are inextricably linked to white consciousness to explain their position in society and to absolve them of any racial wrongdoing. CRT rejects the notion of a “color blind society.

The second tenet is interest convergence meaning whites will allow racial justice only as long as there is something “in it” for whites. The majority culture wants to entrench the status quo and position of power). Bell(1995) proclaimed “ Whites simply can not envision the personal responsibility and the potential sacrifice inherent in the conclusion that true equality for Blacks will require the surrender of racism- granted privileges for Whites”(Bell, 1995,p.22). The interest of African Americans in achieving

racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites.

Thirdly, in the United States, race is a social construct. Race and races are products of social thought and relations. Delgado and Stefancic(2001) explained that “race is not objective, inherent, or fixed. It does correspond to no biological or genetic reality, rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient”(Delgado and Stefancic, 2001,p.8). Habitually, how our society voluntarily ignores these scientific facts, creates races, and bestows them with pseudo- permanent characteristics is of great interest to critical race theory (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001).

Fourthly, “ the legal story telling” tenet urges black and brown writers to recount their experiences with racism and the legal system and to apply their own unique perspectives to assess law’s master narratives. Minority status brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism(Delgado and Stefancic, 2001).Due to the different histories and ways in which they were oppressed, Black, Indian, Asian and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts who are doubtfully aware (Wilson-Green,2008).

Lastly, whiteness as property is the consistent and reinforced practices, attitudes of whites as normal and the othering of everyone’s culture and perspective(Ladson-Billings, 2000; Harris,1993).Whiteness has the value as real and tangible property that affords the possessor advantages (Harris, 1993).CRT applies to the educational inequities of African American children in public education. CRT is appropriate in this study

because tenets of CRT are applicable to components of EE that I highlight through personal narrative.

Autoethnography

Auto ethnography, a relatively new research tool, was presented in 1956 by Raymond Firth (Hughes, 2008). “Autoethnography is the term given to acute self- study in which the researcher takes an active, scientific, systematic view of personal experience in relation to cultural groups identified by the researcher as similar to self or as others who differ from self”(Hughes, Makris and Pennington, 2012, p.209). It is said to be too subjective for those who critique it as a research tool yet others promote the methodology’s capacity to create space for minimalized voices to be heard (Hughes, 2008). In autoethnography, the author or researcher of a narrative writes in first person, making him or her the object of research which shifts the conventional separation of researcher and study participant (researchee). Additionally, the focus often is a single case and that breaks one of the canons of traditional research that generalization across cases to generalization within a case (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

I want to explore my own experiences as data, to tell of my personal experiences within educational entrepreneurship and SLPS, and discuss the effects of educational entrepreneurship on black students in SLPS within a theoretical framework of critical race theory. Autoethnography as a research method is the best tool for me as it disputes the assumptions about what is “right”, affords the right to reexamine both our professional and personal practices and lastly permits scholars to be more critical if not more of themselves than they do of others (Hughes, 2008). Autoethnography does not

follow accepted writing formats agreed upon by traditional social sciences practices. Our own voices illuminate the entirety of our personal experiences. In discarding the sterile stance, we acknowledge how differences of class, gender, race, sexuality and class influence our research (Hughes, Makris and Pennington, 2012).

Another attribute of this type of research is the use of story or voice of the researcher (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002). Personal narratives offers the capacity to include feelings, beliefs, attitudes and first person voice of the researcher (Dyson, 2007). Autoethnography acknowledges the influence of the researcher on their research (Adams, Bochner & Ellis, 2010).

In this study, autoethnography is the tool to examine pedagogical and research practices from lived experiences. In this methodology, the researcher is the phenomenon (Clements and Cord, 2010). The term autoethnography contains the words: auto, ethno and graphy, which denote the textual representation of one's own personal experiences in his/her social, political, economic and cultural context (Luitel, 2003 as cited in Luitel and Taylor, 2008). Auto-ethnography turns the autobiography or memoir genre into a method for conducting and displaying research. The researcher uses their experiences as data (Spry, 2001)

Policy Making

The political and policy context in which educational judgements are made in the United States is at the local level in comparison to the majority of industrialized and post industrialized countries (Hunter & Donahoo, 2003). Even though there are federal and state educational policies that localized school boards must execute, the very nature of

urban school districts is one of a politicized and racial nature (Hunter and Donahoo, 2003). The *Brown* ruling directly inserted federal government into policy making and enforcement in the urban school districts to enforce desegregation. Consequently, states took a more active role in making sure that local districts complied with the new regulations. In the context of the United States, race, ethnicity, gender, class, culture and finance are key influential variables in understanding the power and influence of private interests in the educational policy arena (Hunter and Donahoo, 2003).

Local Politics

In 2001, Mayor Francis Slay was elected to his first term and pledged to make St. Louis a better place to live (St. Louis Government, ND). Part of his platform was improving SLPS and creating additional school options through charter schools (Kimball & Stein, 2007; St. Louis Government, ND). As cited in previous chapters, Mayor Slay was pivotal in bringing TFA to St. Louis in 2002 by using funds from his budget and fundraising amongst the business community. The city of St. Louis has a weak mayor system and limited control of the school district. Improving education was a cornerstone and only through obtaining control of the school board could he implement his agenda for the school district (Kimball & Stein, 2007).

In the 2003 School Board election, Mayor Slay backed four candidates, two black and two white who ran individual campaigns (Kimball & Stein, 2007). A special committee, The St. Louis Education Committee, campaigned for all four as a slate and was funded by the consortium of CEO's, Civic Progress, mentioned in chapters four and five. The new board majority hired turn around firm, Alvarez and Marsal, and their partner William Roberti as acting Superintendent (Kimball & Stein, 2007 ; Jones, 2005).

Mr. Roberti with board approval closed several schools and privatized custodial and foodservices (Kimball & Stein, 2007; Jones, 2005).

In April of 2003, the St. Louis Board of Education contracted with a turnaround firm from New York that named a business executive as interim superintendent (Jones, 2005). The community at large comprised of parents, employees and local neighborhood groups had no involvement in the decision making process. Protests erupted at board meetings over all the reforms. Protesters were upset that the schools were being governed by an out of town firm and St. Louis elites (Jones, 2005; Kimball & Stein, 2007).

In March 2005 the other three seats on the seven member board were up for re-election. The mayor backed three candidates, one Black and two White. Three other candidates ran together against the mayor's slate. Two of the opposition slate and one of the mayor's would win. The same dynamic of Mayor supported candidates versus those considered opposed to the reforms colored the 2006 school board election as well. Two of the mayor backed candidates seats were up and they lost. The board majority now rested with those who ran on opposing the reforms and not backed by the mayor.

According to Kimball & Stein (2007) Mayor Slay asked the state government to step in and take over the SLPS. After the 5th superintendent in three years resigned, the then Commissioner of Education appointed a special advisory committee to analyze SLPS (Danforth & Freeman, 2006; Smith, 2009). The State board of Education reviewed the report and recommendations and ultimately followed the recommendation (Smith, 2009). In March 2007, the state board of education voted to takeover of the St. Louis schools and also approved a three person appointed transitional board (one by the governor, one by the mayor and one by the president of the board of aldermen) (Gay,

2007). The SLPS at the time of this study is currently still governed by the 3 member board. One board member is the former executive director of TFA-St. Louis, one board member is a previously elected school board member in the 1980s and the CEO of the three member board is a former business executive who was a member of the Regional Business Council (RBC) K-12 education committee previously.

Policy Structures

In the St. Louis educational policy landscape, power and control does not rest with the largely African American student and staff population (Heaney & Uchitelle, 2004). The corporate takeover by the turnaround firm (Jones, 2007) and later the Missouri state board of education takeover of 2007 (Gay, 2007) were devised by business elites represented by the two organizations comprised of business CEOs in St. Louis. I propose that the *table top theory* developed by Jones (2005) to examine the role of the business and philanthropic elites in the policy process can similarly be applied to my personal narratives that feature theories of interest convergence and whiteness as property.

Table Top Theory

Jones (2005) conceptualized the table top theory to diagram policy structures or institutions, constituencies or key players and the social political context of the 2003 turnaround firm takeover of SLPS. "Table top theory is embedded in the notion of the educational ecosystem" (Jones, 2007, p.191). Exploration of human ecosystems permits us to examine socio-political phenomena from an expansive perspective, with the awareness that what transpires in communities is a utility of multiple interdependent

factors as opposed to separate factors (Jones, 2007). These factors interact in ways that lead to both formal and informal policy decision-making.

According to Jones (2007) policy decision making and racial politics in the St. Louis, Missouri school district are outside the traditional policy making models. In the case of St. Louis, policy design often had its roots in private self interests as opposed to public interests, and government entities are used to carry out private interests (p.11) Jones used the *table top theory* to map key policy structures, multiple constituencies and socio political context of activities within in and outside the school district(Jones, 2007). This framework “emerged as a conceptual framework for gauging and examining the role of private sector as the author investigated the massive intervention of business and philanthropy in a school restructuring effort in the St. Louis district between 2003 and 2004 defined as : ”Understanding policy as largely a privately driven activity (particularly as this relates to the intersection of private interests and large-scale community control) that uses public or governmental entities as symbols and pawns to carry out said private interests”(Jones, 2007,p.186).

Analyzing human ecosystems allows us to examine socio- political phenomena from a broad perspective, with the understanding that what happens in communities is a function and is not the consequence of one single independent factor, but of multiple interdependent factors. In this case, these interdependent factors include perceptions or world views and actions about the most effective to achieve an education mission. “These factors reveal themselves in ways that lead to both formal and informal policy decision making. Formal decision –making is relatively open, documented and available for public review and criticism- on top of the table, while informal decision manifests in a covert

fashion and is often undocumented and out of view from the lay public- under the table”(Jones, 2007, p.191, Duke,1989; Duke & Canady, 1991) and out of view from the lay public- under the table. Even though in policy there is a bias to emphasize more the “formal” policy decision-making of officials who exist within the public sector such as the superintendent ,city-mayor, state legislator, school principal. Table top theory submits that it is equally important, if not more , to investigate the “informal” policy decision making that is done outside of the typical channels by “non-officials” who represent foundations and representatives of corporations who operate, often under the radar of the general public (Jones, 2007).

In policy there is a tendency to overanalyze “formal” policy decision – making that is characteristic of officials who compromise the public sector (i.e., superintendent, city-mayor, state legislator, school principal, etc.), table top theory holds that it is just as important, if not more important, to analyze “informal” policy decision- making that is characteristic of “non-officials”(i.e.,representatives of the corporate and philanthropic community) who operate, often unbeknownst to the lay public, with near invisibility in the private sector”(p.191).

This policy perspective was developed solely to describe the events that took place in St. Louis Public Schools beginning in April 2003. The events that unfolded led to implementation of Educational Entrepreneurship as a reform effort in the SLPS. In the St. Louis educational policy landscape, power and control does not rest with the largely

African American student and staff population (Heaney & Uchitelle, 2004). The corporate takeover by the turnaround firm (Jones, 2007) and later the Missouri state board of education takeover of 2007 (Gay, 2007) were devised by business elites represented by the two organizations comprised of business CEOs in St. Louis. I propose that the *table top theory* developed by Jones (2005) to examine the role of the business and philanthropic elites in the policy process can similarly be applied to my personal narratives that feature theories of interest convergence and whiteness as property.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are defined by the methodology. Autoethnography allows only for the perspective of the researcher, and so by definition has established its own limits. The limitations are bounded by methodology because my memory alone may not support archival or factual evidence as well as limited triangulation of sources to confirm evidence (Hughes, 2008). The time frame selected corresponds to my professional career and I can't generalize to other time frames.

Definitions

Throughout the document I use academic terminology as well as acronyms that are salient to my research displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Definitions

Term	Definition
Educational Entrepreneurship-EE	The process by which the creation or development of organizations, systems or products that transform the educational landscape in an innovative manner. Individuals who initiate these ideas into actions are educational entrepreneurs. EE strands or components encompass new charter school providers, public-private partnerships, learning tools, student support services and pipelines of human capital (Hess, 2006, Meade & Rotherham, 2008).
Teach For America- TFA	An organization founded in 1990 by Wendy Kopp to place recent college graduates as teachers, called corps members; who commit to teach for two years in one of 39 urban and rural regions across the country, going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students to achieve at high levels (TFA, ND)
St. Louis Public Schools- SLPS	The school district for the city of St. Louis which was unaccredited in 2007 (SLPS, ND).
Knowledge is Power Program-KIPP	A national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools (KIPP, ND).
Chicago Public Schools- CPS	Chicago Public Schools serves is the third largest school district in the United States with 675 schools and 409,279 students (CPS, ND)
Boston Public Schools- BPS	Boston Public Schools serves over 57,000 students in 134 schools in Boston, Massachusetts (BPS,ND)
Department of Secondary and Elementary Education- DESE	The administrative arm of the Missouri State Board of Education. It is primarily a service agency that works with educators, legislators, government agencies, community leaders and citizens to maintain a strong public education system. Through its statewide school-improvement activities and regulatory functions, the Department strives to assure that all citizens have access to high-quality public

	education. DESE does not regulate, monitor or accredit private, parochial or home school (DESE, ND).
Counterstories	Personal narratives that challenge dominant beliefs about certain situations such as segregation. Counterstories seek to restructure commonly held beliefs by permitting voices of the marginalized to be heard

Research Questions

The research question that guided this study is:

What are the implications of the implementation of EE in St. Louis Public Schools?

Significance of Study

There is limited scholarly research available about the growth and development of EE in urban centers. There isn't any scholarly work examining EE through the lens of critical race theory. "Other" voices are not embodied in the existing body of literature on EE. CRT is an especially beneficial tool for deconstructing the socio temporal notions of race to illuminate the naturalization of oppression and normalization of racial inequality in public schools and society (Duncan, 2005; Milner, 2008, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The following chapters use counter-story telling, a tenet of CRT to examine several experiences of the researcher with components of EE in SLPS. Chapter three highlights my experience as a TFA corps member and my recruitment by KIPP. I will chronicle my interactions as a SLPS New Leader participant with organizations comprised of local CEOs and private companies as they invest both their personal and company monies into improving schools. I will also reflect on my time on Special Assignment to the Superintendent and illuminate educational entrepreneurship as a racialized enterprise. These narratives are woven together by the researcher being self critical first and

foremost and of others in improving education through well intentioned strategies. While my experiences have been rich and varied over an acknowledged short period of time, I offer a unique viewpoint that will hopefully contribute to the existing body of research that better understands the effects of racism in educational policies. The stories I will share come directly from lived experiences that my status as an African American young woman impacted my career. Autoethnography allows me to contribute my knowledge and to make meaning from my life experiences. Narratives from people of color are required to enlighten others of racial inequality in schools and society (Duncan, 2005; Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the study, approaches to be used and context of SLPS and overview of the research. The chapter also shared research questions and definitions. The journey to complete this study has challenged me to consider how might experiences of race impact the intent of EE and how can we determine what is and isn't beneficial to Black students and articulate the message in a way to influence change.

CHAPTER TWO – METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter I will provide a description and rationale of the proposed research methodology, along with a description of the participants, data collection methods and procedures, strategies for analysis and synthesis of data, review of ethical considerations and limitations of the study. The purpose of this study is to define the strands of EE that were implemented in SLPS from 2003-2009 and describe through counter-stories, my professional experiences with those strands. At the core of this qualitative study is the notion that racism, white privilege and an ahistorical context dominate institutions and systems, social norms and daily practice (Aleman, 2007). As a result, the education of African Americans has been affected by racism that has preceded Missouri's entry into statehood in 1820. This researcher believes that such an understanding may contribute to the growing collection of literature on educational entrepreneurship.

Rationale

I am a researcher of color and, one could argue, a beneficiary of EE . I want to explain how the highly regarded reform initiatives in SLPS were actually racialized and beneficial to Whites. As stated previously in chapter one, my entire career has been spent in SLPS. I have had firsthand experience, in some cases, direct involvement in the development and growth of EE strands within the district. As I reflected on all the media pieces written both locally and nationally ,“Top Grads Line Up to Teach the Poor” (*The New York Times*, September 28, 2005) and “49 New Teachers are Welcomed in City Schools by Governor and Mayor” (*St. Louis Post Dispatch*, August 15, 2002), I noticed

that the perspective presented were mostly one sided and only mentioned EE in a positive light. As a TFA alumna, participant in a New Leaders for New Schools like principal preparation program, recruited by a charter school network and worked with public/private partnerships and I have been involved in the EE strands that were implemented in SLPS since 2003.

Research Design

This study will employ the qualitative method of autoethnography, a form of narrative inquiry. Autoethnography combines ethnography & autobiography (Adams, Bochner and Ellis, 2011). In her description of ethnographic analysis, Merriam (1998) describes two key features of ethnography: (1) the examination of “culture and (2) social regularities of everyday life” (p. 156). Autoethnography is sometimes referred to as narrative analysis. Merriam (1998) suggested that narrative analysis is a research method that allows the use of stories to examine life experiences (p. 157). Furthermore, she stated that “first-person accounts of experience form the narrative ‘text’ of the research approach” (Merriam, 1998, p. 157). Autoethnography is a process and a product (Adams, Bochner and Ellis, 2011). “Many researchers used autoethnography as a method to produce research based in personal experiences” (Adams, Bochner and Ellis, 2011, p.2). Autoethnographers recognize that personal perspectives influence the research process even when the intent is to remain objective and impartial (Adams, Bochner and Ellis, 2011, p.3). I will use autoethnography to write about my past experiences that I view as critical in shaping my understanding of the racialized nature of the EE reforms intended to help Black children. It is my intent that through autoethnography others will find meaning in my critical experiences.

Articulation of CRT on Critical Events

For the purpose of this study I will operate within the five tenets cited by Lopez, and Parker(2003) and Delgado and Stefancic (2001) work in CRT analysis. Of CRT tenets, one that is vital to this research is providing a space for the “voices” of marginalized people to be heard is vital to reform. This approach allows the researcher to use personal stories; such as professional experiences with charter schools, TFA as well as regional public-private partnership organizations. It has the capacity to create an alternative venue for marginalized voices (Hughes, 2008). The use of auto ethnography as the research instrument, by its very nature, embeds the writer squarely into the data as the subject and the object.

Of the CRT tenets, I will use two of the tenets to explicate the critical events that were chosen for analysis. First, the interest convergence tenet will examine two critical events. The two critical events were my formal and informal recruitment by St. Louis business leaders to open a KIPP charter school in 2007 and my selection and experiences as a member of the leadership cohort trained by SLPS during the 2005-2006 school year. I will use whiteness as property for the second tenet. The two critical events covered by this tenet were a series of development events that I attended to solicit donations for TFA from wealthy and connected St. Louisans from 2003- 2009 and my special assignment in creating alternative school options for SLPS during the 2008-2009 school year.

Table. 2 Critical Events and the corresponding CRT Tenets

Critical Events	CRT Principles
New Leaders Project participant	Interest Convergence
KIPP recruitment	Interest Convergence
Participation in Teach For America Development Events	Whiteness as ultimate property
Special Assignment to the Superintendent	Whiteness as ultimate property

Data Collection

The qualitative researcher characteristically embraces a method to collect thick and rich data that are descriptive, employing words and ideas rather than statistical numbers. The initial source of data will come from my memory, an acceptable source in ethnographic and auto-ethnographic work. Chavez (2009) indicated that relying on memory, is by its very nature a selective reinterpretation of our experiences. Chavez further stated, “that inward reflexivity, therefore, is certainly a good place to start if our sustained goals are to change these highly politicized and unequal structures within the field of education” (p.13).

I will also use meeting notes, brochures, and professional development (PD) materials created by the organizations that are referenced, media articles and statistics from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Chavez (2009)

discussed using CRT and auto-ethnography as a means to examine issues, such as race. Chavez believed that “together they represent new alternatives in thinking about the voices that have been excluded in the academy” (p. 9). A shared feature of CRT and auto-ethnography is the telling of stories or reflections from the researcher’s personal and professional experiences. Ellis (2004) claimed that stories are the ways humans make sense of their worlds. Stories are essential to human understanding and are not unique to auto-ethnography. Given their importance, I argue that stories should both be a subject and a method of social science research (Ellis, 2004).

Additional sources of data accessed from archival materials have been accumulated during my years of service in my current school district. Examples include, but are not limited to, the Pilot program to offer schools more autonomy and families more choice within SLPS recruitment material for the leadership development cohort from SLPS, potential donor packet from Teach For America. Furthermore, documents from research databases such as *Teachers College Record* and *Journal of Urban Education*, other articles and books written by researchers in the field of critical race theory and autoethnography will be used.

Data Analysis

This study is about my personal and professional relationship with a set of highly politicized reform effort in a highly racialized setting. It is designed to allow my personal knowledge and professional access challenge policies in the St. Louis region. Using Jones’(2005) table top theory to map multiple policy structures, multiple constituencies and the socio political context of EE reform strands. This model allows one to see the formal and informal, or covert forces that help explain the policy development (Jones,

2005). It is designed to allow my personal reflections to legitimize my professional stance on dismantling what I have observed to be racialized behaviors in regard to how the reform effort of EE was implemented within the school district where I am employed. The most logical instruments to use in the analysis of this research are CRT and auto-ethnography.

The data collected will be analyzed using a primary tenet of critical race theory; story and counter-story. The other analytical tool, auto-ethnography, provides reflective thought by also using story and counter-story. The idea behind choosing these strategies for analyzing data is to subsequently influence substantive change, specifically in the area of education. "Auto-ethnography confronts and defies traditional investigative methods...autoethnography makes it possible to challenge the illusion of neutrality in research since it underscores the positionality of the researcher" (Chavez, 2009, p. 339). Chavez (2009) "described CRT and autoethnography as the perfect marriage" (p.343). Chavez problematized her experiences in diverse educational institutions that influenced her perspectives regarding race, class and culture (2009).

Limitations

The primary limitation for this study is that I am the researcher and the subject, which in the eyes of some will disqualify the research as merely the personal opinion of one. The second limitation is the reliance on my memory for a large quantity of the data making it a retrospective study. In addition, there are no charts, graphs and no interviews or focus groups which to draw themes from to substantiate researcher's claims. This study provides the researcher the ability to share my personal narrative to give "witness"

(Denizen, 2004; Adams, Bochner and Ellis, 2011) to a different accounting of touted national reform efforts in the St. Louis context.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study arise from my selected methodology. By excluding methods such as survey or interviews of other educators with similar backgrounds, this study can not be recreated. Another delimitation of this study is that I selected the time frame of 2003-2009 due to my professional experience

CHAPTER THREE-INTEREST CONVERGENCE AND WHITENESS AS PROPERTY

Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the critical race theory tenet of interest convergence and whiteness as property rights through critical life events. Interest Convergence, first coined by Derrick Bell (1980), is the theory that White people will not simply change policies that are unjust or unfair to Blacks or even benefit Blacks and other people of color unless the changes converge with the needs, expectations, and self interests of Whites (Milner, 2008). This tenet of Critical Race Theory can be used to analyze the narratives I will share about my acceptance into the SLPS NLP principal preparation program in 2005 and my recruitment by St. Louis Business elites to lead a KIPP charter school in 2007. Charter school and alternate certification programs for teachers and principals are key components of EE (Hess, Higgins, Robinson & Weiner, 2011).

I will also explain the CRT tenet of Whiteness as Property Rights which the critical life events attending TFA development events and my time spent on Special Assignment to the Superintendent will illuminate. The stories I will share underscore that through the theory whiteness as property influenced my professional career and that in some situations, bestowed the conceptual whiteness to me as I was deemed “acceptable” in relation to other Blacks within the SLPS system.

Interest convergence and Whiteness as Property can be used as a tool to explain, analyze and conceptualize the policies and practices of EE and help make sense of the salience of race and racism in EE.

Interest Convergence

As discussed in Chapter two, critical race theory is about critiquing racist systems and policies that marginalize minority groups. Researchers Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) take the CRT further by asserting its' usefulness in examining race in the field of education (Milner, 2008). Bell (1980) and Dudizak (1994) submit that improvements for Blacks that were made with *Brown v Board*, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 overlapped with White self interests and emerge to boost the image of the US abroad.

The seminal example Bell uses to illustrate interest Convergence is *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In 1954, the United States was entering into the Cold War and trying to subvert Communist regimes in Third World countries that were mostly populated by brown and black people (Delgado, 2000). Additionally, the US had thousands of Black servicemen who had fought in World War II under an integrated armed services who returned with more persistent view point of how they should be treated in their own countries (Delgado, 2000; Cashin, 2005). Bell (1980) argues that the *Brown* case settled by the Supreme Court that separate was no longer equal was not because of morality. He contends that elite Whites realized that in order to gain credibility abroad that it would be in America's best interest to support Blacks (Bell, 1980, Delgado, 2000).

Urban School Reform and Interest Convergence

DeCuir & Dixson (2004) in their study of two Black students in a southern white independent elite prep school points out how CRT can analyze educational practices and policies. They examine the personal narratives of the students through the CRT tenets of 1) permanence of racism 2) counter-storytelling 3) Whiteness as Property 4) interest convergence and 5) critique of liberalism. They also recommend that additional research study the tenets of Whiteness as Property and Interest Convergence specifically to “critique school practices and policies that are overtly and covertly racist” (DeCuir&Dixson, 2004, p. 30).

An explanation of Whiteness

“Whiteness is a racial discourse where the category “white people” represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color” (Leonardo, 2002, p.31). This feature is important to make as the discussion of whiteness is about the socially constructed and constantly reinforced power of white identification and interests, not necessarily people who identify as white. (Ladson- Billings & Tate, 1995).

Key characteristics of whiteness are:

- 1) An unwillingness to name the contours of racism: inequity (in employment, education, wealth, etc.) is explained by reference to any number of alternative factors rather than being attributable to the actions of whites.
- 2) The avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or group: whiteness draws much of its power from ‘Othering’ the very idea of ethnicity. A central characteristic of whiteness is a process of ‘naturalization’ such that white becomes the norm from which other ‘races’ stand apart and in relation to which

they are defined. When white- identified groups do make a claim for a white ethnic identity alongside other officially recognized ethnic groups (e.g., as has been tried by the Ku Klux Klan in the US and the British National Party in England) it is the very exceptionality of such claims that points to the commonsense naturalization of whiteness at the heart of contemporary political discourse

3) The minimization of racist legacy: seeking to 'draw a line' under past atrocities as if that would negate their continued importance as historic, economic and cultural factors (Gilborn, 2005 p.488)

The modern concept of property focuses on its function and the social relations reflected within including a multitude of intangibles that are the product of labor, time and creativity such as intellectual property, business goodwill and increased earning potential from graduate degrees (Harris, 1993). "The shift from human to owner and rights to property is that Whiteness as property now shapes the legitimation of the expectations of power and control that enshrine the status quo as a neutral baseline while masking the maintenance of white privilege and domination" (Harris, 1993, p. 1715). Harris(1995) in later work further describes 3 levels to Whiteness as property- 1) right to possession, 2) the right to use and 3) right to disposition. Once one understands the concept of whiteness as property, the next idea to grasp is that of white supremacy.

CRT advocates an atypical assessment of white supremacy. Often in the discussion of white supremacy, one thinks of the extreme groups and individuals that profane acts against non-White people, but Hooks(1989) categorized white supremacy as

a deeply embedded exercise of power that continues intact despite attempts to eradicate the more apparent forms of overt discrimination. White racial supremacy revolves less around the issue of unearned advantages, or the state of being dominant, and more around direct processes that secure domination and the privileges associated with it (Leonardo, 2004).

Whites benefit from whiteness a property structure. Whiteness as property includes only the cultural practices of Whites (Harris, 1993). “It is this definition that lays the foundation that the idea of whiteness- that which Whites alone possess- is valuable and is property” (Harris, 1993, p.1721). Thus, everything allied with whiteness is the norm and everyone is positioned and categorized in relation to their proximity to whiteness (Ladson-Billings, 1998). “Whites are accorded certain benefits as a result of their race that are routinely denied to Blacks.” (Driver, 2011, p 174) Within our racialized society “conceptual whiteness” and “conceptual blackness” were created to position people and determine their access to the property rights afforded to Whiteness. For example, an African American female professional is positioned as conceptually white in relation to a Latino, Spanish speaking nanny due to socio economic factors.

The circumstances when viewed through the CRT lens provide ample evidence that my prominent featuring during my time as a corps member in the TFA program and the utilization of me as a surrogate were the result of whiteness as property and conceptual whiteness. Within TFA, I represented a “conceptual whiteness” that placed me in closer proximity to the status of actual Whiteness than the other Black members that were in TFA at the time and continued as career in SLPS developed. I am no stranger

to the terms “oreo” or “acting white, but I didn’t realize that while those derogatory terms would not be used, there were other ways to imply the same sentiment.

A New Type of Leader

As I was completing my 2nd year as a special education teacher in 2005, my principal forwarded me an email regarding a principal preparation program that would begin that summer. SLPS had received a grant from the Wallace Foundation (Wallace Foundation, 2005) for the district to “grow their own” principals. The email was intriguing and I contacted the director of leadership development to find out more. After speaking with her, I decided to apply for what became the NLP. The application process involved securing letters of recommendation, writing essays and participating in scenarios for the actual interview.

I understandably, was nervous about seeking this leadership opportunity at 24 years of age. I questioned if I was really ready to become a principal. Was two years of classroom experience enough to lead my own school? Would faculty, parents and students take me seriously? I discussed my candidacy with family members who were also educators. They thought it incredulous that I would be arrogant to even consider school leadership with just two years of classroom teaching. The local TFA staff had a different view point. The program staff reinforced my feelings that my accomplishments, and TFA training made me an ideal candidate in education.

Over the course of the next 18 months I would not only reflect on these questions but also be challenged with these same questions by the facilitators and members of the cohort. I also questioned the motivations behind my acceptance. As the first session of

the cohort began, I learned I was the youngest of the 22 SLPS educators chosen and I had the least amount of education experience.

TFA in St. Louis

In 2002 the Mayor of St. Louis along with area businesses, Anheuser- Busch and Edwards Jones, the Danforth Foundation, a local foundation and St. Louis raised businessman Greg Wendt raised \$560,000 along with \$50,000 from the Mayor's' budget to bring TFA to St. Louis with 50 corps members to teach in SLPS (Schlinkmann,2002). Mayor Slay announced in his first State of the City address that TFA would help fill teacher shortages in the school district (Schlinkmann, 2002). Then Superintendent of SLPS, Cleveland Hammonds Jr stated ""an excellent organization that will help us during this time of teacher shortage"(Schlinkmann, 2002, p.D6).

By August of 2002, the amount raised by Mayor Slay had increased to \$730,000. 50 TFA teachers were placed in classrooms in elementary, middle and high schools across SLPS. From the onset of TFA in St. Louis, the relationship between the political and business elite was intimate and documented in local media. (Bower, 2002 & Hacker,2002).

"Teach for America has a proven record of recruiting and placing excellent teachers," said Slay. "We are confident that its presence in St. Louis will have a direct and positive impact on our schools, our community-and most important, on our children."

(Linzer,2002, p.1)

The New Leaders Project

According to their website, www.wallacefoundation.org,(n.d) the Wallace Foundation is a national philanthropic organization whose mission is to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children. The School Leadership Initiative began in 2000 to improve the effort of principals and other leaders in urban K-12 public school education through improved preparation and more supportive policies. In July 2005, SLPS received one million dollars LEAD grant from the Wallace Foundation for leadership development (Wallace Foundation, ND). The New Leaders Project as the SLPS program was named, would be closely patterned after the New York Leadership Academy; a six week summer intensive where cohort members would work in project teams on scenarios that mirrored challenges in St. Louis and a year long school based residency with a mentor principal.

SLPS partnered with the large land grant research institution in the state of Missouri to provide the graduate credit and principal licensure the participants would earn upon the completion of the program. The University provided the intellectual weight to the program for the failing SLPS district. We worked with three professors, one white male, one white woman and 1 Black woman and 3 SLPS employees who served as facilitators- all three were Black women. Within our cohort we were placed into pairs or triads depending upon the grade span we were seeking certification. I was placed with a White woman who was about 20 years older. Initially, our partnership seemed like a perfect match. Even before we were paired she sought me out as she exclaimed she had heard about this young teacher who everyone thought was so bright. Our initial conversation was more like an inquisition as she wanted to know about my background and experiences. Being as inexperienced as I was, I didn't realize that my partner was

assessing my cultural capital and whether or not I would be deemed acceptable in her eyes.

At the onset of the school year in 2005, we worked closely on tasks assigned by our mentor principal. We communicated frequently through email and phone. During one of our weekly Thursday night class sessions with the facilitators, we were pulled aside and asked to attend a celebratory luncheon held by a regional leadership organization to recognize individuals and companies that helped make the St. Louis region better. One of the Fortune 500 companies that had contributed to the NLP in financial resources, laptops and senior level mentors for the principal interns was being recognized. My partner and I were excited to be chosen to attend out of the other 20 interns.

I arrived to the luncheon the next week before my partner and was seated next to the community outreach liaison for the company. We chatted about the NLP, what the intern experience was like and then she began to ask about my TFA experience. My partner arrived and we all made small talk as the program began. As we neared the recognition portion of the program, the community liaison asked if they called the honorees up to speak would I join her because it would be a double bonus since the company also donated to TFA in St. Louis. I agreed I would join her on stage and speak to being a TFA alumna now training to be an administrator in SLPS. My partner was not asked and though she didn't comment on why I had been asked, I sensed that there was a shift in our relationship.

In November of that year, I would leave for an educational trip to Japan that I had been awarded prior to my selection into the NLP and our working relationship began to unravel. In the days leading up to my departure as I became more excited and our

colleagues did too, my partner became visibly deflated. She began to make comments about my contribution to the work load and that the importance of my trip was inflated. I should also note that our mentor principal and his administrative team had started what seemed like an intentional campaign in my eyes to minimize my partner after they felt like she “reported them” to a central office staffer. Reflecting back through the CRT lens, I can see how my partner's identity and functionality of her Whiteness on a daily basis was deliberately undermined. By February my partner had initiated meetings with the facilitators and university professors to air her grievances and demand to be separated from me and our mentor principal. Her request was granted and she was moved schools and I was given a new partner.

While I dealt with the interactions of my partner, I also dealt with skepticism from the other members of the cohort. Some questioned my age and ability to lead, others questioned the training I had received in TFA. The facilitators and the university professors often came to my defense. During the course of the program, the facilitators asked me to speak at a gathering hosted by the Regional Business Council (RBC), a consortium of CEO's representing 100 of the largest mid cap companies in St. Louis region (RBC, ND) who comprised the groups K-12 Education committee about the NLP. The Chair of the K-12 education committee had been my TFA classroom sponsor and another member would become one of the state appointed board members in charge of running SLPS in 2007. My remarks well received and the facilitators sent me to other community events. Other members of the cohort both white and Black wondered aloud why I was chosen to represent the cohort as others had more experience in SLPS than I. Unbeknown to us at the time was that in addition to the Wallace grant, donations from

the consortium of CEOs supported NLP . Individual companies that were represented in the consortium were also donors to the St. Louis TFA office.

At the time, I thought I was extremely fortunate that at such an early stage in my career to have the opportunity to become a school leader and meet well connected business leaders in the community. I did not yet know it wasn't because of anything I had accomplished in my short two years in the classroom that made me an ideal candidate for the program, but that the interests of SLPS to garner financial support from the business community and the business elites who supported TFA and wanted a successful data point converged in me. Even though SLPS had been managed by a Black Superintendent and the majority of the administrative positions at the central office and school level were Black, White political players and business interests were still strong forces in the strategic planning of the district through their financial or political support and influence (Jones, 2005,2007 ; Kimball & Stein, 2007).

Years later, I am taken aback at the arrogance and lack of awareness I possessed at that point in my career. It is not my intent, to erase myself agency or the competencies and capabilities I possess, but to be oblivious to the larger picture and my role does trigger embarrassment.

St. Louisans United to Attract KIPP

The first time I had ever heard of KIPP charter schools was via email from a recruiter three months before I was set to complete my two year TFA commitment in 2005. Countless media accounts show the link between TFA and KIPP, the founder of TFA is married to the CEO of KIPP. The founders of KIPP, were TFA alumni. The majority of KIPP school leaders have also completed TFA. I met with the recruiter for coffee, she observed my classroom, flew me to Oklahoma to visit a KIPP school and conveyed what a great fit I was for the organization, the abundant professional development I would receive and the doors that could possibly open. I had served in leadership roles during my two years as a teacher and was also considering applying for SLPS's NLP which would afford me a year long internship in administration, and a graduate degree in educational administration. Reflecting back, I don't know why I wasn't mystified that two school leadership opportunities were being presented to me a few months shy of even having two years classroom experience.

I decided to apply to both. The NLP application consisted of essays and a scenario based interview. I had two phone interviews with KIPP content managers and then I was flown to New York City for a weekend of six interviews. I already knew when I landed in New York that I had been accepted into the NLP. After the selection weekend, I received a call first thing Monday morning, offering me the Fischer Fellowship. I turned it down. I was told that I would be given a week to think it over. I received calls from members of the national team trying to persuade me to accept the Fisher Fellowship. After a week of contemplation, I turned KIPP down. For me, the primary factors were 1) beginning the Fisher Fellowship meant I would not be able to complete my Master's in Special

Education and 2) the public perception of charter schools and Teach For America was very negative and I thought it would be a difficult climate to try and start a new school.

Three years after completing the NLP and becoming an assistant principal, I received a call from a Black woman, Trina, who was a St. Louis native. We had heard of each other through various professional circles and she said she wanted to meet to talk to me about KIPP and the Fischer Fellowship. I explained my experience with KIPP from 2003 when I was a classroom teacher, how I had been approached by a KIPP recruiter, visited KIPP schools out of state, applied, was accepted and turned down the Fischer Fellow offer. She said she knew all about that experience, but was still very interested in speaking with me on behalf of a group she worked for- St. Louisans United to Attract KIPP., a 501 c3 whose sole function was to secure capitol from St. Louis businesses and individuals to open and operate a the first KIPP charter school in St. Louis.

Trina explained that since my first encounter with KIPP in 2005, the recruitment process had changed as had selection into the Fischer Fellowship. Regions now had to prove there as community support for a KIPP charter by raising a specific amount of money from companies and individuals. The region also had to show there was a pool of viable candidates to apply for the Fischer Fellowship. After that initial meeting with Trina in the Spring of 2007, I told her I was interested in applying again. Over the course of the next few months, I met with notable St. Louisans who were heads of companies for breakfast or lunch. Some I had met before through TFA development events which I will describe in more detail in Chapter 5.

One such meeting remains poignant to this day. I was at luncheon in a wealthy suburb of St. Louis with Greg, a venture capitalist, who contributed annually to TFA- St.

Louis, Trina and Kathy, the executive director of the RBC. It started out like most of the other meetings, cursory questions about my life and how school was going, Greg and Kathy shared their motivation behind wanting a KIPP school in St. Louis and why I was a good candidate to open the first KIPP in St. Louis. I talked about my goal of being a school leader and earn a Ph.D. Kathy abruptly stated that I didn't need a Ph.D. I remember her saying that becoming a KIPP school leader would mean more than a Ph.D.

Greg nodded in an agreement and Trina just sat there. I was startled. I had never known anyone to attempt to talk someone out of earning an advanced degree. I was also baffled as to why my obtaining degree was even part of the conversation. More than baffled, I was annoyed that two people I had just met felt they had the right to dictate my career. I remember leaving and calling my mom and relating the details of the lunch. A few days later, I was called by a member CEO of the consortium of CEOs who was Black, Tony. Tony told me that Trina had called him after the luncheon and she could tell that I had been taken aback at Kathy's suggestion that I not pursue a doctoral degree. He told me that in his experience working with Kathy and the other CEOs that they thought they could control everything and he suggested I move forward with my plans and just not tell them.

At this point, I had not even applied for the Fischer Fellowship. It was the summer of 2007 and the application did not open until October. Trina and I would meet a few more times and she would report how the fundraising efforts were going. She also set up additional meetings with additional St. Louis Business elites. I felt I was auditioning for a part or a role, not necessarily as an educator to lead a school. After each subsequent meeting I had with the St. Louis Business Elite, Trina would call and tell me how much

the person had extolled me as the perfect candidate. I had passed the litmus test for those deliberating on whether to contribute to help bring KIPP to St. Louis.

Trina and I kept in constant contact as the new school year of 2007 began.

I was reassigned to a new school within SLPS as assistant principal and Trina wanted to make sure that even with the new assignment that I would still be completing an application for the Fischer Fellowship in October. I completed the application, moved through round 1 and 3 of the interview process successful and was flown to Chicago to interview. Similar to the first selection weekend I had attended in 2005, this one was a series of interviews. I knew intuitively returning to St. Louis that I would not be selected. I immediately called Trina and let her know. She was crestfallen and expressed how surprised she was. It would be another two years before a school leader would be selected and a KIPP charter school would open in St. Louis.

TFA Development Events

From my 2nd year in TFA through 2009, I was invited to attend small fundraising events typically held in the home of White St. Louisans to help the St. Louis TFA regional office fundraise. Typically, there would be one or two TFA corps members of color, one or two white TFA corps members, and TFA alumni, the executive director and the development director. At some point during the evening we would be asked to share about our experiences in the urban classrooms of SLPS. We were encouraged to tell stories that highlighted the challenges in our classroom- behaviors, lack of supplies, inaccessible administrative teams and how we relentlessly pursued meeting the high academic goals we set for our students.

Each guest would also receive a packet that shared data about the St. Louis corps members such as our alma maters, majors, and average GPA. It would also include a short biography of the corps members present. Initially, I remembered feeling flattered at having been invited to homes of wealthy and connected St. Louisans. I phoned home and told my parents that I had met the Mayor, CEOs of national companies and well known St. Louis philanthropists.

By 2007, I realized that the homes that these events took place were not in the actual city of St. Louis, but in wealthy enclaves in the western suburbs of St. Louis. I also began to notice after the fourth or fifth event that the same corps members of color, myself and one other African-American female. I also noticed that few if any of the guests at these fundraising events were Black. I knew from growing up in the South that the other Black corps member and I had been invited because we were considered “safe” or “palatable” to White people. It was not until I began to learn about CRT that I understood that because of conceptual whiteness, we were positioned closer proximity to whites in social relations and ranked closer to Whites than the other Black members of the corps due to undergraduate institutions we had attended and we had the cultural knowledge deemed valuable by dominant society.

A Special Assignment

In the spring of 2008, I interviewed for principal positions within SLPS and was offered two different principalships. I knew going into this interview season that my odds for becoming a principal were improved over previous years. The then regional director of TFA had forwarded me an email from a local prominent business woman, TFA supporter and “ed reformer” who had emailed the current Superintendent that “we

want Nathalie to reach principal status....I would love to see her move up on your watch” (email correspondence, local reformer to TFA regional director, 2 April 2008). I had accepted a position for a K-8 school and was relieved that I finally had been given an opportunity to lead. The next day I was called into HR to interview for another school. This particular school had been closed for about 5 years and the neighborhood community group wanted to reopen the school. It had been sitting vacant and it was in need of hundreds of thousands of dollars in repairs. In addition to the repairs, the neighborhood group wanted the school reopened as an arts integrated school with performance spaces.

My interview went well and at the end of it the interview committee told me they wanted to offer me the principal position. I shared that I had already agreed to take the other school. The Chief of HR who had been part of the interview told me that I would have a choice. I left the interview with conflicting emotions about the decision that I need to make. For the second time in my career, I felt that something or someone was also impacting my candidacy. I received calls from various SLPS administrators I respected. They urged me to choose the reopened school. I notified the Chief of HR that I would rescind my original decision and take the reopened school. Days later I received an email from the “ed reformer” who previously had emailed the Superintendent congratulating me on my new position (email correspondence , 13 May 2008).

The neighborhood community group that was driven in part by the managing company had been one of the early supporters of Teach for America. The state had already un-accredited the school district and replaced the school board with a 3 member administrative board. Each of the three members had been appointed by the President of

the Board of Alderman, the Mayor and the Governor. The Mayor's appointee had served as the first Executive Director of Teach for America in St. Louis. The Governor's appointee was the owner of a Fortune 500 company that I had met at the consortium of CEOs event while in the NLP. His company was also a financial supporter of Teach for America St. Louis. The President of the Board of Alderman appointed a man who had served as a board member in the 80's.

The SAB and the Superintendent wanted to raise funds to make the repairs to the reopened school throughout the larger St. Louis community. I was told to attend a dinner with the Chief of HR, the same local business woman who advocated for me, the VP of the property management company and the Founder of the company that had built the rental homes around the reopened school. It was at this dinner that I learned that the SLPS in conjunction with the companies represented hoped to raise enough money to make the reopened school a state of the art facility.

I left the meeting with the notion that my selection as principal for this school was part of a much larger plan than just me getting the opportunity to be a school leader. There were still logistical questions that I had about my new position. I had been issued a contract for the 08-09 school year, but there was no way the school was opening before the start of school. Where would I report? What would my days consist of? In the midst of these questions it was announced that the Superintendent was leaving and we would have an interim while the school board conducted a search. I now faced even more uncertainty. From June to October the district was under the leadership of an interim superintendent while a search was conducted. The Special Administrative Board hired a Superintendent in the fall and he started in November.

Prior to his arrival, I spent my Special Assignment under the direction of an Associate Superintendent. I assisted another first year principal merge two schools and filled in when administrators were out sick or on leave. Once the new superintendent started, the CEO of the SAB, the Associate Superintendent and VP of the property management company and I met with him to share the vision of reopening the school and what ground work had been laid. The new Superintendent stated that he wanted me to work out of the central office to plan for the reopening of the school and begin researching different school governance structures. One of the reasons I and others believed this Superintendent had been chosen was because of prior knowledge of the SLPS, he had served as human resources officer under a previous Superintendent and his stated public opinion that was supportive of charter schools and district sponsored charters.

The Superintendent wanted to present a portfolio of schools to the SAB for the next school year to offer more choice within the district and options for school governance structures including district sponsored charters, contract schools, and pilot schools. At the time, I was familiar with charter schools, but not the other types of schools. He even provided me with names of contacts in other school districts and suggested I visit some schools in other cities. In fact, three days after the meeting I along with the director of professional development, at and an associate superintendent flew to New Orleans for a site visit of two charter schools and to meet with the director of a school incubator organization to get ideas and ask questions about school governance in New Orleans.

This would be the first of at least three trips to visit schools and meet with individuals the Superintendent thought would be helpful in my research.

One of the poignant memories of that trip that stays with me is when we were visiting one of the charter schools that shared space with a more traditional elementary school. We were debriefing with the white male school leader about some of the processes we had observed and asking questions about the culture of the school. The school leader provided each of us a copy of the school's code of conduct which listed a parent code of conduct as well. As we flipped through, we asked questions about parental involvement which was one of the school's core values. The question was, "how receptive are parents to the requirements listed in the parent code?" He replied, "At first, they question it but once we, you know teach and show them how to be good parents...".

I think at the time the comment had no effect on me. I remember thinking that I wouldn't have used that word choice or even that phrasing. I remember one of my colleagues, who was also Black female displayed shock. We finished the site visit and returned to our car. Our other colleague, a White female, raved about the school and the school leader. The other Black woman immediately said. "Did you hear him say "teach them how to be good parents? I guess I must have been a bad parent because no one taught me how to be a good parent"? The White colleague, was quick to defend the comment. "He didn't mean it that way".

I sat in the back and watched their conversation unfold. I had to admit I was struck by the comment, but couldn't really pinpoint why. Their back and forth went on with a few minutes. Near the end, the Black colleague asked me what I thought. Was the comment right or wrong? Again, at the time, I hadn't processed a right or wrong, but I

knew that it wasn't appropriate to say, so I said, "I don't know if it was wrong, but it was definitely inappropriate. Who are they determine what a good parent is?" My comment ended the conversation, and the topic was changed. That entire incident has remained imprinted in my mind. I realize now the multi-faceted, deeply embedded aspect racism plays in power relations and how normalized as Gilborn (2005) describes white supremacy is in everyday lives.

Assigned to meet

In addition to traveling to Boston and Washington, DC to research other school options, I was also attending meetings at the request of the Superintendent. He had publicly begun sharing his ideas about a portfolio of schools to different stakeholders groups. Many times he was invited to attend meetings with groups or organizations that had been involved with the politics of the school district for decades. One such meeting I attended in the Spring of 2009, was held by an action group formed in the late 80's by leaders in the Black community to improve the quality of lives of African Americans in the metropolitan St. Louis region. Their agenda focused on eliminating the African American achievement gap. The group publishes annually a regional report card to determine how well each of the 25 metropolitan school districts are working to eliminate the achievement gap (Black Leadership Roundtable, ND). The attendees represented area non profit educational organizations, businesses and advocacy organizations.

I had been instructed to share the types of schools that were being considered, answer questions and take notes. Contract, Pilot and District –sponsored charters were the options the Superintendent was considering in his portfolio of schools. Contract schools are public schools that are managed by private groups under contract with a school

district. The private entities could be universities, community organizations or foundations(CPS, ND). Pilot Schools are public schools that are part of school district and , but they have greater flexibility because of autonomy in 5 key areas, staffing, curriculum and assessment ,budget, governance and policies and school calendar. District sponsored charter schools operate as charter schools and the district serves as the LEA. The charter school operators can be CMO or EMO.

Each of these options represented degrees of involvement of the SLPS central office. Most of the responses and questions that I fielded were about which option would give the principal and teachers the most flexibility and prevent the SLPS central office from micro-managing. Historically, initiatives or programs with proven results in other urban districts would begin within in SLPS and after a year or so they would be scrapped. Or it would be modified and changed so that it vaguely resembled the original. The attendees overall seemed very much opposed to any option that would allow SLPS to have control over the daily operations in the schools that would be part of the portfolio of schools.

One attendee, Steve, was quite vocal in wanting the new school options to operate without interference from the SLPS central office. Steve was attending the meeting as representative of another local organization of CEO's and leading executives from the region's largest businesses and employers. Education was one of their priority areas and they contributed financial support to the local TFA and KIPP as an organization and several member companies also provided financial support. The organization also established 2 affiliated not –for profits that advocated on behalf of the organization's interest and ballot initiatives involving local, state and federal government matters(Civic

Progress, ND). He was a white businessman who had never attended a SLPS school, his kids didn't attend, and he had no education experience outside of the interaction his organization did with TFA and KIPP. He appeared to speak with the confidence of subject knowledge in recommending the Contract school option. He felt an outside organization would be better suited to improve the schools than the educators currently working for SLPS because "they" don't know what they are doing. The assumption one makes when hearing the comment of "they" in this context is that he means they as SLPS staff. However, the SLPS staff is mostly comprised of African Americans and so the "they" takes on a double meaning in this context. "They" represents otherness where in a racialized society, whiteness is the norm and everyone is ranked and categorized in relation to these points of opposition (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Despite the fact that scientific research has proven repeatedly as a biological concept, race endures as a prevailing social construct. In this context "whiteness" is the ultimate treasure and the status, privilege and benefits of being White is coveted.

The law has afforded "holders" of whiteness the same privileges and benefits accorded holders of other types of property. The liberal view of property is that it includes the exclusive rights of possession, use, and disposition. Its attributes are the right to transfer or alienability, the right to use and enjoyment, and the right to exclude others (Harris, 1990, 1731).

CHAPTER FOUR-FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter I originally planned to analyze data from the Missouri Assessment Program results of SLPS from 2003-2009 for the total populations of White and Black students. As a group, Educational Entrepreneurs are driven by test scores and accountability so I sought to use their preferred methods to determine if the reforms produced the desired results, however I realized it is more useful to examine the standardized test data through CRT. Identical to districts across the country, the “achievement gap” exists in SLPS. From a CRT perspective, current assessments perpetuate inequality and reinforce the privilege of those who have access to cultural capital (Ladson-Billings, 2004). More and more states adopt high stakes testing to make decisions such as graduation, school closings and teacher evaluation (AERA,2000). In Howard’s (2009) study of the disenfranchisement of Black males in Pk-12 education he highlighted the fact that:

A high correlation among test performance, socioeconomic background, and the race of students. It is no accident that student performance on high stakes tests is frequently tied to students’ socio-economic background and the level of teachers’ experience and overall school quality. Given the fact that students of color and from low income backgrounds are more likely to come from poorly funded schools, and have under qualified and inexperienced teachers, one can only question the wisdom of evaluating students on similar measure as students who come from schools with more resources and more qualified teachers (p.978)

I will also utilize table top theory to map the formal and informal policy structures revealed in the personal narratives of the researcher. Jones(2005) powerfully illustrates how decisions were made in regards to SLPS by private companies, individuals and foundations that sustained EE as reform strategy throughout the frequent superintendent changes SLPS experienced from 2003-2009.

Table Top Theory

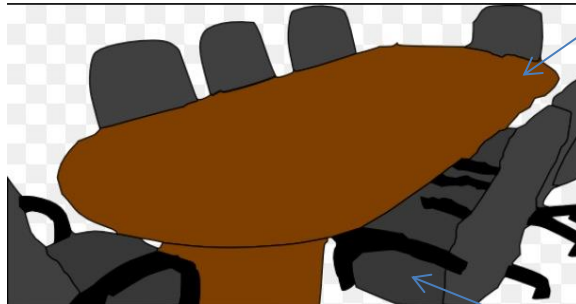
Jones (2003, p. 11) “defined table top theory as understanding policy as largely a privately driven activity (particularly as this relates to the intersection of private interests and large-scale community control) that uses public or governmental entities as symbols and pawns to carry out said private interests”. Jones (2003) diagrammed table top theory to show how the private interests (business community elites and philanthropic organizations) drove the public decisions. The known expected public figures and entities are on top of the table as they ,to an extent, are tracked by the media , public meeting notices and minutes and are subject to sunshine law requests. The policy structures on top of the table are school board, city hall, DESE and public institutions of higher education. The policy constituents are individual board members, superintendent, mayor, DESE commissioner and university officials.

The non officials representing the private interests are located under the table in the table top theory diagram. Being under the table implies that these individuals and organizations are not subject to public scrutiny mostly because the general public doesn't know how much of an influence that the actors under the table had in shaping the policy of the school district. The private interest actors are the private foundations, private

institutions of higher education, businesses and organizations representing business leaders.

Figure 1.

SLPS Corporate takeover



On top of the Table
 School Board
 Superintendent
 DESE
 Public institutions of higher education
 School employees

Under the table
 Informal Decision Makers:
 Businesses
 Private foundations
 Organizations representing businesses
 Private institutions of higher education

The figure about is adapted from Jones(2003) table top theory schematic.

Test Results

The Missouri Assessment Program results displayed in Table 2 and Table 3 from 2003 to 2009 confirm that the white students of SLPS outperformed the Black students in both mathematics and communication arts. The percentage of Black students scoring proficient increased in 4 out of 7 years in communication arts. The percentage of Black students scoring proficient increased in 2 out of 7 years in mathematics.

Table 2. % Proficient on Communication Arts MAP

CA	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Black	12.7	14.8	16.9	16.7	16.2	18.2	24.2
White	25.0	29.1	28.6	36.0	36.0	37.8	43

Table 3: % Proficient on Math MAP

MA	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Black	10.3	14.5	14.2	13.5	13.7	13.5	15.4
White	23.3	25.8	29.3	36.8	33.8	35.6	38.1

The tables show that for every gain Black students, the achievement of White students' increase as well. The standardized test that are normed on the achievement of White middle class children continue to produce the results that purport to legitimately show that Black students don't perform as well as White students because they can't.

(Jackson, 2011). As I stated in previous chapters, use of standardized scores by creators and implementers of EE miss the permanency of race in education. While Black students scores may increase, the gap between Black and White students increases as well because the efforts don't eradicate as they claim, the achievement gap between Black and White students persists.

Formal vs Informal Decision Makers in SLPS

The St. Louis Board of education that made the decision to award the contract to the turnaround firm was also in place during the same time as my personal narratives of TFA development events and first recruitment by KIPP. Four of the school board members who won their seats in April of 2003 and emerged as majority were responsible for awarding the contract to the turnaround firm had received financial support from of the CEO organizations (Jones, 2005) that I mentioned in previous chapters. From 2003-2006, the seven board member school board and the six superintendents who held the

position and the mayor of St. Louis would be the actors in the “formal” decision making for SLPS.

The informal decision makers or influencing structures depicted in the studies of the corporate takeover of SLPS in 2003 (Jones, 2005 & 2007) are profoundly influenced by the business elites of St. Louis, specifically, two main groups. Civic Progress, founded in 1953 is comprised of “chief executives of 30 of the leading employers of the region to leverage public and private resources to improve the region”(Civic Progress, ND). The other, the Regional Business Council.

Jones (2005 & 2007) premise is that policies sanctioned in 2003 by the interim superintendent and school board to close 16 schools, outsource food and custodial services(Dobbs, 2008) were made by public figures and institutions that essentially gave the impression that they were to serve the private interests of the informal decision makers in the business community.

Table Top Theory and Educational Entrepreneurship

I will use the adapted diagram of Jones(2003) to map the public and private decision makers in the implementation of EE. In previous chapters, I disclosed the researcher’s intimate involvement with components of EE which allowed me to examine as both an insider and outsider the connections the public policy makers and in the informal decision influencers had from 2003- 2009.

Figure 2. Selection into the NLP

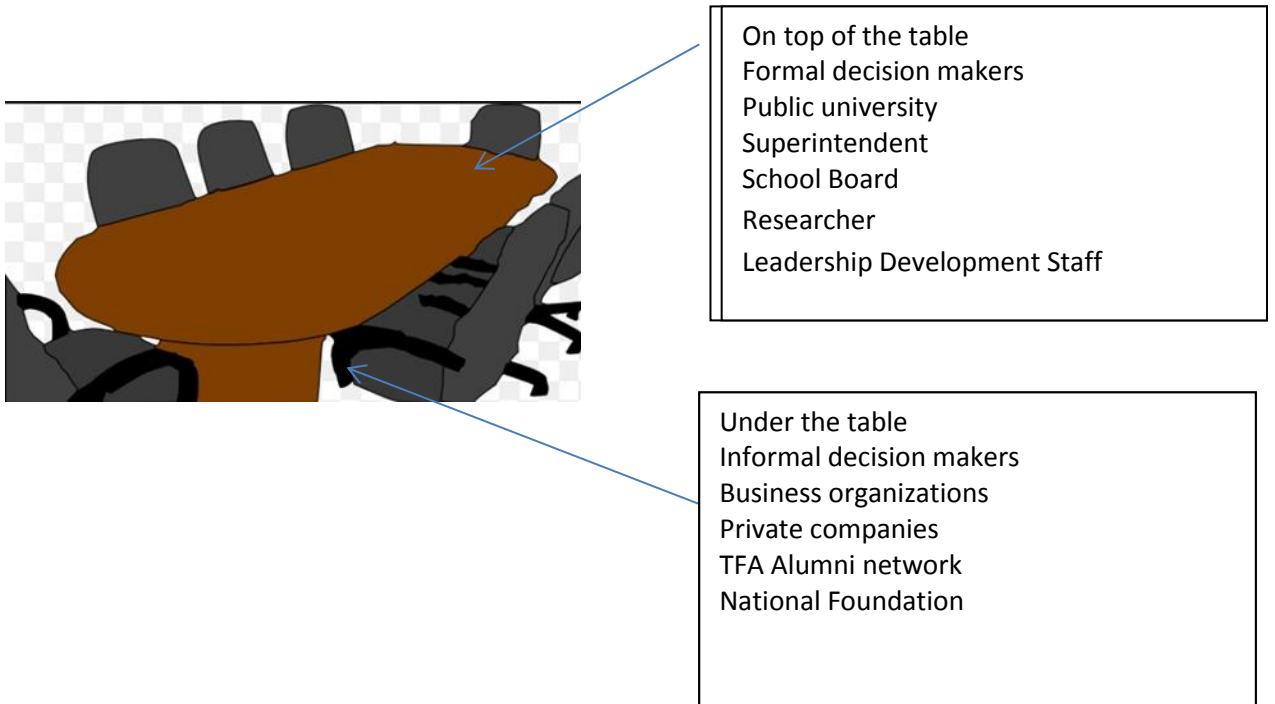


Figure 3. KIPP Recruitment

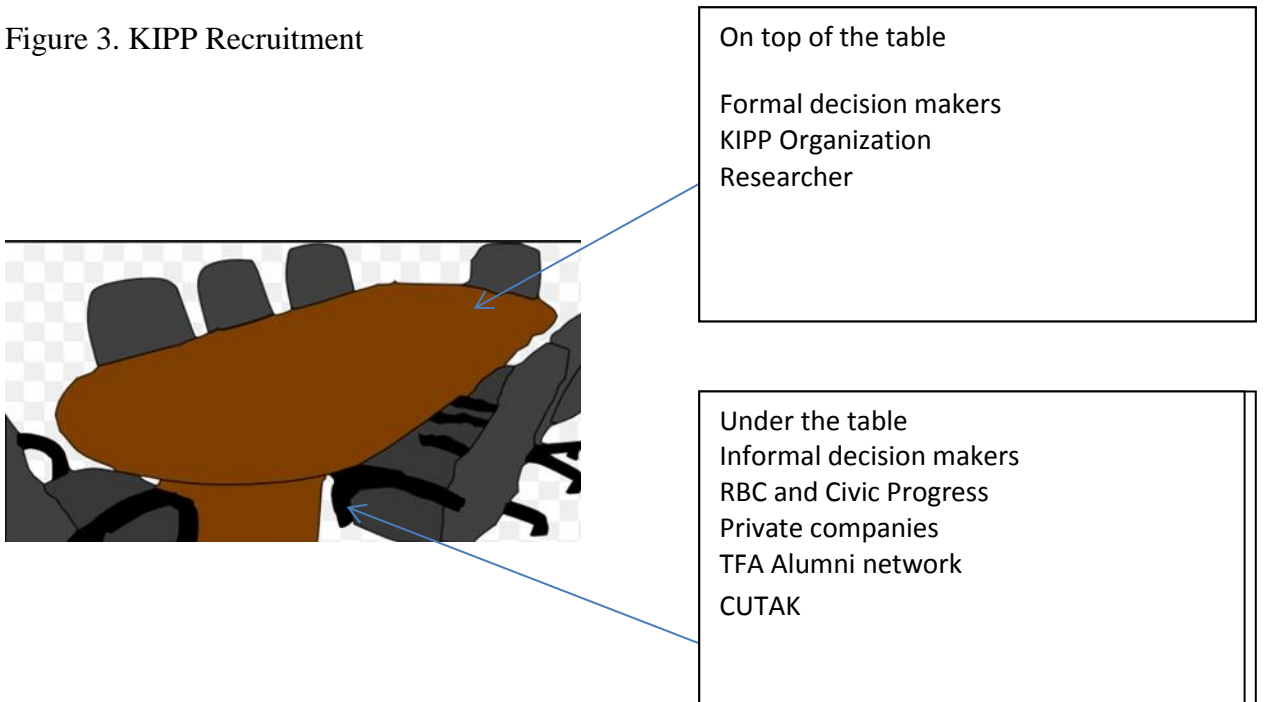


Figure 4. TFA Development Events



On top of the table
Formal Decision Makers
TFA regional staff
Researcher

Under the table
Informal Decision Makers
RBC and Civic Progress
TFA Executive board members
Wealthy St. Louisans

Figure 5. Special Assignment to the Superintendent



On top of the table
Formal Decision makers
Superintendent
Special Administrative Board
Researcher

Under the table
Informal decision makers
Business organizations
Private companies
TFA Alumni Networks
Charter School Organizers

Using Interest Convergence to Analyze

On the surface, my acceptance into the initial cohort of the NLP and recruitment efforts by KIPP appear to be designed to aid SLPS by training new principals and students in the St. Louis region by creating new schools. The fact that I was a young TFA alumni training to be an administrator or by having a TFA alumni and SLPS employee who also was Black woman open the first KIPP charter school in St. Louis, prompts questions in regards to motivations and the true beneficiaries. Using Bell's (1980) terminology, "black interests" are represented by the mostly black led and black served SLPS and the "white" interests are the St. Louis CEO consortium and TFA. Although Driver (2011) in his critique of the interest convergence theory is correct in ascertaining that there is no singular black or white agenda. It is fair to attribute the interests of organizations as black or white given who leads them, the constituency that they serve and the primary benefactors.

In the narratives I shared about my experiences while interning in the NLP project and being recruited by SUTAK, interest convergence manifested in the St. Louis business elites, "Whites" desire to position an administrator in a SLPS school that had completed TFA with SLPS's, "Black interest" of securing additional funding from national foundations and local businesses for leadership development. Why did the TFA alumni status matter? TFA in St. Louis had only existed for three years in 2005. Local educators regarded TFA as an instrument of the Mayor to displace local, traditionally trained teachers in SLPS (Miner, 2010). The Mayor, expounded that he was key to bringing TFA to St. Louis, "I was instrumental in bringing Teach for America to St. Louis. Since 2002, more than 700 young people have taught here through the program" (Slay, 2013). The

business committee had invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local TFA- St. Louis offices (*TFA, ND & Civic Progress, ND*). In my selection, I represented a return on the investment and an announcement that SLPS viewed TFA as a partner in improving the district and reforming the district. Part of TFA long term strategy for impacting education in the St. Louis region was to have alumni leading schools (Nicholson, 2007 & TFA, ND).

As Bell (2004) contends that despite the most herculean effort to change status, it is only as White interests also benefit rather than hard earned merit. It is debatable that a 24 year old African American woman with two years of classroom experience and a not yet completed Master's Degree in Special Education was more qualified or met more criteria in both instances of selection over other accomplished candidates who applied for the NLP. In the initial cohort of 22 I had the least amount of classroom experience and was the only TFA alumni. I would later become the first TFA alumni in St. Louis to be an administrator in the 2006-2007 school year.

In the KIPP narrative, the interest convergence is slightly more difficult to diagnose. The White interests are embodied in the opening of a KIPP Charter school with a school leader who has the duality of being Black and appropriately "trained" through TFA. The business elites had grown increasingly frustrated with improvements in SLPS and wanted to begin a network of charter schools (*Civic Progress, ND*). The Black interests in this example are more narrow to my personal interests as a Black woman. After completing the NLP and being an assistant principal, I felt I was ready for my own school to lead and though I interviewed every year for principal positions I was still an assistant principal. I felt overlooked and thought KIPP would be my opportunity to lead

my own school. In this instance, I knowingly aligned my personal interests with the self – interests of Whites. One critique of interest convergence theory is that by relying solely on interest convergence as an explanation for group and individual success of Black people, that we minimize the individual talents and achievements of Blacks (Driver, 2011). I find fault in this critique especially in the narratives described in this chapter because in both narratives I was not the most qualified candidate available and the only thing that separated me from other candidates was the affiliation to TFA.

I do not believe in 2007-2008 that I could have articulated CRT suitably, but I recognized or perceived that my candidacy for school leadership positions could possibly benefit TFA. The old adage, “scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” would be an apt way to depict what I felt was happening.

The interest conversion of CRT is especially powerful because through them, researchers are able to uncover and unmask the persistent and oppressive nature of the normativity of Whiteness, the co-option and distortion of oppositional discourses, and the ways in which policies that are offered as remedies to underachievement and educational disparity may not be in the best interests of marginalized groups, but rather serve the elite (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p 30.)

Using Whiteness as Property to Analyze

In analyzing the critical life events shared in this chapter I aim to establish that local TFA officials, TFA supporter, the white school leader in New Orleans, and Steve from the organization of CEOs exercised their whiteness as property and the absolute right to exclude. By selecting me over other black TFA corps members, to attend the

TFA development events as a corps member and an alumni, TFA excluded other Black corps members deemed not white. The right to exclude includes deciding who is or is not white enough to enjoy the privileges accompanying whiteness (Harris, 1993). In this case the privilege was networking with rich, white connected St. Louisans who would later advocate for my professional advancement. Steve and the white principal in New Orleans also exercised the right to use and enjoy whiteness as property. Their status as white men allowed them the privilege to use their perceptions about how SLPS employees were ill equipped to implement innovative ideas or that the predominantly Black parents of the school he served didn't know how to parent their own children. The right to use and enjoy Whiteness as property is to employ whiteness to fulfill will and exercise power (Harris, 1993).

By 2009, I could clearly connect the dots and recognize the underlying racism in the educational policies and reform efforts I had been a part of. The critical life events in this chapter demonstrate that Whiteness was employed as resource at the social, political and institutional level to maintain control over the education of Black students and my professional career (Harris, 1993). It is hard to describe the mental gymnastics I have employed trying to determine what my career would be like, if at all, without EE. Was my career unearned? Had I been given an advantage by those who own whiteness and exercised the power of their whiteness to grant those limited advantages to me? (Jackson, 2011).

Summary

In analyzing the numerical data of the Missouri Assessment Program and the data from my lived experience, what is unavoidable is that race salient factor in critiquing such reforms. There are differences in the academic achievement of Black children and white children that can't be disputed, however the utilization of the data produced, the assessment tools used to construct the data and presentation of the data are organized in a manner to continue the majoritarian view of white intellectual dominance.

Decision makers for the students of SLPS who are majority Black are not left in the capable and competent hands of the educators and parents, but through table top theory a clearer picture emerges of who formulates education policy. The final chapter of this study, I will offer findings, implications for the SLPS and future areas of research.

Dumas (2014) describes the human impact that racialized educational policies on black students, families and educators through narratives about school desegregation in Seattle and the immeasurable suffering that was inflicted on the students, their families and the educators in that system. I maintain that the same level of suffering is endured by in St. Louis by Black students, families and educators as EE is implemented.

CHAPTER FIVE- CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to define the strands of EE that were implemented in SLPS from 2003-2009 and describe through counter-stories, my professional experiences with those strands . Research was conducted through personal narratives to understand how EE is experienced. This chapter reviews, analyzes, and discusses the findings of this study. This chapter also outlines the implications of the findings for SLPS, and illustrates the potential impact of EE on Black students and educators this chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

Discussion

This research question framed this study:

What are the implications of the implementation of EE in St. Louis Public Schools?

As discussed in the review of literature of EE, the organizations and individuals who have formed companies or products to transform the existing educational landscape value entrepreneurial attitudes and the leading voice on EE, Hess (2005, 2006) promote these “change agents” as what is needed to turn public education around, specifically urban education. As cited earlier, the majority of urban districts serve largely African – American student populations .Analysis of EE strands, alternative certification programs, new school providers and public/private partnerships in this study based on CRT are perpetuating racist systems within educational institutions.

Critical race theory opens up new avenues of explanations for the why and how behind events and encourages honest discussions on the role of race in educational entrepreneurship. As the majority of urban cities across the country have TFA teachers, KIPP schools and partnerships with their respective business communicates and foundations, who is actually benefiting if not the Black students that are mostly served by urban school districts? This study has used CRT and Table Top theory to show that EE has not benefitted the Black students of SLPS.

Policies in SLPS that continue to implement EE might further reinforce the continued achievement gap between African American students and white students and alienate employees. Additionally, the continued implementation of EE could further racialize the experiences of African American students as informal decision makers influence the policies of SLPS to serve their own interests.

Findings

The State of Missouri measures student achievement outcomes for schools, school districts and racial categories based on the percent proficient. From 2003-2009, Black students underperformed their white peers in SLPS in both communication arts and math. In no year did the percentage of Black students scoring proficient come close to the percent of white students scoring proficient. Small increases in the percentage of Black students scoring proficient occurred in 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2009 in communication arts and in 2004 and 2007 in math. I want to reiterate that the results of standardized were used because metrics such as % proficient and other numerical data is a calling card of

EE reforms. Based on their preferred data source, EE didn't not create equitable educational outcomes for Black students.

The use of the counter story of the researcher to detail from lived experience how the components of EE were manifesting in SLPS through the narrative of one African American female employee gave voice to an opposing perspective to implementation of EE as a reform effort than what is depicted. In Chapter 4 , the counter narratives connected the CRT tenets of Whiteness as Property and Interest Convergence to components of EE. Charter schools (KIPP), alternative certification programs (TFA & NLP) and public-private partnerships (SUTAK & elite business organizations). The counterstory from educators and children of color can help to inform the master view of greater society (Delgado, 2003). Absent this voice, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1996) contended that "Oppression is rationalized, causing little self-examination by the oppressor. Stories of people of color can catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar dysconscious racism" (p. 58). A Zora Neale Hurston quote, "If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it", best describes how I reconciled my emotions with my thoughts.

Lastly, CRT has illuminated through my professional experiences with EE, that individual Blacks may thrive under Educational Entrepreneurship with respect to their career aspirations if one is deemed "a chosen one". A large public profile and leadership responsibilities may be given, but at what cost? In 2003 when I began my career, I believed my advancement was solely based on qualities I possessed and skills I had demonstrated. As the years continued, I began to recognize patterns, but did not yet know

or understand CRT. After further graduate students, I came to understand the tenets of CRT and yet continued willingly in facilitating the implementation of EE in SLPS.

My journey to complete this dissertation is fraught with inconsistencies and mixed feelings as I relived and replayed my experiences. Due partly because I struggle with the duality of being complicit but also feeling duped. How does one reconcile disparate feelings of participation in what is known, albeit belatedly as a harmful enterprise? Do you abdicate your position in protest and begin bearing witness to the racialized educational policies or do you attempt to inform and transform the policies from your position?

Implications and Recommendations

Although this study added to the limited body of knowledge in the area of educational entrepreneurship, I feel additional research is needed on each strand of EE from a qualitative methodology and analyzed through CRT. This scale of this study may not lend itself to replication, yet additional study is needed to examine the following:

- 1) Who or what is driving the national and local EE policies?
- 2) Who benefits as a result of local and national EE policies?
- 3) What are the outcomes of local school districts where EE policies have been implemented?
- 4) Are there other African American participants of EE locally or nationally who can articulate their experiences through a CRT?
- 5) What other tenets of CRT could be used to analyze strands of EE?
- 6) What are other national school reform efforts perpetuate systemic racism to Black children within educational systems?

The literature about urban schools and educational entrepreneurship should be broadened to include more analyses of CRT and local policy arenas in which components of EE are implemented, so that more perspectives will influence the direction of Educational Entrepreneurship.

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