School Leadership in Dirty Water: Black and Minoritized Perspectives on Mayoral Control and Turnaround in Waterbury, CT 2011-2016

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ABSTRACT

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This is a life history case study of urban community responses to school turnaround policies, 2011-2016. The study analyzes Black voices and historically marginalized perspectives affected by an integrated governance school leadership model in Waterbury, Connecticut. This inquiry is driven by the uproar that ensued with a particular kind of mayoral control, and the removal of a beloved Black principal, Erik Brown. Charges of racism followed as members of minoritized communities in Waterbury argued that the mostly White educational administration and leadership in the district made decisions contrary to the best interests of the over 85 percent Black and Brown student body.

I analyze policy discourses through document analysis and interviews with school leaders and prominent Black voices in Waterbury. Aligned with Stein's (2004) "culture of education policy" critical perspective, I discuss ways Culturally Responsive Leadership (Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis, 2016) contribute to decolonizing the culture of deficit thinking in educational policy discourses and practices in schools. Key concepts are "strategic essentialism" and "Decolonizing the Culture of Education / Policy and Leadership" (DC/PL).

This life history study is grounded in Isabelle Wilkerson's (2010) Great Migration framework, as southern migration helped shaped the city's Black and minoritized communities. I analyze participants' life stories through decolonizing lenses and culturally responsive school leadership tools to foreground how members of Black and historically minoritized communities cope with imposing school leadership discourses and practices. Waterbury's minoritized community members'

perspectives are empowered in this study in order to analyze mayoral control and turnaround policy implementation.

This study found that the voices of minoritized community members were not included, and at best marginalized. African American and other minoritized community members' insight and perspectives—voices of educators and elected officials—were silenced under culture of education policy discourses operating in Waterbury.

Keywords:

Turnaround, Mayoral Control, K-12 School Leadership, Culture of Education Policy, Culturally Responsive Leadership, Decolonizing, Life History, The Great Migration, Black Voices, Community Engagement, Minoritize, Essentialism, Strategic-Essentialism.

Dedicated to my grandmother Dazell Omega Bumpers Wright, February 2, 1923-September 12, 2015 and my mom, Lynda. My sons Abdullah, Muhammad and Salih. Thank you for your patience and sacrifices. I love you all. Dedicated to Waterbury, N.E. Atlanta and Cairo, Egypt, places I called home: Places that shaped me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My hometown of Waterbury is infamously known throughout the state of Connecticut as the Dirty Water; a moniker created by local inner-city hip-hop artists. The name derived from a decade (1992 and 2002) that witnessed 2 Waterbury mayors, convicted and imprisoned followed by the Governor of Connecticut, also from Waterbury, who was imprisoned in 2004. Allegations of police brutality in Black and Brown (minoritized) communities and widespread investigations among rank and file political officials went into the creation of the nickname Dirty Water. Nonetheless, it is home and always will be. This study was conducted in the Waterbury School district. As such, I want to acknowledge everyone who participated in this study both formally and informally. And whoever is depicted in an unfavorable light it is not my intention except to bring attention to perspectives and insights from seldom heard and minoritized communities in regard to schooling and school reform. I have to acknowledge the years that I lived and worked in Egypt. Those years taught me how to see the world and to be in the world differently: Lessons that I applied to this study.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Muhammad Khalifah who recruited me to Michigan State University while in Cairo, Egypt back in the winter of 2012. Dr. Khalifah showed interest in my thinking and my ideas and convinced me to apply to the College of Education. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Lynn Fendler. I am unsure I can articulate what Dr. Fendler has done for me with regards to my thinking and writing throughout the dissertation processes. Dr. Fendler challenged and pushed me relentlessly, yet graciously allowed me the space to make mistakes and for my ideas and thoughts to develop.

I had the pleasure of taking classes with many extraordinary professors from across the College of Education at Michigan State University, some of who provided a

space for difficult discussions. Thank you to the College of Education at Michigan State University and the city of East Lansing for extending so many resources for my family and me during my years as a doctoral student.

Thanks to my extended family: aunts, uncles and cousins in Waterbury, Brownsville-Brooklyn (New York City), and throughout North Carolina. Particularly, I would like to thank my older cousins who provided me with the most valuable and formative training and life-lessons in my earliest years. My older cousins Bo, Claudel, Tracey and Jake McKnight. Stevie, Reese and Baron Wright and lastly Derreck Pruden. I have to thank them for allowing me to straggle along behind them on their life-journeys. I watched them struggle and overcome. To witness them in their prime was a marvel and one of the biggest blessings of my life. These were my earliest heroes; and each of them possessed extraordinary talent and brilliance. I witnessed their best and their worst. But I am not who I am without them. And failing to acknowledge and salute them is failure.

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An Insider Analysis of External Cultural Critiques

As a product of an urban community, I care deeply for the culture and the people in urban communities. Because I am an educator, the schools located in these communities are important to me as well. As an educational researcher, my goals and my research agenda center upon urban education as well as educational practices that impact minoritized and marginalized students in general. In this study, I wanted to learn more about Educational Administration and Leaderships' relationship to the culture of minoritized students. This study gave me the opportunity to investigate a place that I know very well, Waterbury, Connecticut, the city where I attended K-12 school.

This study investigated mayoral-guided school reform, specifically, the turnaround policy initially implemented in the Waterbury school district in 2010-2011. The study is based on several different sources of data. I compiled scholarly literature of mayoral led schools and districts (mayoral control), also literature on the turnaround policy in Waterbury and scholarly literature on its implementation. I examined the Elementary Secondary and Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which is the federal education reform initiative, legislated shortly after the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme court decision: ESEA is also the act from which turnaround emerged. I also analyzed Title I, which is the funding source of ESEA and turnaround (Gamson, McDermott, & Reed, 2015; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015; Stein, 2004; US Dept. of Education, 2010).

I studied archival documents such as the Waterbury School Board of Education meeting minutes, local newspaper articles as well as court records and documents related to this study. I also interviewed several Waterbury educators and other prominent community leaders both loosely and specifically connected to

education in Waterbury. My research aim was to understand the culture of school reform, from the perspective of the Black community, in the context of what proved to be a unique version of a mayoral controlled school system driving the turnaround policy in Waterbury. Also, my research aim is to center the perspectives of some of Waterbury's most prominent Black voices, which have generally been excluded from policy discussions, public discourses and school practices in Waterbury, a district that consists of over 85 percent Black and Brown students.

What's to Come

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this inquiry and warrants for my study. It explains my positionality as both researcher and a member of the community of study. This study takes place in a school district that I am familiar with, and among people, some of whom, I know intimately. I explain my relationship to this study by providing my life story, which is part of the life history methodology used in this study. In chapter 2 I explain what life history methodology is, the ways it has been used in research, and its significance to this study. Also in chapter 2, in a section called critiques of life history, I write about the critiques and the values of this research approach. Chapter 2 also outlines and explains the purpose of my use of decolonization not only as a theoretical lens but also as a practical tool.

In chapter 3, I discuss the impact of the turnaround policy on an urban community in a school district under mayoral control. I describe mayoral controlled school districts and how this form of governance operated in Waterbury from 2011-2016. In chapter 4 I explain the turnaround policy, why schools in Waterbury were cited, and what were some of the impacts of turnaround policy implementation.

My study builds on calls for educational reform by using Culturally Responsive Leadership models in research and training. Chapter 5 explains what culturally responsive leadership looks like, how it can be utilized and its value. This is a

historical study that includes sociocultural elements of Waterbury, both, before and during the years of turnaround 2011-2016. Lastly, in chapter 6 I reflect on what I learned in this study about myself as well as about research. Chapter 6 concludes with plans for future research and implications.

My Relationship to the Community under Study

> Indeed, since the 1980s, it has been common practice for qualitative researchers in general to 'write themselves' into their research, on the grounds that personal, background information will enhance the rigour of their work by making potential biases explicit. (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 35)

The Dirty Water moniker originated in Waterbury's North End neighborhoods; where the schools in this inquiry are located. A local Waterbury DJ at WZMX Hot 93.7, a very popular radio station in the region, began referencing Waterbury as the Dirty Water while broadcasting live. As a result, the entire state and many other places in the Northeast came to know of Waterbury as The Dirty Water. Local innercity hip-hop artists created Waterbury's infamous Dirty Water moniker. This reference was contrived due to recurring and widespread political and institutional investigations of city officials. Within a decade, Mayor Joseph Santopietro in 1992 and Mayor Philip Giordano in 2002 were imprisoned following investigations during their tenures as mayor. These arrests and convictions were followed by the investigation and eventual imprisonment of Connecticut's Governor John J. Rowland in 2004, also a Waterbury native. In addition, Waterbury has a reputation for police brutality and misconduct among its innercity residents. Rampant federal investigations haunted many rank and file city officials (Leduff & Herszenhorn, 2001; MAHONY, 2016; Press, 2012). There always appeared to be a cloud over the city and something in the water, as local residents commonly suggest.

In general, anyone with a stake in school reform cannot be dispassionate about it. Thus, it would be reductionist to ignore the emotions surrounding reform efforts such as turnaround affecting a familiar community and school district. As such, many of my sensibilities are on display and my frustrations may appear evident in my writing, as this was deeply personal for me. During my research, I found myself triggered and reminded of my own personal K-12 school experiences in the Waterbury School District. I often recall my high school guidance counselor telling me that before the age of 21 I would be either dead or have a criminal record, "as long as my arm". Her statement forever motivates me and I often reflect upon how different my life could have been had I internalized her negative view of me.

At the time of this study and into the spring of 2017 my own sons, although far from Waterbury, were experiencing much of the deficit-perspective treatment and practices that Black and Brown boys face as cited by much education research (T. Howard, 2015; Noguera, 2003). Also during the time of this study, 2011-2016, I had four close male family members in two of the urban public high schools in Waterbury undergoing similar experiences. I would often get calls from my male cousins in high school or their parents about extraordinarily harsh discipline and other occurrences in their schools in Waterbury. The frustrations I have felt from my own children's school experiences, as well as my relatives at the time of this inquiry, contributed to the anxiety and enthusiasm exhibited in this study. In the concluding chapter 6 in the section named reflections, I also discuss some of my personal academic challenges in making the decision about approaching research in this personal and engaging manner.

Research Question

What are some of the Black community and other historically marginalized members perspectives and insights about school leadership during the period of turnaround from 2011-2016 in Waterbury, Connecticut?

Indications about Study Design

Contemporary Reform in Historical Context

This study illustrates how both ESEA and turnaround policy framed policy beneficiaries—minoritized Black, Brown and poor students—as culturally deficient (Stein, 2004). Policy beneficiaries of ESEA 1965 and all of its iterations leading up to turnaround 2010-2011 frame policy beneficiaries, their communities, families and their culture as culpable. These policy constructs and enunciations, that label students as low-performing and at risk, have led to a criminalization epidemic of minoritized students (Duke, 2012; LeFloch et al., 2014; Stein, 2004; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 1965 and its funding source Title I are important features of the policy under study. The policy under study in this inquiry is turnaround. After the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, and intended as a catalyst, the historical trajectory of ESEA connects to the contemporary educational reform known as the turnaround policy, which was first implemented in Waterbury in 2010-2011 (Bell, 2005; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015; Stein, 2004; US Dept. of Education, 2010).

The primary historical elements in this study and that which holds the study together are aspects of culture: practices and actions based upon cultural discourses and cultural analyses. This inquiry highlights many of the ways cultural discourses are fundamental to ESEA 1965 and turnaround; as such, this dissertation is

historical. This inquiry is comprised of analyses of documents, narratives, and stories of research participants that spread across chapters. Meier (2011) for example argued, "writing history of any kind without analysis or interpretive elements is impossible" (p. 6). This dissertation's historical approach to research provided an opportunity for discovery. These discoveries are indicated throughout this dissertation as many unexpected entanglements and insights emerged.

Comprehensive Policies and the Nuances of Urban School Reform

In 2010-2011, two schools in the Waterbury school district were cited for the turnaround policy. Policy implementation was guided under a unique version of mayoral control. The urban Waterbury school district consisted of over 85 percent Latinx and African American students. However, the overwhelming majority of administrators and educators in the district were White. I am cautious about essentializing categories here such as Black and Brown vs. White. This caution is due to some nuances found in this inquiry that conflicts with the essentializing nature of identity terms, Black, Brown, and White. In this study, there are instances where White voices aligned with historically marginalized Black and Brown perspectives on key issues. Furthermore, Black and Brown are not a monotonous group: there is a significant amount of diversity within Black communities in the Waterbury school district as well as in the Latinx communities (SES, religion, values, world-views, education, country or island of origin, etc.).

My references to Black, Brown, and White in this inquiry are with deference to the troublesome essentialism inherent in these terms. Furthermore, in my utilization of these terms, I am beholden to a strategic essentialism to account for nuances and temporary alliances among people with divergent identities (Sharp, 2008). Strategic essentialism is the adoption of temporary alliances when conflicts in identity ensue (Sharp, 2008). Feminist scholar, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is cited as among the

most eloquent in explaining the pitfalls of essentialism. Strategic essentialism provides the potential for alliances where obstacles related to identity emerge. Strategic essentialism acknowledges those White voices that align with Black perspectives. Temporary alliances diverge when interests diverge. I will elaborate further on strategic essentialism in chapter 2.

Educational and community leaders interviewed for this dissertation provided insight into the mayor's command over the Waterbury school district. Furthermore, Black and minoritized educational and community leaders offered perspectives on the impact of the implementation of the turnaround policy under a nondescript and vaguely legislated mayoral led school district. Policy documents and other research related to turnaround were also analyzed. This dissertation also historicizes the urban community where turnaround was implemented by looking into the legacy of the Great Migration in Waterbury. The Great Migration is Isabelle Wilkerson's (2010) thesis that describes the relocation of millions of African Americans from the US rural south across the United States during the post-Enslavement, Jim Crow era covering the years 1916-1970 (Wilkerson, 2010). I will elaborate further on the significance of the Great Migration framework and its relationship to this thesis later in this chapter.

Historicizing a Minoritized Community and Amplifying their Voices

My research utilizes Wilkerson's (2010) Great Migration framework with the intent to humanize members of Waterbury's divested communities. The Great Migration framework provides some historical context of the emergence of Waterbury's minoritized communities. My intent is to historicize the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the Great Migration (Wilkerson, 2010) migrants, whose subsequent generations and offspring are implicated in this study and impacted by turnaround. Much of these aspirations have been suppressed in part due to broader historical and local socioeconomic and political currents. My research sought insights

and perspectives into how aspirations are, at times, suppressed by contemporary local school practices. The schools of Waterbury, once home to burgeoning middle-class communities including African Americans during their refuge from the Jim Crow South in the middle of the 20th century, have been labeled as "failing" and its students considered to be "at risk".

This study is situated in the shadows of the affluence of the state of Connecticut. Waterbury, Connecticut was once a thriving melting pot, an economic powerhouse, and an east coast gem. James Brooke (1985) of the New York Times recalled, Waterbury "was the 19th-century version of today's Silicon Valley" (Brooke, 1985). Today, what remains of Waterbury is an urban city ravaged by deindustrialization, economic divestment in the urban areas, in spite of some the highest tax rates in the country, poverty and a debilitating drug epidemic that led to a sweeping Mass Incarceration phenomenon.

This historical approach to research is designed to analyze educational policy, historically, and how historical entanglements: designs and structures, influences contemporary schooling and education. This approach to history resembles Depaepe and Simon's (1996) metaphor of the usage of historiography as a lever and mirror. Common approaches to history are that they operate like a mirror that reflects the past. In contrast, the lever disrupts concepts and assumptions provided by much historical writing. Fendler (2010) contends:

> Objective history is meant to function like a mirror that provides us with a reflection of the past. By contrast, effective history is meant to function like a lever that disrupts our assumptions and understandings about who we think we are. (p. 42)

Furthermore since, as Fendler (2010) argued "mirrors make the best levers" (p. 42); my historical approach combines both of these approaches to history. I use history

as a mirror into the past. I also use history as a lever to disrupt and critique contemporary educational policy and practices reflected by the past.

An Examination of Related Research in Educational Administration and Leadership

My study is situated within the existing literature in the fields of Educational Administration, School Leadership, Policy, as well as Sociocultural Foundations in Education and seeks to contribute a historical dimension to these fields. Khalifa et al. (2016) argued that most educational leadership reformers "focus almost exclusively on instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models to address the cultural needs of students" (p. 8). I argue for a more robust culturally responsive approach to Educational Leadership. Much of the research in Educational Administration, Leadership and Organizational Theory has been focused on examinations of policy and policy implementation, and conducted through epistemological lenses of science and positivism (Battiste, 2013; Campbell, 1979, 1981; Dei, 2010, 2015; Haas et al., 2007; Murphy, Vriesenga, & Storey, 2007; Patel, 2015; Pounder & Johnson, 2007; L. T. Smith, 1999). Murphy et al. (2007) noted the quite visible trends of "positivism as the epistemological foundation of school leadership" (p. 614). However, the increase of feminist perspectives and a steep increase in social justice and advocacy for families and children are trending and pose "challenges to the historically privileged intellectual and methodological foundations of school administration" (Murphy et al. 2007, p. 613). My study aims to contribute to what Pounder and Johnson (2007) called the need for the discipline of Educational Administration to link more qualitative works to quantitative works, critical and social justice frameworks to the traditional ones, to help dispel the notion that the discipline of educational administration "is narrow in its theoretical and methodological foci" (p. 271).

An Evolution in Educational Administration Research

In 1979, Roald F. Campbell, the former dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Chicago, and professor of Educational Administration and Professor Emeritus at Ohio State University published an article in the journal Educational Administration Quarterly (EAQ) challenging the narrow scope of research in Educational Administration. Campbell was asked by the editor of EAQ at the time to analyze the first 14 years of publications in the journal beginning from 1965. After the review of the 42 journal issues during the time frame from 1965 to 1979 Campbell (1979) launched a very important analysis of the discipline of Educational Administration as reflected in EAQ. EAQ is the most esteemed journal in the field of Educational Administration. Although EAQ is the foremost journal in the field of Educational Administration, at the time of Campbell's (1979) analysis, the prominence of the journal in the field of education as a whole was marginal. Campbell, 1979 argued, "EAQ does not occupy a prominent place in the literature of the field. EAQ articles infrequently cite articles in related journals, and, even more telling, EAQ articles are seldom cited in other journals or in books in the field" (p. 16). Campbell (1981) argued that publications, as reflected in EAQ, and the development of the professorship in Educational Administration had work to do in several areas including "extending knowledge and improving practice" (p. 7). Since Campbell's (1979; 1981) analysis of the discipline of Educational Administration and its primary journal EAQ, EAQ's editors, since Campbell's (1979) analysis, have taken significant strides to address Campbell's challenges.

Several follow-up analyses of EAQ and Campbell's analysis ensued. These analyses were published in EAQ and covered the years of 1979 to 2007 (Haas et al., 2007; Murphy et al., 2007; Pounder & Johnson, 2007). These follow-ups included document analyses of the influence of EAQ (Haas et al., 2007), the types of articles

published—the methodologies used and areas of interests (Murphy et al., 2007), and an update on changes to EAQ—and an overall assessment since the Campbell (1979) analysis (Pounder & Johnson, 2007).

Nearly three decades after Campbell's (1979) critique of the most important journal in the field of Educational Administration Murphy et al. (2007) followed up Campbell's (1979) research with an updated review of the journal. Murphy et al. (2007) claimed, "given the importance of EAQ to the profession and given the need to understand more fully how we are developing as an applied field, it seemed appropriate to extend the initial work undertaken by Campbell" (p. 613). Murphy et al. (2007) studied research trends in the field of Educational Administration by conducting a 25-year systematic investigation of 570 articles published in Educational Administration Quarterly (EAQ). Murphy et al. (2007) noted, one of the most visible trends uncovered in the analysis was the epistemological foundation of positivism—the "historically privileged intellectual and methodological foundations of school administration" (p. 613). Campbell's (1979; 1981) and Murphy et al (2007) have provided work in Educational Administration research that supports efforts such as mine to explore educational leadership using concepts, methodologies, and analyses such as Culturally Responsive Leadership, life history methodology and decolonizing practices and theories.

Emerging Directions for Research in EAQ

One of the expressed goals of Campbell's (1979) review was to see EAQ become more prominent within the field of education at large. There have been improvements in EAQ's prominence in the field of education from 1979 to 2007. According to Haas et al. (2007), that influence was deemed limited in scope and duration. Furthermore, Haas et al. (2007) contended that "EAQ could enhance its efforts to attract high-quality manuscripts. One method would be to actively seek out

individuals with new ideas, research, and analyses" (p. 507). Campbell (1979) was clear: "despite all of its problems, I find that most of the articles published in EAQ are of good quality, some of them superior quality" (p. 17). And although there has been tremendous progress in our field of Educational Administration, overall the biggest concern remains the epistemological stronghold of what is deemed science, knowledge, and research as seen through the positivist lens (Pounder & Johnson, 2007). In response to Campbell's (1979) critique, EAQ editors in 2007 noted that alternative theories and methodologies could no longer be ignored:

> An important task for scholars in a given field is to critically examine how the field has been constructed. Accepted paradigms, theories, and concepts play a significant role in determining what is and is not a legitimate topic of study, theoretical approach, or methodological tool. Rigid and uncritical adherence to established and accepted theories and methods creates tensions, cleavage, and at times, intolerances that threaten progress in a field. (Pounder & Johnson, 2007, p. 269-270)

This dissertation responds to Pounder and Johnson's (2007) challenge to diversify research approaches in Educational Administration and Leadership by contributing a historical study of cultural discourses in educational leadership using a life-history research methodology viewed through decolonizing lenses. This inquiry is aligned with newer trends in Educational Administration and Leadership research that seeks to incorporate broader methodological and theoretical perspectives into the discipline of Educational Administration. The strong history of social scientific research in Education Administration and its impact on the field has been substantial, and this inquiry responds to the call for greater epistemological and theoretical diversity in the discipline of administration and leadership in educational research.

Expanding the Discourse

How do we bring different ways of knowing into the field of Educational Administration and its dominant epistemic grammar, often times used to invalidate other ways of knowing (Shahjahan, 2016)?

Educational researchers have examined and critiqued deficit perspectives used to frame minoritized students and their cultures (Gorski, 2008; M. Khalifa, 2015; M. A. Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Stein, 2004). For example, Stein (2004) used discourse analysis and a case study of the largest and longest standing U.S. federal education policy designed for students deemed impoverished—the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 1965 and its funding stream Title I. Stein (2004) argued that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) 1965 and Title I, were framed by ideology. This ideology framed the culture of minoritized, urban, poor, Black and Brown, communities as morally inept and culpable. These cultural-deficit discourses began taking shape within educational policy namely in 1965 with the legislation of ESEA.

The discourses that shaped ESEA and Title I; Stein (2004) coined a culture of education policy. These cultures of education policy discourses emanated from a popular ideology found in anthropology and in the social sciences called culture of poverty. This culture of poverty ideology shaped the legislation and the discourses of its legislators as Jim Crow began to wane in the 1950s and 1960s (Stein, 2004). Stein (2004) argued that the culture of poverty signified cultural deprivation, which centered and framed policy discussions and constructs. Thus, "federal funding would provide a means to address the needs of children who, in congressional hearings and government reports on Title I, were characterized" as deprived culturally (Stein, 2004, p. xiv). I highlight these culture of policy discourses in my own research in an

attempt to break from dominant epistemic grammar and operations—that determines so much of what knowledge is and is not; and who are its distributors.

In response to the challenge of Campbell (1979) and Pounder and Johnson (2007), this historical study brings ontology, epistemology, procedures, and theories from life history methodology, and decolonizing theories. This approach is intended to be complimentary to research in Educational Administration, Leadership, and Policy as well as in Sociocultural Educational Foundations. In this section, I introduce concepts of life history methodology and decolonizing theories in education as a way of providing warrants for my study. Chapter 2 deals extensively with life history's values and goals along with its historical place—its rise, decline and its current reclamation. Chapter 2 also offers an analysis of some of life history's origins or some of the places where it can be identified within research. I also examine life history approaches in general and specifically in K-12 educational leadership and its relationship to the study of social phenomena.

Culturally Responsive Leadership

Oftentimes educational administrators, educational leaders, and members of marginalized communities (particularly Black and Brown communities) reside in separate ecological spaces. I introduce the concept of Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRSL) (Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis, 2016) in order to examine the relationship between educational leadership, urban community members, and parents of students within the urban schools in Waterbury under investigation. "Culturally responsive leaders develop and support the school staff and promote a climate that makes the whole school welcoming, inclusive, and accepting of minoritized schools" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 3). Furthermore, CRSL fosters a climate that ensures professional development and curriculum development. Curriculum that is culturally responsive and informed by CRSL, effectively responds to students and

are not foreign to their needs (M. A. Khalifa et al., 2016). Khalifa et al. (2016) recognized "that culturally responsive leadership is needed in all settings including those not dominated by minoritized students, and that not all students of color are minoritized" (p. 4).

Culturally Responsive Leadership in education is a pivotal metric for understanding effective and impactful relationships between urban community members and educational leadership. Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) contend that key elements of CRSL are to identify and unpack biases that school leaders have concerning students from urban environments. Effective culturally responsive leaders interact fluently between school and community. CRSL seeks to promote effective corroboration between school leadership and the community it serves.

Culturally responsive leadership as resistance. In light of Khalifa's et al. (2016) culturally responsive leadership and Stein's (2004) culture of education policy thesis, I contend as Stein (2004) indicated that a "cultural insurgency" and a "cultural resistance" to non-inclusive policies are possible: warranted and plausible. This is to suggest that, as a temporary and short-term solution, culturally responsive leaders can look for ways to be culturally responsive in spite of policy that reflects the contrary. Culturally responsive leaders with insight into the culture of poverty discourses and their contrarian affect (discursively and practically) on culturally responsive schooling practices can find creative ways to benefit "from whatever resources such policies might offer" (Stein, 2004, p. 137). I argue that CRSL can be a useful representative of the type of school- based cultural insurgency and resistance to the cultural deficits inherent in "equity-oriented" policy. The cultural insurgency and resistance suggested here aligns with the methodological framework used in this study; the manner in which this study was conducted is a break from much educational research methods.

Life history as a counterculture. This inquiry is conducted using life history methodology. I utilized the life history methodology as an antithesis to traditional educational research methods. Some scholars called life history methodology a counterculture. A divergence from traditional educational research methods—the ways we come to know including the strategies, paradigms, research models, grammars and theories in educational research (Dhunpath, 2000; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Life history as a counterculture is complimentary to the cultural insurgency and resistance to the culture of education policy discourses and practices that deficitizes policy beneficiaries underlined in this study.

Life historians re-present life stories as told to them within the context of their own frames of reference in order to call attention to cultural elements of educational leadership. A life story is a rendition of a lived experience, an interpretive layer, but the move to life history needs additional stories and context and further interpretations, which adds richness. Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue for life stories as the starting point for life history work. The life stories of research participants are also central to this study, as part of the life history methodology. As such, I begin the next section with historical background and my own life story as a cultural insider—I situate myself into the study as part of this greater life history project. Having been born and raised in the community under investigation, I share similar histories, culture, discourses, and practices found in the communities under investigation.

A Story of Migration: Fleeing Toward What Was Fled From

> As the balance of disciplines began to shift in education from modernistic expository prose of grand narratives to more storytelling, to personal narratives and postcolonial analysis of colonization, to research in one's own perspectives, I took greater delight in reading and writing and found that the shift had brought my own analysis into a different light. It also helped me find a greater balance with my own history and offer those as partial analyses of the choices and paths that I took. (Battiste, 2013, p. 17)

The Great Migration describes the relocation of an estimated six million African Americans from the US rural south to the urban north and west during the years of 1916-1970 (Wilkerson, 2010). Though the Great Migration seems to be a long time ago, I include this historic movement of people as a major theme in the history of 21st century Waterbury, Connecticut. The Great Migration is a crucial theme in the history of Waterbury because most (if not all) of the African Americans in Waterbury today are there because of the migration of their ancestors from the rural south during the Jim Crow era. We have our roots in the Great Migration, and the effects of Enslavement and dislocation are connected to many of the themes in this study. Like other African Americans, my family's history is part of the Great Migration.

My family's connection to the Great Migration that I highlight in this study begins with my grandmother. My grandmother, Dazell Omega Bumpers Wright, was born on February 2, 1923. On September 12, 2015, the most regal woman that I had ever known passed away. She was the mother of 9 daughters and 4 sons. My grandmother was central to my life and my growth. I was close to my grandmother, I admired and I loved her deeply. She had a green thumb and healing hands. The green thumb meant she was an exceptional gardener and spent hours in her garden

when possible and taking care of her houseplants and always giving advice to others on how to do so. As for her healing hands, my grandmother had tremendous medicinal acumen. My grandmother kept a vast amount of medicinal remedies in her head, and with little hesitation, could recall a remedy when told of an ailment; she had a gift. Despite not having any formal medical training, our family and many from our broader community knew to consult with my grandmother regarding any ailment that required medical treatment.

My Family in the Jim Crow South

My grandmother was small in stature, petite and bow-legged with an intangible power and pull that drew people to her. At my grandmother's funeral, her uncle, who was four years younger than she, George Debnam, M.D. gave the eulogy. My grandmother's uncle is a well-known medical doctor in Raleigh, North Carolina (NC), where he founded the Debnam clinic in the 1960s. His twin daughters, who are also medical doctors, partnered with him some years later. Uncle George "has the distinction of being known as the 'Dean' of African American physicians in Raleigh" (WRAL, 2014b). In his fifty years as a physician, Uncle George has delivered a state record of 11,500 babies (WRAL, 2014b). Uncle George (as he is affectionately called in our family) along with his now deceased wife is credited with sending hundreds of kids to college in the Raleigh area, and both he and his wife were inducted into the Raleigh hall of fame (WRAL, 2014a). It was a proud moment to hear Dr. Debnam, uncle George, speak highly and fondly about my grandmother, their relationship and how she was like a supportive older sister to him growing up. Uncle George took the opportunity at my grandmother's funeral to thank her as he recalled some of the earliest memories of their lives.

The heartfelt eulogy given by uncle George at my grandmother's funeral led me to inquire further about his connection to my grandmother. I was advised to

reach out to several of my elder cousins. One, in particular, James "Truman" Cook, I was told had a strong memory and a passion for our family history. Truman revealed to me that uncle George's dad, (my grandmother's grandfather), committed suicide early in their lives. It was explained to me that the pressure of having his land taken from him by the "White man" and having two very young children contributed to the suicide of uncle George's dad. Uncle George was the youngest brother of my maternal great-grandmother.

The fate of uncle George's dad (my grandmother's grandfather) and these types of stories of Black families are not rare. The anguish of Black families in the post-Enslavement Jim Crow South incited various attempts of escape: alcoholism, fathers abandoning their families, and as in the case of uncle George's dad; suicide. In the wake of his father's death, Uncle George's older sisters, including my great, great grandmother, along with my grandmother became instrumental to uncle George's upbringing. During the eulogy uncle George shared fond memories of these women including my grandmother and her nurturing role during his years as a medical student; he also offered some insights into her life in North Carolina before she relocated to Connecticut.

Our Story within The Great Migration

I tell my family's story because it is part of the legacy of the Great Migration (Wilkerson, 2010). Like all of the characters in Wilkerson's (2010) account members of my family were fleeing from the invisible hand of Jim Crow and the residuals of Enslavement as sharecroppers (Wilkerson, 2010).

My grandmother kept many photos; the walls in her house were filled with pictures of our family. One of the most memorable photos on the wall was one of her mother. The picture of my great-grandmother raised more questions than answers because she looked strikingly Native American Indian. However, I never met my

great-grandmother; she passed away when my mother was just a young child. When I was a young child we regularly visited our relatives in North Carolina, and I recall my grandmother's aunts (my great-grandmother's sisters) aunt Lillian and aunt Serena who also had distinctly Native America features. The Native American lineage is known in our family but not discussed much by the later generations; elders in our family can only discuss cursorily which tribe or tribes our family are linked to. It is little known, by me at least, as to how our family became detached from these Native American roots and stories. I am still uncovering these stories.

As an adult, I had a friend from Boston named Keisha. When I first met her, I thought she was an African American woman. Over time Keisha revealed to me that not only was she fully Native American; that she also was born and raised on an Indian reservation in Massachusetts. I later began to learn that there is an entire lost history about Black Native Americans that may have been here before European colonization. The history that connects African Americans with Native Americans and Black Indians is blurred. Many of these stories and histories have become lost due to European expansion and violence.

My grandmother left the south in the early 1960s for better opportunities and jobs in the northeast. My grandmother was born in 1923 just 58 years after Enslavement ended in 1865. Leading up to 1865 some but not all of my grandmother's as well as my Uncle George's ancestors were Enslaved in North Carolina. Furthermore, it is possible that many of their ancestors that preceded them here in these United States were also Enslaved Africans and or met the fate that many Indians had, especially the Black Indians.

Freedom. With the ratification of the 13th amendment to the U.S. Constitution our Enslaved ancestors were freed in 1865. Subsequently, they became landowners in Youngsville, North Carolina a small town just outside of Raleigh. However, during the years after the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction that

followed, my grandmothers' grandfather (uncle George's dad) had his portion of that land seized through a common predatory loan scheme that swindled many Black farmers and landowners in North Carolina at the time. What remained of that land, in part, was the small family church that our ancestors had built and where my grandmother is buried. The Old Liberty Missionary Baptist Church Inc. established in 1865. Behind the church, there is a cemetery where my grandmother is laid to rest along with many of our ancestors, the daughters, and sons forced to live under the violence of European expansion and Chattel Enslavement.

Reconstruction and Jim Crow. Instead of being an heir of landowners, my grandmother ended up a sharecropper as many former descendants of the Enslaved peoples in the south were (DuBois, 1935; Morris, 2015; Wilkerson, 2010). My grandparents along with their children lived in Jim Crow North Carolina on the property of, a White man and his family, Mr. Brookes Young, in return for tilling their crops. The Young family, in which the city of Youngsville was named after were former plantation owners, turned sharecroppers post-Enslavement. My grandparents were, as so many African Americans, entangled within the exploits of the sharecropping system. The exploits of sharecropping rarely resulted in any payouts to African Americans. On the contrary, sharecropping most often left African Americans with non-repayable debt; in spite of, as in the case with my family, working from sun up to sun down.

The Young family profited from Enslavement and after Enslavement ended they maintained exploitative practices of former Enslaved people through sharecropping. Sociologists considered the practice of sharecropping as an economically dependent exploitative arrangement of unrelenting debt peonage: neo-slavery (DuBois, 1935; Morris, 2015). My mom told me that at 6 years old (1960) she picked cotton and she remembered the strain on her back and called it "hard work." She also remembered helping to stock cured tobacco at that young age on

the Young family's farm. My older Aunts Dine and Maxcine told me about how as teenagers they would begin "work" on the Brookes Young farm at 5 am and stay sometimes until 7 pm. I asked about school, my aunt Dine said that if the "White man" asked that the kids stay home; then the kids stayed home.

Tales of resistance. Eventually, my grandfather, George Oliver Wright, left the Brookes Young farm and his family behind for New York City where he would take up residence in Brooklyn, in the Brownsville section, on Bergin Street around the mid to late 1950s. Around that same time, many of my grandparents' older children began leaving the south for industrial and manufacturing jobs in the northeast. My grandparents' oldest four children, my uncle J.O. (Johnny Oliver) and his wife Edith, my aunt Maxcine, my uncle Sherrell and my aunt Claudine were the first to go North to find work. Waterbury, Connecticut, also known as the Brass City, became the destination.

Education in this historical moment. The story of the Great Migration, which includes my family, lays the groundwork for race relations in Waterbury, Connecticut in the 21st century. The turnaround policy is a continuation of Jim Crow era educational policy and what Stein (2004) described as "equity-oriented" policies. Policies that were put in place during the era that coincided with the Great Migration: Namely ESEA 1965 and its funding source Title I. According to Stein (2004) ESEA and Title I comprised a culture of education policy, that is permeated by cultural deficit discourses of policy beneficiaries. Culture of education policy discourses deemed policy beneficiaries as culpable, in this case, the entire population of those members who would have comprised the migrants of the Great Migration.

In sum, the K-12 school-age students and children of those who migrated were among the beneficiaries of these equity-oriented polices: ESEA (1965) and Title I. In the 100-year period between legal Enslavement ending in 1865 and the passing of ESEA 1965 African Americans were dealing with horrific systemic racism, a

lynching epidemic, as well as socio-political, economic and legal inhibitions such as sharecropping and Jim Crow. Nevertheless, African Americans were among the primary policy beneficiaries of ESEA 1965 and Title I and framed as value deprived, as well as morally and culturally inept.

Because of dominant discourses in equity-oriented policy that has deficitized particular communities, specifically African American communities, it was of utmost importance for me to offer some context. A context that includes life stories and experiences that offer different perspectives of African Americans from Waterbury that participated in this study. This approach offers a contrast to the frames in which educational policy and practices position the culture and values of African Americans in this study.

Family Migration Northeast

My Aunt Maxcine told me that at age 17 she opted out of her last year of segregated schooling in Jim Crow North Carolina to relocate to Waterbury, Connecticut to find work. After a couple of years in Waterbury, she married my uncle Bruce, who was also from North Carolina but near the coast from a city called little Washington. My aunt Maxcine and her husband eventually became entrepreneurs in Waterbury; they owned stores and homes and became landlords aside from working in the factories.

Shortly after my aunt arrived in Waterbury, her husband Bruce and my uncle Sherrell drove south to North Carolina to get my grandmother and her 7 youngest daughters. Of these 7 little girls my mother, Lynda, was the fourth youngest at around age 9 in 1963. I discussed this moment with my mom, my aunt Maxcine, and her husband my uncle Bruce. I wanted to know how did 10 people and all of their belongings make it out of North Carolina in one car. My uncle Bruce told me that they were all "skinny" and relatively malnourished and had very little means. They

all fit into his full-sized 1956 Buick Roadmaster. My youngest aunt Naomi was a just a few months old and the other girls were preteens and early teens. Uncle Bruce told me that he and my uncle Sherrell, who died in a horrific car accident on January 24, 1997, at the age of 50, packed all their clothes on top of the car and drove to Connecticut. My mom recalled how enamored she was with all the lights and tall buildings while driving through New York City to get to Connecticut, which contrasted with growing up on the pitch-black Tarbor Road in Youngsville, NC.

Deindustrialization in Waterbury

Deindustrialization, drugs, and Mass Incarceration ravaged what was once a major draw for hard-working immigrants and African American southerners fleeing the residue of 250 years of Enslavement: Sharecropping, and Jim Crow. My mom and many of my aunts, upon retirement, seeing the declining condition of Waterbury began relocating back to North Carolina. Also, my grandmother spent the last decade of her life in a Raleigh suburb. Furthermore, the newest form of racialized social control, Mass Incarceration and or as legal scholar Michelle Alexander (2012) called it, The New Jim Crow, began to take shape. The New Jim Crow ushered in a new era of Black life for us in Waterbury a small to midsize urban American northeast city in the shadows of New York City.

Jim Crow's Northern Migration

The Enslavement of Africans, Jim Crow, and Mass Incarceration are held together by legal mandates that prohibited and restricted Black bodies and their movements. These legal mandates have had a deleterious impact upon the historical trajectory of Black life in the United States. Alexander (2012) concedes to the skepticism of the lineage between Enslavement, Jim Crow, and Mass Incarceration as

racialized systems of control for post-Enslavement's 4th and 5th generations. Alexander (2012) acknowledged the differences between "the three racialized systems of control [Enslavement, Jim Crow, and Mass Incarceration] adopted in the United States" (p. 14). These differences are relevant and acknowledged. However, Alexander (2012) contended "the similarities between these systems of control [Enslavement, Jim Crow, and Mass Incarceration] overwhelm the differences and that Mass Incarceration, like its predecessors, has been largely immunized from legal challenge" (p. 15). These three racialized systems of control have directly impacted the African American community members in the Waterbury school district as well as all of the African Americans interviewed in this study.

Furthermore, Enslavement, Jim Crow and Mass Incarceration, were devastatingly imposing and obstructive to my family, our lives and legacy. The laws of Enslavement were forced upon my grandparents' grandparents and their ancestors. My grandparents were sharecroppers due to Reconstruction laws that made this system of debt peonage, known as sharecropping, common for their generation. The laws of Jim Crow were imposed upon my mother and her siblings, which ultimately forced their migration north. Subsequently, my generation was/is entangled with Mass Incarceration, and its debilitating impact on my cousins and peers throughout Waterbury.

Most of my friends in Waterbury were Black, Puerto Rican and other minoritized Black and Brown groups from throughout the Caribbean Islands as well as Cape Verde (islands off the northwest coast of Africa). These communities have intermarried and have become mixed over the years. They came from two-parent homes, single parent homes, and some had professional parents. Some of my friends and peers lived in the suburbs along with those that lived in the inner city. The common denominator was that many of us, Black and Brown, were accumulating

felonious arrests before high school had ended. Most of our White friends were not as unfortunate.

Legislating Ways of Seeing

It is important in this inquiry to understand the connections between the Great Migration, the culture of policy, and equity-oriented policies—ESEA 1965 and turnaround. Stein's (2004) depiction of equity-oriented policy as legislating "ways of seeing" (p. 33) helps my emphasis on these connections. For example, the lofty aspirations of the Great Migration migrants are ignored and overshadowed by equity-oriented policies. The criminalizing impact upon many of my public-school peers, and the communities under study in this inquiry are a result of the culture of policy discourses driving equity-oriented policy. The ways in which children of minoritized communities are depicted eventually began to interweave into depictions of policy beneficiaries' culture. Their moral deficiencies, as framed by the culture of policy, became synonymous with criminality and criminal behavior. According to this culture of policy and its discourses, "this culture was not only conceived as a detriment to children born in poverty, it was also a threat to individual and national security" (Stein, 2004, p. 34). Lost in all of this is a history of migrants fleeing Jim Crow for a better life.

By 1970 ESEA and Title I reauthorization debates framed policy beneficiaries as "potential future criminals" (Stein, 2004, p. 58). Stein (2004) contended that the 1970 reauthorization debates of ESEA/Title I on the congressional floor included school board representatives and superintendents nationwide. Testimony at the hearing posited Title I as "a way to keep the 'social dynamite' of poorly educated inner-city children from exploding" (p. 58). Some members of Congress on the congressional floor described these potential future criminals and their social-dynamite as predelinquents. Stein (2004) wrote:

> The construct of predelinquency folded into categories of thought embedded in Title I policy. This use of the predelinquency construct in framing Title I beneficiaries promoted viewing policy-eligible children as potentially dangerous and disruptive…By association, then, Title I eligibility was conceptually confounded with the potential for bad behavior. (Stein, 2004, p. 59)

After the Great Migration, as a result of Jim Crow came the era of Mass Incarceration, the New Jim Crow. These two historical moments (the Great Migration and Mass Incarceration) provide the cultural context of schooling, and its effect, in the 21st century in Waterbury.

In a 2013 report on racial disparities and school discipline in Connecticut; it noted that in the poorest urban areas in Connecticut, including Waterbury, students were arrested 23 more times, expelled 17 more times and suspended out of school 24 more times than students in the wealthier Connecticut suburbs (Rosner, 2015). The report noted that "extensive research shows that excluding children from school for disciplinary problems is often ineffective and even counterproductive" (Rosner, 2015). This counterproductivity leads to early and often time avoidable students' engagement with jails and negative encounters with police and the courts.

Prison became, and unfortunately remains, a highly plausible destination for too many of the minoritized public school students in the Waterbury School district during their school years and soon after graduation. And while the euphemistic school-to-prison pipeline discourses are current trends in social justice academic circles, the ways in which the history of contemporary educational policy helped shape and are fundamental to the school-to-prison pipeline are my main concerns in this inquiry. Educational deficiencies and criminal activities were interconnected in the earliest versions of equity-oriented policy discourses. These discourses contrasts with how policy beneficiaries and those who migrated from the Jim Crow south to

Waterbury saw themselves. The current life in Waterbury contrast what the early migrants anticipated and experienced in Waterbury's heyday as a manufacturing giant and the world's leader in Brass production, thus its moniker The Brass City.

The Study Participants and their Migration to Waterbury

Most African Americans in Waterbury, in particular those implicated by the turnaround policy, are affected by and are a part of the legacy of the Great Migration. Many African Americans ended up in Waterbury as young migrant children from the south and/or are first generation Waterburians such as myself. Also, many of my relatives and friends went to the schools cited in this inquiry. Walsh Elementary and Crosby High Schools were instrumental to the lives of many that migrated to Waterbury from the Jim Crow south. This historical, life history, case study is situated between the years of 2011-2016. From 2010-2013 I was living in Waterbury. These years are chosen because in the 2010-2011 school year, two schools in Waterbury's school district; Walsh Elementary and Crosby High Schools were cited for turnaround. Turnaround is a federally funded program, funded by School Improvement Grants (SIG)—ESEA/Title I (State of Connecticut, 2010). Turnaround was designed to infuse funds and procedures into turning around Connecticut's lowest-achieving schools (State of Connecticut, 2010). Primarily, turnaround targets schools that serve minoritized, Black and Brown students using discourses and policies of failing schools. In the years of 2013-2016 I was living in East Lansing, Michigan as a PhD student in Educational Administration K-12 at Michigan State University. During my doctoral studies, I was learning about school policies and educational leadership as well as theories of and around urban and Black and Brown students' school experiences.

The Great Migration: Stories of Resistance, Vision, and Hope

The stories of the families that participated in The Great Migration are stories of survival, resilience, faith, and hope in the unknown. These are stories of people that I view as having extraordinary vision. These stories have generally been omitted from studies of socio-cultural foundations in education, culture-of-policy discourses and omitted from discourses that frame equity-oriented policy beneficiaries (Stein, 2004). Given their past as violently Enslaved and tortured people, African Americans had no tangible reason to believe things could become better. It was simply faith: Faith in a better future for African Americans to come: Ideals that are hardly reprehensible or culpable.

Every one of the African Americans in Waterbury that I interviewed for this study had a story shaped by the legacy of The Great Migration experience. These stories are important because they show the depth of humanity of African Americans. These stories also provide insight into valuable aspects of Black culture that contradicts the depictions found in Stein's (2004) analysis of the culture of educational policy discourses. These culture-of-educational-policy discourses depicted policy beneficiaries as culturally deficient and inferior human beings. In the next section, I will highlight some of the stories and experiences of some of the participants in this study. I begin this series of stories with Athena Wagner.

Ms. Athena Wagner. Ms. Wagner was a member of the local NAACP and was the president of the School Governance Council (SGC) at Walsh during Erik Brown's tenure as principal. Erik Brown was the Walsh School principal at the time turnaround was implemented. SGC was a bridge organization between parents and school administrators during the time of turnaround.

Out of all the African Americans that I interviewed in this inquiry Ms. Wagner's relationship to The Great Migration is most unique. Neither she nor her

parents were born in the south. They were born in Waterbury. This suggests that their relationship to the African American post-Enslavement era was different, not necessarily better just different, from those who had to endure Jim Crow and sharecropping in the south. This does, however, suggest that their socioeconomic status may have been more elevated than some of the other Blacks that came to Waterbury much later. I did not ask Ms. Wagner this question directly but it seems indicative by the fact that in the 1960s she and her siblings attended very expensive private/catholic schools in Waterbury. Not yet something many Blacks could do in the 1960s in Waterbury. She spent kindergarten at Walsh elementary and afterward grades 1-12 were spent in private Catholic schools in Waterbury. In the early 1960s, when my family was still in North Carolina working as sharecroppers, Ms. Wagner was attending private school in Waterbury. Ms. Wagner spoke candidly about her experiences:

> AW: St. Mary's grammar school 1-8 (kg at Walsh). Had no idea of the rude awakening I was in for. Extremely racist. Extremely racist. And they didn't want us (her and her younger brother) there in the first place. They had to have us there. And tuition was more because we were non-Catholic.
>
> JW: What do you mean they had to have you there?
>
> AW: I think something had come down governmentally …where they were told to diversify your school population. And can't just be for the White kids.
>
> JW: What year was this?
>
> AW: 1966. And uhm. The kids were brutal the White kids were awful.
>
> (Wagner, interview)

Athena Wagner's K-12 school experiences are significant because many of the African Americans that migrated from the south formed camaraderie and bonds that guaranteed certain insulation and protection in the public schools in Waterbury. The Blacks from the South now living in Waterbury stuck together. By attending Catholic

school in Waterbury, Wagner was not afforded the protection that would have been more available to her had she attended public school. It was the 1960s and as we see with Ms. Wagner's story virulent explicit racism was not only in the Jim Crow south but also active in Waterbury. These formative years in private schools in Waterbury shaped the fiery advocate for children that she became and as displayed in Waterbury at Walsh School with the implementation of turnaround. Of all the informants in my study, Ms. Wagner's formative years growing up in Waterbury had to endure the most extreme abuse in school. Wagner was one of less than a handful of Black children in the Catholic school system in Waterbury. Wagner described the blowback of forced integration she endured occurring in Waterbury Connecticut. Ms. Wagner recalled being spat on, verbally and physically abused by White students. She told me stories of her teachers condoning and even requesting that White students tell nigger jokes in the front of the class. Ms. Wagner was chased home from school daily (Wagner, interview).

The context in which Ms. Wagner's school experiences occurred does not seem to be analyzed much in the literature on the history of African American school experiences that I am aware of. This was a young Black girl going to a K-12 private/catholic school dealing with explicit racism, in the Northeast, from school leaders and teachers on down to her peers. A key component explored in this life history methodology asks how did Ms. Wagner cope? Her stories about turnaround, her interactions with the Mayor, her resilience, her resistance and her keen insight into who Erik Brown was and what he was fighting against offer strong clues as to how she coped and still copes with racism in Waterbury. Additional cues regarding Ms. Wagner's resistant and resilient disposition will unfold in the coming chapters; chapter 3 deals with the mayor of Waterbury's role in policy implementation; chapter 4 deals with Erik Brown the principal at Walsh during turnaround. Ms. Wagner's perspective plays a role in my analysis in both chapter's 3 and 4.

Dr. Virgil Franklin. Dr. Franklin was the first African American principal in the city of Waterbury. Furthermore, Franklin was the principal at Walsh elementary (one of the two schools under investigation in this inquiry) from 1973-1986. Dr. Franklin's dad was born in Alabama and his mom was born in Virginia. Both of his parents came to Waterbury in the 1930s where they met and married. Mr. Franklin is a 1958 Crosby high school (the second of the two schools under investigation in this inquiry) graduate. Dr. Franklin told me that he was offered several academic and athletic scholarships, Drake and Brown University's, respectively, being most notable. Mr. Franklin revealed, "I didn't accept any of the offered scholarships, in part due to lackluster counseling for African American students at Crosby" (Franklin, interview). Mr. Franklin attended a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), Fayetteville State University, in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He would elaborate further:

> As mentioned, guidance counselors back in those days did not spend much time with African American students. As a consequence, I had no idea what Brown University or Drake University could have done for my education and life. We were not even counseled into going to HBCUs. My particular counselor suggested I go into the military and plan a life working in one of the Waterbury factories, like my father. (Franklin, interview)

Tameka Lott, M.D. Tameka Lott is a medical doctor that is from the urban north end of Waterbury where the Walsh students came from and where most of the Crosby students live as well. Walsh and Crosby were the two urban schools cited for failure and subsequently turnaround. Dr. Lott was a student at Walsh during Mr. Franklin's tenure as principal. Dr. Lott often points out how nurturing Walsh was for her under the leadership of Dr. Virgil Franklin. Dr. Lott, graduated high school the same year as me and like me, and many from our generation, is a first generation Waterburian. Her parents like mine migrated from the Jim Crow south to Waterbury

to find better lives for themselves and future generations. Dr. Lott's mother migrated from South Carolina and her dad from Georgia. Dr. Lott was the youngest of 10 children. She spent her formative years witnessing many of her older siblings, sisters, and brothers, afflicted by drug addiction while rotating in and out of prisons. Between her senior year of high school and her senior year of college 4 of her siblings passed away due to drug abuse (Lott, interview). Dr. Lott described her experiences in her own words:

> So, I lost 4 siblings from senior year of high school to senior year of college 92-96: college was a struggle. I began struggling with depression. (I) did counseling in college and now in retrospect due to the medical knowledge I know, but I was able to maintain for years … I just pushed through it. I didn't have grief counseling the family didn't come together, the rigors of college applying to medical school. Only God. That's all I can say. Only God. So, I stayed in college my grades weren't the best. I didn't get into med school the first time I applied and felt like I hit a brick wall. (Lott, interview)

Dr. Lott eventually overcame these hardships and described her method of coping as faith-based. Faith is a cornerstone in the African American experience. Faith was the Enslaved Africans knowing that someday things would get better; if not for them for their future generations. Faith can be seen in the actions of those African Americans who left the Jim Crow south for uncharted lands and experiences in the Northeast as in the case with those of us from Waterbury. For many of us, faith was all we had.

Mr. Denoris Crosby. Mr. Crosby's background in relationship to The Great Migration is also unique. Mr. Crosby was born in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, twenty miles west of Charlotte. Mr. Crosby had graduated from a Historically Black College and/or University (HBCU) with a degree in Biology from North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina. Most professional Blacks that resided

in the Jim Crow south, had to leave the south to find jobs in their profession (Wilkerson, 2010). This was the case for Mr. Crosby, who left North Carolina for New Haven Connecticut where he would land a job as a researcher at Yale University. Mr. Crosby chose to leave Yale to work directly with many of the African American migrants' children that were coming to Connecticut and forming the urban environments that would later emerge. Mr. Crosby became a high school teacher in urban Bridgeport, Connecticut and later a high school principal in urban New Haven, before eventually becoming an administrator for the State of Connecticut Department of Education where he retired. Mr. Crosby was also tapped as a temporary replacement at Walsh elementary after Erik Brown was removed (Crosby, interview).

The Role of the Researcher: What Kind of Historian am I?

This is a historical study that uses life history methodology. The focus years of this life history were the years of 2011 through 2016. In 2011, I was living in Waterbury and unaware that I would be doing a dissertation on this community in just a few years. Two years later in the fall of 2013, I began the PhD program at Michigan State University in Educational Administration K-12. As I began my first semester I had no knowledge as to what my dissertation topic would be or what I would study. My first class as a doctoral student was Dr. David Arsen's the Political Economy of Schooling EAD 923. The class highlighted the historical political-economic underpinnings both implicit and explicit shaping the trajectory of school reform. I was enamored with the content in the class and life as PhD student was off to a great start. At the time, I assumed my dissertation would be within the realm of the political economy of schooling particularly the impact venture capitalists were having on school reform. The political economy of schooling class resonated with me

due to my Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) with a focus on organizational behavior.

Thought Processes and Decisions Related to this Study

At the outset of my doctoral studies, I was able to identify the significance of the political-economic connection inherent in schooling. As time went on I became more interested in other aspects of schooling particularly the socio-cultural foundations of education and their entanglements with race and imposition. As the school-to-prison pipeline literature began to emerge and as my views became clearer regarding the impact that prison culture was having on young Black boys in schools my focus, again, shifted. I wanted to research Black male principals. I wanted to know and examine how Black male principals, as educational leaders, rationalized being part of a school culture that Black boys were finding difficult to navigate (T. Howard, 2015; T. C. Howard, 2008; M. Khalifa, 2015; Noguera, 2003). I wanted to hear these principals' perspectives and their coping methods: their stories, their challenges, obstacles, triumphs and their visions.

Black male principals. As I began to search for candidates to interview for this study, I suddenly flashed backed to Waterbury. I vaguely remembered the only Black male principal in Waterbury that I was aware of. I later learned his name was Erik Brown. I recalled hearing of the controversy he was immersed in. I recalled media coverage of him and his school. But what I remembered most was the support he received on social media from many among the African American community in Waterbury and across Connecticut. This support came from parents of children who had Mr. Brown as a principal during his tenure at Walsh or who came to know him during his tenure at Walsh. They were vocally frustrated and upset at how Brown was being depicted in the media. At that time, in 2010-2011, I never looked any further into the situation.

New insights and the detour. A few years later, around 2014, as a PhD student ready to embark upon my study and with an idea in mind I reached out to people in Waterbury and asked about the Walsh principal. I did not know his name. I just remembered that there was some controversy surrounding a well-liked Black male principal at Walsh. I reached out to some friends that worked within or were otherwise affiliated with the Waterbury school district. I was quickly informed of what had been occurring in regard to Erik Brown and the Waterbury school district. I learned that Brown had been demoted from principal to vice principal and had been removed from Walsh elementary school and sent to another elementary school within the district. I learned that Brown had appealed his demotion and more of the facts were emerging at the time of my inquiry. The Erik Brown case was the talk across the state in many respects. At the time of my inquiry key facts were emerging and it looked like educational leadership in the Waterbury school district's treatment of Brown was unjust and improper. The outrage that I recalled from my social media network several years prior started to look justified. I asked more and more questions, and eventually my informal informants, within the district, had given me all they had known but not before painting a picture and setting a stage for how to proceed further. They provided links to newspaper articles and recalled much insight from within the district and the urban community about the Brown story. I was more intrigued. One person close to the story suggested that I contact someone with more intimate knowledge of what was happening. He suggested the only two African American Board of Education members in Waterbury and Athena Wagner. Ms. Wagner at that time was someone I had not known.

Coming into focus. I contacted Athena Wagner by telephone. She was the first of the formal informants that I spoke to for this inquiry. Ms. Wagner was a pivotal entry point into this study. She was close to the Brown case and had worked directly with him at Walsh School. Wagner was the Student Governance Counsel

(SGC) president at Walsh. SGC was part of a support system for Walsh school parents that came to be as a result of the turnaround policy. In the initial and informal conversations over the telephone, Ms. Wagner began telling me her perspective of what she witnessed; both as a community member and as part of the turnaround effort. This was not insignificant. Ms. Wagner was intimately involved with Educational Administration and Leadership discourses, decisions, and practices. Wagner is highly regarded for her advocacy by many in the Black community in Waterbury and throughout Connecticut. Ms. Wagner told me about the turnaround policy and how and why the two schools, Walsh and Crosby, were cited. These conversations with Ms. Wagner lead me to Federal and eventually State and local literature on the turnaround policy and its impact on Waterbury.

The full transition. These new insights and subsequent transition solidified the shift in my thinking on my project. My focus shifted away from its original focus, away from a collective of stories of Black male principals across the country. Away from how these principals rationalized the socio-political processes of schooling impacting Black boys and how they, as Black men and principals, coped with what Black boys in their schools faced. The new focus was on the Erik Brown case. But not just that; there was a greater phenomenon affecting my hometown and my community. My study began to become clearer. There was a component in my study that dealt with the experiences of Black principals but not in the way I had thought initially. This study comprised the components for an Educational Administration and Leadership case study. I was able to identify a problem between a controversial school superintendent, a controversial African American male principal, and a controversial school board of education that featured a powerful and influential mayor in Waterbury, Connecticut, and a burgeoning grass-roots community activism.

The shape of this study. There was an integrated governance component (mayoral control) chapter 3 and an educational policy component (turnaround)

chapter 4. There was a social-cultural component that paid homage to the bustling social activism happening in Waterbury (culturally responsive leadership) chapter 5. I decided that the socio-historical context that Waterbury, i.e. the Great Migration, was encapsulated within had to be included; any analysis without it would be incomplete. These elements combined to help shape the direction of this life history case study. In the next chapter, I will elaborate upon the key theoretical concepts that I use in my analysis. Furthermore, I will explain my rationale and justification for the life history methodology that I use in this study.

Chapter 2

Decolonizing Educational Administration and Leadership: A Life History Approach

In Chapter One, I introduced Roald Campbell's (1979; 1981) analysis of the discipline of Educational Administration and its most prominent journal EAQ, which led to Pounder and Johnson's (2007) challenge to diversify research approaches within the discipline. This dissertation responds to Pounder and Johnson's (2007) challenge in two ways. First, my research approach differs from traditional positivist studies, in that it is historical. By varying in approach, I am able to ask different epistemological questions. Epistemological questions that investigate the ways in which individuals think (Jones, 1983), and cope (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Gramling & Carr, 2004). The life history methodology is most effective when the research problem is epistemological. The particular epistemological position of the life history methodology values the subjective, emic, and idiographic, wherein objective generalizations are not the goal (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). "Life history data disrupts the normal assumptions of what is 'known' by intellectuals in general and sociologists in particular…[and] life history forces a confrontation with other people's subjective perceptions" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 7). In this life history inquiry, knowledge, which is shared with me by participants in this study, is not devalued or discarded on the pretext that it may not align with the "normal assumptions" of educators—intellectuals and or sociologists.

The researcher's involvement as an interviewer, participant, and analyst influences how the research is defined. As an individual with their own epistemological stance, the researcher brings particular theories and interpretive schemes to their study. Moreover, in some cases, the research shares membership in the same cultural group as their participants—as is the case in this study (Dhunpath,

2000; Jones, 1983). Though this may be a challenge in some positivist studies and other more common methodological approaches found in Educational Administration; this approach is valued, accepted, and understood in life history methodology. Life history methodology allows for life experiences of individuals to be situated in a socio-historical context that links their personal experiences and actions to theoretical perspectives. Life history methodology represents a counterculture to traditional educational research methods: the ways we come to know including the strategies, paradigms, research models, grammars and theories in educational research (Dhunpath, 2000; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). "Life history, by its nature, asserts and insists that 'power' should listen to the people it claims to serve" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 8). I explore life history methodology in greater detail after I elaborate on the theoretical lenses that I used throughout my analysis.

Decolonizing theories. This study used Decolonizing theories as a part of a historical approach toward decolonizing educational administration, discourses, policies, and application.

Decolonizing Westernization

I utilize decolonizing theories and lenses as tools of analysis in this study. Furthermore, I argue for decolonizing practices toward policy reform and schooling practices. The history of schooling in the US, especially in reference to minoritized and urbanized communities, particularly African American communities, are ripe with a vast array of examples of imposing ideologies and discourses upon communities of color.

Decolonizing concepts aid my analysis by showing how accounts of history found in our educational systems, particularly accounts of history that folded into policy discourses, are constructed for the maintenance and advancement of Eurocentrism or Westernization (Mignolo, 2011). This historical past and its

connection to contemporary educational discourses, policies, and practices are associated with an inherent violence. Disengaging and untangling from this past and its incumbent violence along with its effects upon schooling—polices, discourses, and practices—are the decolonizing aims of this study. Decolonizing concepts and practices are useful in understanding what is occurring in Waterbury. The colonizing and imposing nature of turnaround policy and integrated governance (mayoral control) are enforced by educational leaders detached from the urban population they purport to serve. This detachment is represented mostly by a group of affluent White educators with epistemologies, politics, values and language styles that contrast those of the urban communities where schools are designated as failing. School failure is often determined based upon high-stakes exam scores: standardized tests in reading and math, as was the case in the Waterbury school district. However, these high-stakes examinations, do not account for larger historical relationships between communities, systemic inequity, and poverty. Moreover, urban[1] community discourses and their perspectives in regard to policy reform and practice are ignored. This can be seen in Waterbury, where urban community members are largely marginalized, silenced and shut out from decisions about the schools where their children attend.

Therefore, my decolonizing engagement is an approach toward rewriting the past in light of the present, which is critical to my analysis of urban education and educational reform strategies. This decolonizing engagement offers valuable information for educational leaders concerned with lessons from the past. Lessons that, for example, provide insight into how past errors (intentional and unintentional), are embedded in educational discourse, practice and pedagogy. I contend that what is occurring in Waterbury is colonizing—as poor Black and Brown

[1] I use the term *urban* hesitantly. I am sensitive to the coded insensitivities that it carries. The term, urban, however is in common usage within the academy discourse(s) that I engage. It is in this light in which I justify its usage.

communities and families are discursively framed as culturally deficient and subsequently treated as such. This colonization is evidenced by the way Eurocentric ideologies, policies, pedagogy, and leadership styles are imposed upon the urban community and Walsh Elementary and Crosby High School's the schools cited as failing and designated for turnaround in 2011.

Decolonizing Lenses in Education

The second dimension of how I have taken up Pounder and Johnson's (2007) challenge, to expand the research methodologies, theories, and practices within the discipline of Educational Administration, is that I draw extensively from research outside of the field of Educational Administration to frame and analyze the data in this study. However, two decolonizing examples that I draw upon from within the field of Educational Administration: Educational researchers Marie Battiste (2013) Decolonizing Education and Leigh Patel (2015) Decolonizing Educational Research. One dimension of Battiste's (2013) work called decolonizing education an "act of love" and noted that: "To understand education one must love it or care deeply about learning, and accept it as a legitimate process for growth and change. To accept education as it is, however, is to betray it" (p. 190). Patel (2015), in her project of decolonization in educational research, proposes, "education research through both meaning and matter has played a deleterious role in perpetuating and refreshing colonial relationships among people, practices, and land" (p. 12). This study relies heavily on historical principles and is framed through decolonizing theoretical lenses and practices.

Decolonizing Lenses Outside of Education

Notable decolonizing principles from outside of the field of education are also used in my study. Most notable are Walter Mignolo's (2012) description of epistemological imposition occurring when "European local knowledge and histories have been projected to global designs" (p. 17). It is an epistemic privilege of Eurocentrism's imposition of universal history as told from one local perspective—Western civilization—Westernization. Mignolo (2011) defined Westernization as "the expansion of the west" through the control of knowledge, which "disavows other forms of knowing and living" (p. 65-66). This epistemological imposition results in what Spivak (1988) termed epistemic violence. Epistemic violence refers to the violence inflicted upon the ways of knowing and understanding of indigenous and non-western peoples and cultures. Santos (2014) called this violence against culture and knowledge epistemicide. This epistemic violence or epistemicide, are the end results of an imposition of foreign epistemologies upon others.

Re-Envisioning an Educational Past

I use history to reflect upon the past and also to disrupt assumptions and understandings about who we are and how we have arrived at this historical moment (Fendler, 2010). In this chapter, I explain the components of decolonizing concepts and practices and historical methods' importance to this study's analysis: both (decolonizing and history) are used to reflect and disrupt written historical accounts about the past. The historical accounts that I focus on in this study are the Great Migration (Wilkerson, 2010) broadly, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 (ESEA) in particular. ESEA was the most significant and impactful educational legislation ever passed in the history of the United States (Stein, 2004) and was passed on the heels of the Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools

in the Brown v. Board of Education decision 1954. From ESEA 1965 emerged the most significant contemporary educational reforms. Reauthorized versions of ESEA (1965) included No Child Left Behind (2002), Race to the Top (2009), as well as others, but most importantly, as pertains to this inquiry, the turnaround policy implemented in Waterbury in 2011. All of these educational policies and reform efforts are all renditions of ESEA 1965 (Gamson et al., 2015; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015; Stein, 2004; US Dept. of Education, 2010) and they all stem from the same funding source, Title I.

Historical discourses of marginalization, such as the culture of poverty, shaped equity-oriented policies such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 (ESEA) and Title I (Stein, 2004). These discourses and actions are fundamental to the turnaround policy that descended upon the Waterbury school district in 2011. In this inquiry, turnaround is analyzed through a lens that considers the historical culture of policy discourses found within ESEA 1965. These historical accounts and reflections deemed policy beneficiaries, i.e. African Americans their culture and their values, as deficient and culpable. These deficit and culpable accounts of policy beneficiaries are disrupted with this study's analysis that consists of decolonizing concepts and lenses and contrasting historical accounts.

Silenced Concerns in Waterbury

> It was never the case that the subaltern could not speak: rather that the dominant would not listen. (Young, 2004, p. 5)

One of the goals of this inquiry is to learn whether or not the Waterbury school district was engaged in silencing the minoritized Black and Brown members in its district. The Waterbury school district consists of over 85 percent African American and Latinx students. A parent-led advocacy agency accused the district of retaliating against them for complaints filed with the State of Connecticut's

Department of Education (Samuel, 3013). The district is also mentioned in a Federal racial discrimination case in the United States District Court in Connecticut. In March 2016 the Federal Court in Connecticut found enough merit in the racial discrimination case and sent the case to trial (United States District Court & District of Connecticut, 2016). I used decolonizing theoretical lenses to analyze whether the educational leadership in the Waterbury school district was involved in silencing its minoritized and Black and Brown community members and parents concerned about new educational policies and strategies.

Decolonizing theories and practices are a response to Eurocentric critical theories and practices that ignored issues pertaining to race, gender, and colonization. For example, Young (2004) posits Marxism, as well as many other critical theories, as being problematic due to: "its implacable whiteness, its Eurocentrism, an orientation most clearly evident in the accounts of history offered in its name" (p. 4). Young (2004) suggested that Césaire, Fanon, Memmi, Cabral and others' engagement with oppositional discourses to White supremacy/Eurocentric discourses; are pivotal constructs to the development of decolonizing theories and practices.

The Violence of Westernization/Rewesternization

> Given the colonial hand we have been dealt, the Indigenous, racialized, and the colonized scholar cannot be anything but anticolonial. We must be engaged in the project of decolonization for our own intellectual survival. (Dei, 2015, p. 346)

Walter Mignolo's (2011; 2012) framework for decolonization was introduced in the beginning of chapter 2 in this study. Perspectives that center lived experiences of race, colonization, and indigeneity, as oppositional to Westernization and White supremacy, are key aspects of decolonizing practices. This framework is integral for

those who have been minoritized: those in whose—racialized, colonized, and indigenized—lives are impacted by patriarchy, hegemony, and marginalization. Mignolo's (2011; 2012) framework "was intended to decolonize the imperial idea of universal history, to contribute to legitimizing the pluriversality of knowing, seeing, [and] believing" (Mignolo, 2012, p. xiv). Walter Mignolo (2012) noted that an important aspect of the epistemic privilege of Eurocentrism is due to its imposition of universal history as told from one local perspective—Western civilization—Westernization.

Westernization as Educational Policy and Schooling

Mignolo (2011) defined Westernization as "the expansion of the west" through the control of knowledge, which "disavows other forms of knowing and living" (p. 65-66). Mignolo (2011) spoke of various forms of resistance against westernization. As a result, cultural shifts and other westernized and Eurocentric designs have ensued. Mignolo (2011) called this new movement of shifting and redesigning, Rewesternization. Rewesternization is moved by two impulses, the first being: "is its (Westernization's) own internal crisis of mismanagement, miscalculation, and misunderstanding" (p. 68). Mignolo (2011) argues that the invasion of Iraq and the Wall Street collapse serve as examples of this first crisis. The second impulse of Rewesternization "is to understand and repair the consequences of Western aggression" (p. 68). Mignolo (2011) argued that decolonization "is the horizon and thinking and being that originated as response" to westernization and its imperial designs (p. xiii). Decolonization began to take shape with Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fannon, Third World intellectuals, with Third World epistemologies and sensibilities (Mignolo, 2011; Young, 2004). In this inquiry, I argue that the culture of education policy discourses embedded within equity-oriented policies such as ESEA, NCLB,

RTTP, and turnaround and are fundamentally westernization / rewesternization projects.

The Culture of Educational Policy

This study analyzed the Waterbury School District through lenses of decolonization and historical methods. I conceptualize poverty-oriented or equity-oriented policies such as turnaround and reform strategies such as mayoral control as indicative of the epistemic privilege afforded by the westernization / rewesternization framework. Westernized policy makers have been conceptualized as normal, while Black and Brown recipients of equity-oriented policy, have had their culture and values deemed deficient and in need of correction. "Characterizations of policy beneficiaries as deviant and government institutions as corrective, articulated at the time of policy-making, are woven into policy mechanisms for funding allocations and service provision" (Stein, 2004, p. xiii). As a result, educational policies in the form of westernized global designs are created and enacted as corrective actions in order to fix deviant individuals.

The westernized/rewesternized design of school policy. As previously stated, this inquiry argues that the culture of education policy discourses embedded within equity-oriented policies such as ESEA, NCLB, RTTP, and turnaround are westernization / rewesternization projects. ESEA and Title I are the largest federal education policies intended for impoverished children (Stein, 2004). Title I is the compensatory agent that funds the turnaround policy (State of Connecticut, 2010; Stein, 2004). Stein (2004) conducted a case study of Title I and ESEA and its subsequent re-authorizations over four decades. Stein's (2004) analysis began with the initial authorization of ESEA in 1965. Her analysis extended across several decades of ESEA/Title I reauthorizations, which extends to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) version enacted under President George W. Bush in 2002. Race to the Top

(RTTP) in 2009 and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 2015, both signed into law by President Barak Obama, are also ESEA reauthorizations and funded by Title I (Gamson et al., 2015; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015; McGuinn, 2006; US Dept. of Education, 2010).

Collective resistance and new pathways. My goal in using westernization/rewesternization theoretical lenses is to rethink equity-oriented policies and funding sources. ESEA 1965 and Title I and their contemporary educational reform offshoots such as turnaround 2010-2011 are a part of a westernizing ideology. I am encouraging a rethinking of equity-oriented policies and their reform efforts as two sides of the same coin (Mignolo, 2011). These concepts, westernization/rewesternization, allow us to view ESEA 1965 as a westernization project of controlling knowledge and disavowing "other forms of knowing and living" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 66). Contemporary educational reform efforts such as NCLB, RTTP, ESSA turnaround and mayoral control are positioned as rewesternization projects. These rewesternization projects are acknowledgments of westernization's "own internal crisis of mismanagement, miscalculation, and misunderstanding" and attempts of repairing westernized aggression and violence (Mignolo, 2011, p. 69).

The goal in making the connection between policy and the broader westernization/rewesternization leads us to the need for decolonization. Decolonization is "the horizon of thinking and being that originated as response" to White designs—global designs (a universal culture, a universal value system and a universal way of being in the world) (Mignolo, 2011, p. xiii). Decolonization is an adequate response to westernizing and rewesternizing projects. Decolonization and decolonizing practices are a response to westernization's imposition upon epistemologies and sensibilities of minoritized intellectuals (Mignolo, 2011). The following section in this chapter will elaborate on the methodological decisions I

made as a researcher, the purpose of the study, as well as the relationship between the tenets of life history, the goals for this study, and my theoretical commitments.

Procedures for this Study

This study relies on fairly conventional historical research protocols: an analysis of archived documents, interviews, and life stories. However, because I used decolonizing approaches to analyze historical materials, the analysis is less conventional in the fields of Educational Administration/Leadership research. The documents I generated for this study consist of the federal government's turnaround policy that I accessed from a government website and the State of Connecticut's request to petition the government to implement turnaround in the Waterbury school district (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2010; Pryor, 2013; State of Connecticut, 2010; US Dept. of Education, 2010). I compared and analyzed the criteria for turnaround as outlined in the federal policy and the claim by the Waterbury school district in their petition. These documents and information are pillars of the study and are analyzed as such.

After analyzing these foundational policy archival documents, I used the same procedures with other archived documents; (board of education meeting minutes, press releases, social media content, court records) from the Waterbury school district and local media reports about the strategies, processes and interpretations of turnaround (Electors of the City of Waterbury, 1902, 2002; Gardner, 2016; Guest, 2011; Leduff & Herszenhorn, 2001; Naples, 2014; Puffer, 2016a, 2016a; Samuel, 2013; United States District Court & District of Connecticut, 2016; Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013; Williamson, 2015). The documents and media reports that I collected spanned the years of 2011-2016. Following my analysis, I then designated three key players most relevant to educational leadership in the Waterbury School District:

1) Erik Brown, the Walsh Elementary School principal when turnaround was implemented in 2010-2011;

2) Kathleen Ouellette, the superintendent of the Waterbury school district;

3) Neal O'Leary, the mayor, and the ex officio chairman of the Waterbury Board of Education, a status enabled by the Charter of the City of Waterbury.

The document analysis, specifically the board of education meeting minutes, propelled me to various other school leaders, board members, community members, parents, students, and activists impacted or otherwise concerned with turnaround school policies. Many of whom I talked to at length over a period of two years and are listed as participants in this inquiry. I collected and analyzed media reports and school board-of-education meeting minutes from the time turnaround was implemented in 2010-2011. I centered this study, that is comprised of the compilation and analysis of policy documents, media reports, and the school-board minutes, on the roles of educational leaders in Waterbury. In this case, the educational leaders include the mayor, superintendent, Board of Education members, Erik Brown, the principal of Walsh School, and members of the urban community in Waterbury.

Waterbury in Context: The Past as a Prologue to the Present

In addition to the aforementioned documents and as part of this larger life-history case, I analyzed historical archives such as history books, articles and local Waterbury library (Silas Bronson Library) reference materials to help better understand Waterbury's socio-political, economic, and cultural history (Brooke, 1985; Dew, 2016; Guest, 2011; Leduff & Herszenhorn, 2001; Rehm, 2016; Ryan, 1992; Wilkerson, 2010). This broad historical socio-cultural analysis of Waterbury, that included the Great Migration thesis (Wilkerson, 2010), provided context regarding the industrial and manufacturing boom that hit Waterbury in the early twentieth-century that culminated with various ethnic groups' migration to the city (Brooke, 1985; Guest, 2011; Leduff & Herszenhorn, 2001).

Insights from the People

The participants who took part in this study were chosen organically. Some of the participants I knew prior to this study; others I did not. Initially, I planned on studying Black male principles in schools where there was a significant amount of Black male students. I knew there was one such school in Waterbury—Walsh elementary. I reached out to a popular basketball coach in Waterbury that I thought could lead me to the principal at Walsh. The basketball coach updated me on the current challenges that the school was facing. According to the basketball coach, Walsh Elementary School along with its African American male principal at the time, Erik Brown, was embroiled in turmoil. After following up on leads I gathered from the coach; I learned that Walsh was cited for turnaround, and the mayor was deeply involved in making decisions for the district in general, and that Erik Brown had been controversially removed from Walsh Elementary School.

The coach recommended that I speak to a community advocate Athena Wagner whom he knew was well informed on the occurrences at Walsh. The coach contacted Athena Wagner on my behalf and she agreed to speak with me. I contacted Wagner who provided the main entry point into this study. Prior to my engagement with this study and leading up to this inquiry I had not known Ms. Wagner.

Ms. Wagner has a history of community activism and comes from a family of activists in Waterbury. Wagner, during the turnaround period at Walsh, was the president of the school governance council (SGC). The State of Connecticut designated SGC's as liaisons between school administrators and parents in turnaround schools. Conversations with Wagner led me to federal, state and local documents on the turnaround policy, as well as petitions and implementation strategies for turnaround in the State of Connecticut and Waterbury specifically.

In addition to Wagner, I contacted Reginald Beamon Sr., who was someone I know very well. His son, Reginald Beamon Jr., was a friend and a classmate of mine in elementary school and in high school. I contacted Beamon Sr. because as I began researching literature on mayoral control and the integrated governance element of school administration; there seemed to be a discrepancy between the research literature on mayoral control and the governance structure taking place in Waterbury. Beamon Sr. a seasoned and respect politician in Waterbury and the State of Connecticut provided some of the missing contexts.

As my questions began to shift away from integrated governance and more towards the turnaround policy, Beamon Sr. recommended that I contact the two African American members on the board of education. The two Board of Education members I had not known personally, however, I had hoped to include their insights into my study. Though they both agreed to speak to me, I could not reach them for

some time. But after I spoke with Beamon Sr. he told me to call them because they could answer, in depth, some of the concerns I had.

Of the two board members, Karen Harvey and Juanita Hernandez, I contacted Karen Harvey first. They both provided significant insight into my document analysis of the Board of Education meeting minutes. There were specific questions that the Board of Education meeting minutes raised for me that the board members were able to clarify and add context. They were also pivotal in helping me understand how mayoral control evolved in Waterbury. Harvey and Hernandez also provided specific examples of discussions and debates that occurred amongst board members, along with the mayor. For example, they both provided examples of instances where their perspectives were silenced and marginalized. Additionally, Harvey and Hernandez expressed the frustration they felt when speaking on behalf of the Black and Brown communities in Waterbury in front of a mostly White school administration: The Mayor, the superintendent and 7-8 of 10 Board of Education members.

I also interviewed Dr. Virgil Franklin, the first African American principal in the city of Waterbury and the Walsh elementary school principal from 1973-1986. After hearing that my study was partially about Walsh elementary school; Dr. Franklin's son, Dakar Franklin, a childhood friend of mine, suggested that I speak to his dad. Although I was a friend of Dakar, Dr. Franklin's son, prior to our interview I had never met or spoken to Dr. Franklin. Initially, I was skeptical of interviewing Dr. Franklin because I did not see the significance. I had heard of Dr. Franklin the principal, and by most accounts, he was described as a beloved principal at Walsh and the school thrived under his leadership. I decided to interview Dr. Franklin because I wanted to learn more from him about his leadership style, his work with White administrators, and his influence on students. Mr. Franklin's account provided pertinent historical insight and analysis to this study.

Denoris Crosby, a seasoned educator, former High School principal, and a retired State of Connecticut Board of Education administrator was also a part of those I interviewed. Shortly after the turnaround policy was implemented at Walsh and Erik Brown was fired, Mr. Crosby was asked to come out of retirement and temporarily act as principal. I did not know Mr. Crosby personally but coincidently his niece is a childhood friend of mine. Mr. Crosby's niece Tameka Lott, MD was also interviewed in this study because she was a student during Mr. Franklin's tenure at Walsh; today she is a medical doctor. Dr. Lott the niece of Mr. Crosby reached out to him on my behalf and he agreed to talk with me.

I also interviewed a parent and her son (who in 2017 was a college student) who gave their testimony of Erik Brown as their elementary school principal while at Walsh. They were chosen to be a part of the study after I learned of their relationship to Walsh and Erik Brown, during casual conversations with them. There was also a former city employee that gave an account of the principalship at Walsh before Erik Brown arrived. The aforementioned individuals are the main pillars in this study. Below I list them all numerically and provide additional information as well. I also provided public pictures of them, as many of them are public figures.

I conducted in-depth interviews with these participants over a period of two years, which included multiple follow-up interviews. Most of these interviews were semi-structured and audio recorded. Dr. Virgil Franklin was the exception; he requested that I email him a list of questions, which I did and he emailed me his responses to each question, so his interview was conducted in writing. I later followed up with Dr. Franklin for clarification as needed over the telephone. As for the remaining recorded interviews, I transcribed them in most cases right after the interview concluded. I later looked at the transcripts for concepts, streams of thoughts, and decolonizing connections.

The participants in this study are people who are affiliated with Waterbury schools in a variety of ways. I interviewed members of educational leadership in Waterbury, retired and current. I interviewed a respected and seasoned local politician and community organizer in Waterbury. I interviewed former school district employees, Walsh school parents, and former Walsh school students. I decided to focus more on Walsh Elementary and I intend to revisit Crosby High School at a future date. Those I interviewed in this study are the following 11 individuals:

1) Dr. Virgil Franklin, the first African American principal in the city of Waterbury and the first African American principal at Walsh elementary. Dr. Franklin was principal at Walsh from 1973-1986. Franklin is also a graduate of Crosby high school, class of 1958. These two schools, Walsh Elementary and Crosby High Schools are the focus of this study. Walsh and Crosby were deemed failing and low-achieving, which led to their being cited for turnaround in 2010-2011 by the Waterbury public school district. Dr. Franklin provides valuable historical insight into Walsh and Crosby. Franklin is also a product of The Great Migration (Wilkerson, 2010) as his parents fled the Jim Crow south in search for work and a better life. Franklin's mother was from Virginia and his dad Alabama. Both of Franklin's parents came to Waterbury in the 1930s where they met and married; Franklin was born in Waterbury.
2) Tameka Lott M.D. grew up in Waterbury's north end like most of us (connected to this study and where the turnaround school children live) with enough means to get by. Though some would consider us impoverished; we never thought of ourselves in that way. Tameka attended Walsh elementary during Mr. Franklin's tenure as principal. Dr. Lott looked to Dr. Franklin as a father figure and as an individual that contributed to her love for education. That love for education guided her path and resulted in a

career as a medical doctor. Similar to Dr. Franklin, Dr. Lott's parents also migrated from the Jim Crow south for Waterbury in search of a better life. Lott's mother was from South Carolina and her father from Georgia.

3) Mr. Denoris Crosby (no relation to Crosby High School in Waterbury) is originally from North Carolina and a by-product of segregated schools from K-16. Crosby came to Connecticut after he graduated from North Carolina Central University, a historically black college, in1956, with a degree in biology. Mr. Crosby is an example of another aspect of The Great Migration; while all of the individuals fled Jim Crow in search of a better life, the circumstances varied. Along with sharecroppers and Blacks with little to no education; other professional Blacks had to leave the Jim Crow south in order to find work in their field (Rehm, 2016; Wilkerson, 2010). Unable to find work in his field, in 1957 Mr. Crosby came to work as a biology researcher at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Crosby's work at Yale opened the door for him to teach high school biology at a mixed school in Bridgeport, Connecticut beginning in the mid-1960s. Mr. Crosby eventually became principal at one of the most challenging urban high schools in New Haven, Connecticut 1980-1985, before eventually taking a position as an administrator at central office with the state department of education where he retired in 1995.
4) Athena Wagner: Wagner was a member of the local NAACP and president of the School Governance Council (SGC) at Walsh during Erik Brown's tenure. The school governance council was a part of the state education reform law passed by the Connecticut State Legislature and signed into law by the governor of Connecticut on October 4, 2010 (Public Act 10-111). The school governance council was established to aid the lowest performing schools in the state. Specifically, those cited for turnaround. One of the aims of the

SGC was to build collaborative relationships between students, parents, school staff, and community leaders in order to enhance student achievement (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2010). Ms. Wagner is a lifelong member of the Waterbury's north end, where many of the Walsh and Crosby students live. Ms. Wagner's mom, Dorothy Stewart, was a well-respected African American community advocate and former Waterbury Board of Education member. Ms. Wagner is a vocal adversary of many of the districts unjust policies and reform strategies. She appeared on local media talk shows, TV and radio has organized community rallies, spearheaded social-media communities, and spoken out against racism and discriminatory hiring practices within the district.

5) Reginald Beamon, Sr., now retired, was a Connecticut State Legislator for 20 years and a former local Waterbury elected official. Mr. Beamon is a community activist and organizer. Beamon founded a non-profit organization in Waterbury designed to help inner-city youth and young males with career goals and job training. Beamon is also a political science professor at a local community college. My document analysis of Mayoral Control in education seemed inconsistent with what was occurring in Waterbury. Mr. Beamon's insights into the specifics of Waterbury politics, especially as it related to the City's Governance Charter, were insightful and provided me with understanding regarding the unique relationship that the Mayor of Waterbury has with the Board of Education.
6) Jonell Pendarvis. Ms. Pendarvis is a mother of a son who attended Walsh Elementary School. Her son was a student at Walsh from K-2 (prior to Erik Brown's tenure) and was in grades 3-5 with Mr. Brown as principal. Ms. Pendarvis noted the impact Erik Brown had on her son once he arrived at Walsh.

7) Kelly Quinn. Kelly Quinn is a White female of Irish and Italian descent. Ms. Quinn was employed by the city of Waterbury and worked at Walsh prior to Erik Brown's tenure. Ms. Quinn gave incredible insight into conversations that she had with White administrators at Walsh. These conversations between Whites included negative perceptions and demeaning remarks made in regard to Walsh students; 95 percent of which are students of color. Ms. Quinn explained to me that White administrators and teachers at Walsh were comfortable making explicitly racist remarks and framing minoritized students in a deficit manner while talking with other White people. Ms. Quinn noted however, that these White educators and administrators at Walsh spoke differently around their Black and Latinx colleagues.
8) Mrs. Juanita Hernandez and Ms. Karen Harvey. Mrs. Hernandez and Ms. Harvey are current Waterbury Board of Education members. They were both able to expound on public records and questions that I had from my document analysis of school Board of Education meeting's minutes. Their policy explanations were extremely insightful. As members of the Waterbury Board of Education they provided insight into intimate debates and discussions with their colleagues.
9) Dr. Diane Clare-Kearney, PhD, is the former K-12 Supervisor of Equity Programming in the Manchester Public School District in Manchester, Connecticut. Dr. Kearney was interviewed because in 2008 she authored a racial balance plan that reported that Black and Brown boys were five times more likely and Black and Brown girls, three-times more likely to be labeled special education as compared to their White counterparts. The report also noted that Black/Latinx students in the Manchester Public School district were suspended three-times more than White students for similar

infractions. These findings coincided with the Manchester Public School District being found in violation of a racial balance requisite as mandated by the State of Connecticut. A state audit determined that the Manchester School District had an imbalance in the population of Black and Brown students across schools within the district. During the time the report was published, Dr. Kathleen Ouellette was the superintendent of the Manchester Public Schools. Dr. Ouellette left Manchester and became the superintendent in Waterbury. Dr. Ouellette was the superintendent in Waterbury when turnaround was implemented in 2010. Dr. Kearney offers some insights into how it was to work under a district ran by Dr. Ouellette.

10) Gerron Pendarvis, college student. Gerron was a student at Walsh elementary school with Erik Brown from grades 3-5th. Gerron talks about his schooling experience at Walsh before (K-2) and after before Brown became principal (3-5).

The following are images of 8 key individuals that participated in this study including Erik Brown and the Mayor who were not interviewed. Juanita Hernandez (Waterbury school board member) and Dr. Diane Kearney are not pictured. There were no public images of Mrs. Hernandez on the Board of Education website. And Dr. Kearney's conversations were not included in this study.

Figure 1: Who was chosen and why? Pictures of study participants.

Who was Chosen and Why?

I chose these eleven people to interview and arrived at each decision through different means. Some of these individuals I knew, some I did not know and were referred to me by others. Each person had a unique relationship to Walsh Elementary, Crosby High School, or the Waterbury School District and the communities the district served in general. Many of these individuals have a personal narrative that is couched in the African American legacy of The Great Migration from the Jim Crow South to the North because of the plentiful manufacturing jobs available in the early to mid-twentieth century. Kelly Quinn, whose Italian mom and Irish father migrated to Waterbury for similar socio-economic reasons. However, the

socio-political and historical reasons as to why they migrated differ from those of the African Americans that fled the Jim Crow south.

I elected to do semi-structured interviews and in some cases semi-structured life-story interviews. This method allowed me to elicit a range of different perspectives and follow up on any insights provided by my informants. As the focus of my study began to sharpen, I was able to follow up with more targeted questions such as "What do you think were the main influences and consequences of educational leadership in Waterbury with regards the political dynamics of 'turnaround' and mayoral intervention?" Moreover, as I gained more information about the politics of his removal, I asked specifically, for thoughts and insights into Erik Brown as a principal.

Erik Brown, although a key character in the story of Walsh and Waterbury School District, was not interviewed or asked to participate. Although his participation would have been an asset to the study, it was not plausible to include Erik Brown as he is currently engaged in an on-going federal court battle against members of the Waterbury School District. However, I was informed that he may be willing to participate in future studies regarding turnaround, his tenure at Walsh, and to share his version of what occurred with the Waterbury Board of Education and the superintendent. I will elaborate more on the utility and value of life stories and their placement within life history research as a case study, later in this chapter.

Case Study in Life History

This case study examined the educational administration, policies, and leadership practices of the Waterbury School District. This inquiry is based, in part, upon life stories from urban community members, who were constituents of the Waterbury School District. The historical aspect of this study is based on life stories of people in Waterbury, Connecticut. Additionally, this study is informed by

interviews, and document analysis such as school board minutes, and local media stories. This study can be described as the case of a school district in Connecticut intending to turn around two schools designated as failing and low achieving. Low achievement and failure were based on standardized test scores. These schools scored in the lowest five-percent, statewide, on math and reading exams (State of Connecticut, 2010). Yin (2014) noted that the case study is used "to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena" (p. 4). This study has some of the characteristics of Yin's (2014) description of an explanatory case study. He argued, an explanatory case study's "purpose is to explain how or why some condition came to be (e.g., how or why some sequence of events occurred or did not occur)" (Yin, 2014, p. 238).

Case study is a common research technique used to study historical phenomena. It is a technique used across a multitude of disciplines including education, business, anthropology, and nursing, etc. The case study technique is beneficial across all fields and disciplines because it allows the researcher a methodological approach to understanding complex social phenomena (Yin, 2014). A case study allows investigators to extract a case such as the study of individual, group, cultural, or organizational behavior while retaining a "holistic and real-world perspective" (Yin, 2014, p. 4). However, a case study is not a method in the methodological sense. Various methods and methodologies can be used to do case study research such as ethnographies, interviews and also quantitative methods (Glesne, 2011). The method used in this case study is life history methodology. The life history methodology fits well with a key aim of the case study, to retain a "holistic and real-world perspective" (Yin, 2014, p. 4). Gramling and Carr (2004) pointed out that life history was "a holistic, qualitative account of life that emphasizes the experiences of the individual and how the person copes. It links experiences to subsequent actions and theoretical perspectives with personal

experiences" (p. 208). I determined that the case study technique and the life history methodology were complimentary for my aims in this study.

Researchers choose to study, what they believe to be a phenomenon, that which will generate the most knowledge and interest. As stated by Dyson and Genishi (2005), "cases are constructed, not found, as researchers make decisions about how to angle their vision on places overflowing with potential stories of human experience" (p. 2). As such I am constructing a case to be made for Waterbury, Connecticut. For this study, the case is defined as school leadership and governance and community relations in two urban, majority-Black and Brown schools, Walsh Elementary and Crosby High Schools, in Waterbury, Connecticut from 2010-2016; although the primary focus in this dissertation is Walsh.

Life History Case Studies in Educational Leadership

This life history approach to research is conceived and organized differently from much educational research reports in Educational Administration that I am familiar with. As such this inquiry will read differently from other literature found in the majority of Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy Studies. However, this life story method of educational research is not unprecedented. Narrative case studies are not uncommon (Yin, 2014). Dan McAdams, Northwestern University professor in the School of Education and Social Policy, and founder of the Foley Center—an interdisciplinary program which incorporates life history methods—has been awarded close to five million dollars in grant funding using life history methods in educational research (Dan McAdams, 2008).

Also, Donald McAdams (2000) (not be confused with Dan McAdams of Northwestern University just mentioned) conducted a study that centered his personal experience as an elected Houston School Board member that spanned twelve years. This case included numerous references from local news articles that

corroborated Donald McAdam's (2000) personal stories as a three-time elected school board member (McAdams, 2000; Yin, 2014). "The result is one of the most readable but also well-documented case studies that readers will encounter" (Yin, 2014, p. 108).

Zigler and Muenchow's (1994) historiographical account of the early development and growth of the Head Start program, which turned into one of the most successful institutions in our educational system. Robert Yin (2014) called Zigler and Muenchow's (1994) case study "exceptionally insightful [due to] Zigler's personal experiences with the program, beginning with his role as its first director" (Yin, 2014, p. 119). Similar to McAdams' (2000) case study that used documents and newspaper articles to corroborate his life story and experiences; Zigler and Muenchow's (1994) case used Zigler's life history and his story to highlight the evolution of the Head Start program. The case also used interviews of educators affiliated with the Head Start program. This integration of various sources of evidence made a compelling case for Head Start, which resulted in "a winning combination: a most readable but well-documented book" (Yin, 2014, p. 119). My life history case study has the same characteristics as these two cases (McAdams, 2000) and (Zigler & Muenchow, 1994): life history—stories, experiences, document analysis, and interviews. This life history case study is designed to meet Campbell (1979) and Pounder and Johnson's (2007) challenge to push further the call for more diverse epistemologies—methodologies and epistemologies—into the research repertoire of Educational Administration.

Life History Research: Stories from Connecticut

> Speaking in and through stories then becomes a way to engage self-transformation a kind of rite of passage…I am aware of the value of story and its ability to transform my research, and resist the Eurocentric frameworks that privileged other peoples' stories and analyses… (Battiste, 2013, p. 17)

The life history methodology as used in this inquiry is a collection of stories, including my own, from current or former residents of Waterbury, Connecticut. The life stories add culturally relevant information into the study of educational leadership. My approach to the life history method is to humanize the experiences of African Americans, Latinx's and others in Waterbury, by chronicling a sample of experiences. Moreover, the recording of these narratives works to fill gaps in educational history and in research on Black and Latinx/urban education in the United States.

Historical Study and Life History Methodology

According to several interdisciplinary scholars, including Clough (1992) and Goodson and Sikes (2001), all representations of reality—even statistical representations, are narratively constructed and as a result are creative constructs. Life history is useful and effective with multiple theoretical concepts. Life history methodology is used throughout qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods studies. Life historians work from the language individuals use to express and define their lives (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Jones (1983) called upon a qualitative approach to social analysis using life history and regarded it as a unique tool used to examine and analyze the subjective experience of individuals and their construction of the social world. Life historians examine how individuals narrate their experiences and perceptions of their lived social context (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). "Of all research

methods, it [life history methodology] perhaps comes closest to allowing the researcher access to how individuals create and portray the social world around them" (Jones, 1983, p. 147). Rubby Dhunpath (2000) suggests boldly that the life history methodology "approach is probably the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the intimate intersection of institutional and individual experience in the postmodern world" (p. 544). The life history methodology is an interpretive framework, which reveals the human experience, through personal accounts and prioritizes individual explanations of actions.

This prioritization of the personal is in opposition to methods that filter and sort responses into predetermined theoretical categories (Jones, 1983). Life history methodology is epistemologically grounded in the everyday, common sense world (common to those who reside in their worlds) and is ontologically rooted within the constructions and explanations members of that world ascribe to their reality and actions (Jones, 1983). An interpretive lens uses, as its fundamental subject matter, the taken for granted, everyday-life world problematized by self-reflective individuals interacting from within it (Denzin, 1983).

Life Stories, Life History and Coping

Gramling and Carr (2004) outlined the various dimensions and methodological considerations of life history, including coping. They pointed out that life history was "a holistic, qualitative account of life that emphasizes the experiences of the individual and how the person copes. It links experiences to subsequent actions and theoretical perspectives with personal experiences" (Gramling & Carr, 2004, p. 208). There is a growing body of interdisciplinary literature—psychology, philosophy, and the natural sciences—acknowledging the value of narratives (Dhunpath, 2000; Dan McAdams, 2008). Northwestern University's the Foley Center:

for the study of lives, and its School of Education and Social Policy is centered on life stories and life history methodology. Dan McAdams, professor and former chair of the Department of Psychology at Northwestern University, developed the research program for the Foley Center, which brings together perspectives from personality psychology, life-course developmental research, qualitative sociology, biography, life story, and cultural studies (Dan McAdams, 2008). According to Dan McAdams' curriculum vitae, from 1997 to present, he has been awarded close to five million dollars in grant funding for the Foley center. Also, there are mixed methods studies that use qualitative life history methods along with quantitative methods. One PhD student in the department of criminal justice at Michigan State University informed me in a personal conversation that she, along with her advisor, is working on a life history mixed methods research report, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and soon to be published.

In 1983 interdisciplinary feminist scholars from Anthropology, History, German, Linguistics, and Literary Criticism—in affiliation with the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Feminist Studies—founded the Personal Narratives Group (Group, 1989; King, 1991). The Personal Narratives group engaged in a collective endeavor to explore woman's personal narratives, reflections, and intellectual histories that went into the creation of feminist theory (Dhunpath, 2000). The Personal Narrative Group (1989) contends that an individual's own experience is a valid part of her/his knowledge, and valid within the research process when it is subject to public critical appraisal.

Coping and time encapsulated. In the historiographical research literature, biographies, oral histories and life stories are distinguished from life histories. Oral history is a method in which memory and experience can be captured for future generations, a component of life history methodology. Life history methodology is broader in scope and more holistic; it seeks to capture how individuals cope. It links

these actions (coping) and personal experiences with theoretical perspectives. Life history is also distinguished by a framework of time (Gramling & Carr, 2004). My life history encapsulated the timeframe from 2010-2016. Goodson and Sikes (2001) acknowledged that there is not one proper way to write historical research, they argued for life stories as the starting point for life history work. Life stories, such as mine in chapter one, gave the story of how we—my family and others from the urban community that I was raised in—coped—in a new environment, Waterbury, upon fleeing the Jim Crow South. These life stories were removed from life experiences, interpreted and made into text. A life story is a rendition of a lived experience, an interpretive layer, but the move to life history needs additional stories and context and further interpretations, such as interviews, documents and theory, which adds richness.

Life stories and life history as creating identity. According to Goodson and Sikes (2001) when people tell their life stories as informants in life history research they become socially organized biographical objects. They are telling their stories in a certain way for a certain purpose. Those who tell life stories are guided by their environments, which helps construct the identity that they wish to re-present (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). This happens in all social situations, not just in the context of research. As such Goodson and Sikes (2001) asserted "life history research provides [opportunity] to tell your life story, to craft a narrative that links together events, experiences, and perceptions, [it] is the explicit opportunity to create an identity" (p. 41). An example of the educational value of life stories is in my own life story as part of this life history project (Chapter One).

While, telling that story was therapeutic it was also extremely difficult. I had to dig deep into myself and make the choice to reveal parts of my life that left me shy and vulnerable. The process of writing my life story was like an emotional rollercoaster. I learned some things about myself and about my family; other things

that I had taken for granted were seen in a different light. I found aspects of my life and my story both fascinating and devastating. I was explicit about some things I came to know, and there were other things that I did not reveal. This approach of using life stories to construct life history promises to be educational for everyone involved: those who share their own life stories, those who listen to the life stories, and also for me as a researcher.

Identifying urban life in Connecticut. The construction of life history is a joint creation between the life historian and the storytellers. Life history methodology is appropriate for this inquiry because it serves my political, educational and theoretical commitments. Those commitments, are in part, to honor the history of African Americans and other minoritized groups outside or on the margins of the historical record in Waterbury. Those that helped construct this particular life history of Waterbury are part of a minoritized and marginalized group of educators, politicians, activists, parents and students and the broader urban community of Latinx (predominantly Puerto Rican) and African Americans many of whose ancestors migrated to Waterbury for a better life. Also, research in Educational Leadership is enhanced with the inclusion of this historical knowledge. The study is situated in Connecticut, a place often thought of for its affluence and wealth. Rarely do people associate Connecticut, its cities and neighborhoods or places with Black and Brown families as impoverished or as having schools that are failing. These life stories of people living in the shadows of Connecticut's affluence are brought to the center and amplified. In life history studies, interviews are designed to not only add shape to some feature of life experience but to create an identity (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Munro, 1998). In essence, this life history seeks to create an identity for a reality in Connecticut that is tucked away. If the best way to avoid a problem is to ignore it; then perhaps the best way to remedy a problem is to first, acknowledge it.

According to Goodson and Sikes (2001) life historians are creating and crafting stories when they design and write their research. But it is not only life historians who are implicated in creating/crafting stories in their research. All oresearchers , no matter their approach or method, be it: quantitative, qualitative or historical, are engaged in storytelling. Scholars, Clough (1992) and Goodson and Sikes (2001) have posited, all representations of reality, even statistical representations, are narrative constructs and as a result creative constructs. Similar to scholars engaged in other methodological approaches, life historians re-present life stories as told to them within the context of their own frames of reference. In re-telling the stories shared with me and in my analysis of them, I, as a researcher, maintain awareness of the way I am implicated.

Life Stories and life history as pedagogy. Some scholars advocate for life history as a pedagogical tool, asserting that it can be a cathartic and liberating research tool (Dhunpath, 2000; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Life histories provide stories of people, struggling through real problems and other situations. They offer liberation from indifferent and disengaged researchers and research approaches to research generated by samples, and faceless subjects without histories and social circumstances.

As humans in general, and researchers and educators in particular; our human fallibility and vulnerabilites constantly surface. More importantly we are reminded that teaching, learning and improving the human condition should be the primary endeavor of academics and researchers (Dhunpath, 2000; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Curriculum historian, Ivor Goodson (1992) argued because teaching is personal, it is critical to know the type of person the teacher is. I argue, that it is equally as critical to know the life histories of those in educational leadership. Educational leaders, administrators and researchers—who they are, their politics and their inclinations—should also be known. When we begin examining the

educators, and researchers alike, we can see they are more than just educators and researchers but motivated persons with unique histories that impact their work (Dhunpath, 2000; Goodson, 1992). It is important to recognize that educators and researchers are humans shaped by politics, values and morals and a worldview.

Critiques of Life History

One of the challenges of doing life history research is when the research must transform the life stories of individuals into a life history, this requires that the research include and account for historical context. Furthermore, this historical context in life stories can be seen as a socially constructed act and an acknowledgement of subjectivity (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Goodson and Sikes (2001) warned that this was "a dangerous move, for it offers the researcher considerable 'colonizing' power to 'locate' the life story with all its inevitable selections, shifts and silences" (p. 17). The colonizing danger of moving from life stories to life history is a real concern that I battled with in writing my own life story (in Chapter One).

My life history study is situated from the timeframe of 2011-2016, as time encapsulation is a tenet of the life history methodology. These are the years in which the implementation of turnaround policy first occurred in Walsh Elementary and Crosby High Schools and also the time frame in which exceptional mayoral control was enacted within the Waterbury school district. I lived in Waterbury from 2010-2013 and in 2010 turnaround was implemented at Walsh and Crosby. I was a graduate student in Educational Administration at Michigan State University 2013-2016.

Outsider from Within: Inside and Out

My life story is just one layer of this life history project. My story offers my connection to the urban—African American/Latinx culture and community in Waterbury and the city at large. My story indicates familiarity with urban Black and Brown discourses in the city and taken for granted knowledge; my connection makes me accessible to the circumstances of my study as a person both within and outside of the phenomena. I also have personal connections with many of the people whose stories I included in this life history case study. Because of my personal connections, I attempted to be reflective and honest about my own place in the storytelling. In many ways, I am an insider in this case study. However, as an academic, I am a part of a larger institution (Michigan State University) with different discourses and taken-for-granted knowledge, which also makes me an outsider. Juggling these two worlds as both insider and outsider was a primary task in this study and is reflected within my use of different grammar choices and struggles regarding the use of particular forms of grammar throughout this study. I will elaborate further on this inside/outside research positionality below.

According to Rubby Dhunpath (2000) there are three possible responses to critiques of life history research. The first possibility is not to respond at all. But I think avoiding the question is inappropriate, and I agree that "it would smack of the same kind of intellectual arrogance often exhibited by empiricists" (Dhunpath, 2000, p. 543). However, in answering the question, credence is given to the illegitimate and artificial dichotomy between the empirical research design model and other research designs. The quantitative v. qualitative / humanities v. social science paradigm wars (Gage, 1989; Howe, 2008; Tadajewski, 2009). The second possibility according to Dhunpath (2000) is to aggressively defend the virtues of the life history research approach at the risk of becoming an apologist for its legitimacy thereby

reaffirming the dominance espoused by empiricists. A third possibility is to stake a claim of life history as a counterculture to traditional research methodologies (Dhunpath, 2000). To position life history as a counterculture provides leverage toward an intervention into White supremacy (Khalifa, 2015) Westernization (Mignolo, 2011; 2012) and racist ideologies located in educational structures and systems such as is indicated in Stein's (2004) Culture of education policy. The culture of education policy frame policy beneficiaries as culturally deficient and blamed their historical and socio-economic predicament on a lack of, and a need for, standard American values (Stein, 2004).

Interdisciplinary Confusion

When it is done well, life stories and life history research crosses disciplinary boundaries and allows the convergence of multiple disciplines, while maintaining the integrity of each. However, some scholars raise concerns and cite confusion associated with this approach. Hargreaves (2011) argued that the plurality of voices could cause harsh discord and fragmented perspectives. Such discord and fragmentation may lead to a culture of misunderstanding and miscommunicating (Dhunpath, 2000).

Small "t" truth. An enduring critique of life history research is the relativist nature of truth associated with the construction and analysis of life stories, narrations, and biographies. However, the goal of my study is not to search for a universal or generalizable truth. My historical research challenges the notion of there being a single truth that can be generated from dominant discourses, strategies, and practices found in education, be it, in research, leadership, pedagogy, and curriculum. Therefore, I aim to provide a series of subjective views, which are specific types of truths embedded within the people of Waterbury's culture and their communities through their stories. Bringing the stories of educators, students,

parents, community members, and organizers into the canon of educational literature and leadership, at the very least, can help defy common dichotomies between theory and practice (Dhunpath, 2000). Similar dichotomies exist between educational administrators and leaders and members of minoritized communities—parents and students. These stories also helped identify equity-oriented discourses that framed policy beneficiaries as deficient and incapable.

Identifying importance and representation. The relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the act of deeming someone or a situation as important is further complicated by researcher's veneration or disdain for the participants in the study. Such a situation is potentially dysfunctional. Also, when alternative research methods (such as life history) challenge the oppressive conditions that have silenced individuals; how are researchers positioned outside of that framework? In other words, we must ask, are alternative research methods such as life history, still working to maintain the oppressive legacy of research? Therefore, close attention must be paid to the (re)telling of the story; a (re)presentation of a researcher who has a vested interest in the story (Dhunpath, 2000). The notion here is that, in order to be valid, those who speak must tell their own stories using their own voices. A notion that I don't see as the only or the whole truth.

The nuance of representation. Robert J. C. Young (2004) argued that "it was never the case that the subaltern could not speak: rather that the dominant would not listen" (p. 5). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) wrote, what many consider, a classic essay on the problem of speaking for cultural others—Can the subaltern speak? According to Sharp (2008) this very complex article has been interpreted in various ways. The premise of the article, according to Sharp (2008), was to discuss the problem of speaking for those whose cultural background is profoundly different from one's own. Spivak (1988) is critical of the self-assured,

scientific method used by Western scholars when studying other cultures. Spivak (1988) maintains that the western way of knowing the subject of history and the other (read: non-western)—its object. Spivak (1988) calls the Western speaking for non-westerners as 'epistemic violence.' Epistemic violence refers to the damage done to the ways of knowing and understanding of indigenous and non-western peoples with regards to religion, science, philosophy, architecture and governance. Santos (2014) called this violence against knowledge epistemicide. This epistemic violence or epistemicide, are the end results of what Mignolo (2012) called "hegemonic epistemology" (p. xvii), which occurs when foreign epistemologies are imposed upon others. Furthermore, this epistemological imposition projects itself as universal. This premise Mignolo (2012) conceptualized as Local Histories/Global Designs; wherein "European local knowledge and histories have been projected to global designs" (p. 17). This universal projection of epistemology brands itself as a natural occurrence thereby concealing its origins and intentions. These are main constructs in my theoretical framework along with Mignolo's (2011; 2012) thesis westernization/rewesternization.

This epistemological imposition often results in the death of minoritized and subordinated social groups due to unequal exchanges of cultures. As a result, westerners—with profoundly different cultural backgrounds—have been purveyors of epistemicide resulting in the marginalization and death of the subaltern voice and culture. As it pertains to this inquiry epistemological imposition/epistemicide is most pronounced in Stein's (2004) Culture of education policy thesis. Stein's (2004) work highlights an ability to legislate and disseminate ways of seeing through the transmission of a policy culture inherent in equity-oriented policy. Stein (2004) argued that in the discourses that frame Title I legislation, "the students harbor the problem" as poor and culturally deficient recipients of federal funding with no concept of "standard American values" (p. 42).

Attempts to recover the subaltern voice by cultural outsiders and cultural insiders are not equivalent. Furthermore, cultural insiders should be mindful of the inevitability of essentialism and the dangerous potential for power/knowledge[2]. This is such because "it is difficult to recover a voice for the subaltern without negating its heterogeneity" (Sharp, 2008, p. 114).

The challenges of representation. Representation has its limits. These limits include, and are not limited to, determining what information is relevant to include as a person's story. Santos (2014) contends that once relevancy is established the phenomenon must be identified—detected and recognized. Detection is the process by which traits or features in a phenomenon are defined. Recognition is the delineation of the parameters that guide the specific system of explanation or interpretation that the detected phenomena will be classified through. (Santos, 2014). These strategies and processes are predisposed and inclined with the potential for abuse. In other words, researchers and historians chose to center specific aspects of a story and in doing so perhaps leave out more important and valuable aspects; at least more important and valuable to someone else. This inevitability occurs for various reasons, often time's partisan reasons such as adherence to political ideologies and discourses as well as racial, ethnic and other alignments. Ibn Khaldûn (1377) wrote in The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History [translated from the original Arabic], "prejudice and partisanship obscure the

[2] Power/knowledge is one of the most important aims of postcolonial critiques. Said (1978) draws on Foucault's concept of power/knowledge wherein knowledge and power are inseparable. According to Said (1978) power will be constituted through dominant ways of knowing, these way of knowing gain traction and influence through the association to and with powerful positions within networks (Sharp, 2008). Said (1978) considered power/knowledge the two fundamentals of colonial authority. The significance of postcolonial critique is to shift attention from focusing on economic and political operations of power that helped catapult western countries' rise to dominance—to understanding the continued dominance of Western epistemologies—Western ways of knowing (Sharp, 2008).

critical faculty and preclude critical investigation. The result is that falsehoods are accepted and transmitted" (Khaldûn & Lawrence, 2015, p. 35).

The value of representation. In spite of the complexities, nuances, and potential challenges of representation, Spivak (1988) acknowledged the value in speaking for the other by cultural insiders. This can be done with mutual boundary setting between cultural insiders and those they represent. In this way validity becomes built-in. Temporary alliances and 'strategic essentialism' with a clear image of identity as politics of opposition to fight for the rights of minoritized groups are appropriate (Sharp, 2008). In my experience, representation is common and welcomed in the African American community, by members from African American communities (we rep where we are from; and we support those who rep us as well; at all times and costs). This occurs in other non-White communities who have suffered from paternalism, patriarchy, marginalization and minoritization. Furthermore, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argued that many artists, musicians and filmmakers try to capture moments of their people and employ representation as both a political concept and as a form of expression. Also, she argued that representation was a form of resistance to what has been imposed upon marginalized communities by those engaged in their epistemicide.

In 1969, in the months that preceded the 1970 re-authorization of ESEA; the Washington Research Project and the NAACP's Legal Defense and Education Fund published a report entitled: Title I ESEA is it Helping Poor Children? A key finding in the report, "was the need for instruction more relevant to a child's cultural background" (Stein, 2004, p. 57). This was a stark contrast to the fundamental principle of Title I: the culture of policy beneficiaries was characterized as lacking "intellectual curiosity". These policy beneficiaries, then, needed to be "fixed" with, according to Stein (2004), a standard of middle class White American norms (p. 43). The culture of policy and culturally deficient models that are embedded in Title I

legislation must be combatted with culturally responsive alternatives and strategies. Khalifa et al (2016) proposed highlighting "the ability of the school leader to engage students, families, and communities in culturally appropriate ways… [and be able] to understand, address, and even advocate for community-based issues" (p. 11).

Interpretive Framework

The epistemological position of life history is interpretive as opposed to normative. An interpretive lens seeks to understand the phenomena from within (emic) as opposed to a normative style of inquiry, which seeks to study phenomena from without (etic) (Jones, 1983). The words emic and etic, according to linguistics and anthropologists in the 1950's and 1960's, refer to two different approaches toward researching human beings. Since the 1950's and 1960's, the concepts have evolved and have been adopted by various researchers across disciplines including education (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008).

Insider/Outsider: Emic and Etic Approaches to Research

A researcher using an emic approach to research is sometimes referred to as an insider (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008; Smith, 1999). An insider starts from the perspectives of the research participants: The concepts and categories deemed meaningful and appropriate by members of the culture whose beliefs and actions are a part of the analysis. In an emic approach, the researcher seeks to put aside prior theories and assumptions in an effort to allow the participants and relevant data to speak to them and allow for themes, patterns, and concepts to emerge. Emic research approaches are used most often when a topic has not been heavily theorized. The strength of an emic approach to research is in its

appreciation and respect for local perspectives and, as a result, its inclination to uncover new findings (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008).

A researcher using an etic approach to research is sometimes referred to as an outsider; etic approaches use theories and perspectives from outside of the setting being analyzed. In an etic approach, the researcher uses an existing theoretical framework to conduct her/his research. One of the strengths of etic research approaches is that it allows for comparisons across more general cross-cultural contexts and concepts (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008).

Life history's emic inclination and context. The Great Migration (Wilkerson, 2010) provides a significant context that historicizes the vision, hopes, and aspirations of many African American families that fled the Jim Crow south for Waterbury. The interpretive lens offered by life history informs us that knowledge and understanding are bound by context. Jones (1983) contends that this context is the result of a socially constructed world of patterns and frames. Interpretive inquiry seeks to address questions asked, along with the historical and social context that they are asked from "within" social phenomena; "by bringing to the surface the essential dimensions of a social process or social context" (Jones, 1983, p. 150).

A normative inquiry, or studying phenomena from without gives the researcher "ontological control." Jones (1983) argued that a study done from without "is inclined to impose a definition on the subject of inquiry and to postulate relationships of a hypothetical kind" (p. 150). As a result, such perspectives suggest that obtaining knowledge of the phenomena can only be obtained through the appropriate application of theory and method "rather than on the intrinsic nature of the phenomena being studied" (Jones, 1983, p. 150).

Between an emic rock and etic hard place. While some methodologies rely more heavily on one approach over the other, "many researchers live in the tension between these two extremes (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008,

p. 1). A completely etic approach to research risks overlooking potentially new and or groundbreaking concepts and perspectives. And at the same time, all researchers come into a research project with previous concepts, perspectives and lenses in which they see the world through (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008). Emic and etic research tools are academic concepts introduced in the mid-twentieth century by anthropologists and linguists to study humans and as such are engulfed in political controversy (President & Fellows Harvard University, 2008; Sharp, 2008; Smith, 1999). Components of this political controversy is indicated by both Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and bell hooks' contentions in regards the level of engagement and the degree of distortion employed by "Western academics who seek the experience, but not the wisdom, of the other" (Sharp, 2008, p. 112). Nonetheless, insider and outsider, emic and etic, perspectives are used to shape my study (L. T. Smith, 1999).

Theory. Methodology. And the V. Word

Gloria Anzaldua (1990) issued a challenge to develop new theories—theorizing methodologies—to better understand those on the margins of society. Anzaldua (1990) argued for "theories that overlap many 'worlds'" theorizing methods whose categories of analysis include race, class, gender and ethnicity. These are theories "that will point out ways to maneuver between our particular experiences and the necessity of forming our own categories and theoretical models for patterns we uncover" (p. xxv-xxvi). I used decolonizing lenses and life history similar to the theorizing-methodology challenge posed by Anzaldua (1990). I used decolonizing lenses to analyze equity oriented and culture of education policy discourses. I used participants' stories as a counterculture to these deficit frames. Participants' stories are integral to my analysis.

The Question of Validity

What about validity? Many qualitative theorists have abandoned the concept of validity altogether due to its problematic assumption of a real-world that can be judged by standards of objectivity (Dhunpath, 2000; Maxwell, 2013). Some however use the term validity without its implications of "objective-truth" (Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) thought of validity in a "fairly straightforward, commonsense way, to refer to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account" (p.122). Life history challenges the notion of one truth or no truth. Life history puts forth that there are particular kinds of truth found amongst people of which can be found in their narratives (Dhunpath, 2000; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Life history "challenges the notion of there being no 'truth', but instead asserts that there exists a series of subjective views" (Dhunpath, 2000, p. 547).

In life history, the researchers' own experience is a valid part of her/his own knowledge as long as it is subject to public and critical appraisal (Dhunpath, 2000). I am very open to public criticism; my family and I have lived in Waterbury's urban communities, where my study is conducted, for generations. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argued that researchers that are members of that community have to live and interact with those they study "on a day-to-day basis" (p. 137). Due to the level of collaboration between researcher and participants "seeking meaning and explanations together, respondent validation may well be built into the research design" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 36). "Validity is established by demonstrating that sociological explanation is congruent with the meanings through which members construct their realities and accomplish their everyday practical activities" (Jones, 1983, p. 152). Similarly Feminism, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and LatCrit have theorizing-methodology qualities in their value of life stories and narratives as a

means toward validation (Anzaldua, 1990; Milner, 2007; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Preview of Dissertation Chapters

Chapters 3 and 4 of this study diverge from the previous chapters, as various documents generated for this study and participants' perspectives are integrated to analyze mayoral control and the turnaround policy. Mayoral control as an integrative governance strategy is explained in more detail in the following, Chapter 3. The city of Waterbury has a unique educational leadership model, which by the city's charter involves the mayor. As such, in theory and in practice, the Waterbury School District is under an uncommon type of mayoral control as will be explained.

In chapter 4 I detail the turnaround policy and its relationship to this study. The turnaround policy is contextualized as having evolved from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and its funding source Title I (State of Connecticut, 2010; Stein, 2004). ESEA 1965 and Title I are framed as equity-oriented policies in which the policy beneficiaries are framed as culturally deficient and devoid of standard American values; leading to their academic incapacities (Gamson et al., 2015; Stein, 2004).

Chapter 5 provides warrants for culturally responsive leadership. Culturally responsive leadership as analyzed and highlighted by Khalifa et al. (2016). Warrants for culturally responsive leadership is indicated throughout chapter 5 from participants. Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter. In chapter 6 I reflect across the research process and what I learned while conducting this study. I spend time reflecting upon what I learned about myself and my community and the things I struggled with over the course of the research process. Struggles such as social science research expectations, methods, and grammar. I reflect upon what I learned about educational research. I also discuss how my international educational

administration experience helped broaden my analysis and my capacity for critique as exemplified by my preference to use decolonizing lenses in this study: What I did and how I came to do an interdisciplinary research design. Lastly in chapter 6, I contemplate future research, which includes connections between culturally responsive leadership and standardized testing.

Chapter 3

Mayoral Control

This chapter is about the role of political/integrated governance during the initial period of turnaround policy implementation in 2010-2011 in the Waterbury School District in Waterbury, Connecticut. In the United States, there are five basic school governance structures upon which educational leadership rests. These models are:

- Elected school board (the most common model)
- Appointed school board (e.g., Chicago Public Schools)
- School board with both elected and appointed members (e.g., Hoover City Schools, Alabama)
- State-controlled (e.g., Hawaii State Department of Education)
- City-controlled/ Mayoral Control (e.g., New York City Department of Education)

Although voters in Waterbury elect their school board members, the Waterbury School District subscribes to a unique version of city or mayoral control. There is a notable shift occurring across the United States toward the city or mayoral controlled education model. Kirst and Wirt (2009) note that Americans are largely unaware of the shift of power occurring in our educational system, from local boards and superintendents to "state and federal officials and other interests" (p. 3). Henig (2013) asserts that the shift from school boards/superintendents should be understood within a broader context of executive involvement in education at the state and national level. Henig (2013) argued; "Indeed, the emergence of so-called education governors and education presidents predates the movement toward mayoral control" (p. 178). The governance arrangements within education systems between mayoral control, local school boards, and the school district vary from city

to city. Individual cities stipulate the level of local or district control over schools under a city controlled system.

The mayor in Waterbury, by the city's charter, is ex officio over most boards and commissions in the city of Waterbury, including the Board of Education. Mayoral control of school systems began in in the early 1990s in Boston (Mayor Thomas Menino) and Chicago (Mayor Richard M. Daley) (Wong, 2007). Proponents of mayoral controlled school systems believe it to be a blueprint for success in major cities, ostensibly as a strategy to raise test scores at the local level. This chapter is about the role of school leadership in Waterbury under mayoral control during turnaround policy implementation, which began in 2010-2011.

Rationale for Mayoral Control

Integrated governance is thought to jolt a complacent and paralyzed school system (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). However, according to Henig (2013), mayoral control needs to be analyzed within a broader context of executive expansion and school takeovers, predated by governors and presidents. It is important to note that Mayoral control in Waterbury did not occur due to a new city charter. The city of Waterbury's charter has granted the mayor of Waterbury ex officio status over the Board of Education in 1902 (Electors of the City of Waterbury, 1902). However, historically Waterbury mayors allowed the Board of Education and the Superintendent to address all matters of education in the city. Mayoral control in Waterbury, through exercising the power of ex officio (a unique version of Mayoral Control) is a recent occurrence in Waterbury that coincides with the advent of the turnaround policy in the years 2010-2011. This unique governance strategy, ex officio used to ignite mayoral control, was explained to me by school administrators and local politicians from the city of Waterbury.

Karen Harvey, an African American woman and the longest tenured Board of Education member in Waterbury, stated that the Board of Education in Waterbury had made several unsuccessful attempts to change the city's charter she stated, "now understand now there have been attempts to move that; to update the charter and the segment that has him as ex officio" (Harvey, interview).

Integrated Governance and Political Educators

Mayoral control is part of an integrated governance strategy and although it is relatively rare it is trending and more cities are incorporating it. The term "integrated governance" usually refers to the centralization of school governance; wherein individual school districts are "integrated" under state or city control. However, many researchers hesitate to label mayoral control as centralization (Wong, 2007). Waterbury, Connecticut is one of the few places in the United States in which schools are controlled by the mayor's office, a trend that is expected to evolve. Then, U. S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, informed by his experience in Chicago, and under the direction of former President Obama, was a proponent of mayoral control of schools. Duncan stated that his tenure as U. S. Secretary of Education would have resulted in failure if more mayoral control of schools did not emerge (Davis, 2013). Integrated governance of education is a strategy enacted by politicians seeking to influence school reform via their political platform. According to Henig (2013), United States presidents and governors, alike, have incorporated integrated governance strategies in order to enact school reform. "The three presidents who were first elected after A Nation at Risk (Bush, Clinton, Bush) gave more than two and one-half the times the relative attention to education than the seven who preceded them" (Henig, p. 184, 2013). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTTP) are two contemporary examples of Executive expansion into education by US Presidents George Bush Jr. and Barack Obama.

Integrated governance at the national versus city level is distinctly different. Thus, the emergence of education mayors has given rise to a new form of integrated school governance (Manna & McGuinn, 2013; Wong, 2007). Wong (2007) likened integrated governance to a "state takeover." State takeover occurs when a state sees a local government's finances and governance in disarray. Integrated governance in the form of mayoral control of education, similarly, can be likened to a takeover of the board of education. Mayoral control of school districts closely aligns with contemporary school reform efforts such as NCLB, RTTP, and turnaround all of which rely on academic indicators and accountability measures. Wong (2007) contends that "rather than identifying underlying structural problems" takeover and other coercive means are being employed to turnaround persistently low-performing schools (p. 8). Some critics of the model argue that "meaningful reform will not take place until community leaders address the deep-seated economic and social problems in city neighborhoods (Kirst & Wirt, 2009, p. 173). In spite of the noteworthy potential of mayoral controlled schools there is no guarantee that innovation and aggressive reform will occur and according to Davis (2013) a bad mayor will be indicative of a bad system.

Mayoral Control in Education

Wong and Shen (2013) published a report, Mayoral Governance and Student Achievement: How Mayoral-Led Districts Are Improving School and Student Performance. The authors concluded that mayoral controlled districts in many large urban cities were showing academic success (test-scores). The report observed a few components that contribute to mayoral-led success. First, an engaged mayor that leverages resources effectively. Second, a city must adapt mayoral control to its unique context; which includes local culture and political context.

Furthermore, business leaders, politicians, and school unions are leading the charge for mayoral control of schools (Kirst & Wirt, 2009; McDermott, 2013; Wong, 2007). Much research on mayoral control cites the potential and possibility for success in mayoral-led school districts; however successful outcomes are scant and mostly idealistic. Hess (2008) noted that "those who study mayoral appointment are generally equivocal about the idea." Kirst & Wirt (2009) noted, "the overwhelming evidence is inconclusive" that mayoral control is as effective as it is branded (p. 163). Arguably mayoral control is most noted for the hard lines it draws between its proponents and opponents. Henig (2013) rightly acknowledged that there are "proponents arguing that it catalyzes reform and opponents complaining that it marginalizes parent and community groups" (p. 178). Arguments for successful outcomes of mayoral control are vague and blurry.

Kirst and Wirt (2009) argued that Wong's (2007) claim that mayoral control "will lead to statistically significant, positive gains in reading and math, relative to other districts in the state" is a stretch (p. 163). Kirst and Wirt (2009) argue that researchers have found "achievement score increases [to be] small" (p. 163). Furthermore, alternative explanations for test score increases such as changed curriculum are not duly accounted for (Kirst and Wirt, 2009).

Wong and Shen (2013) support mayoral control due to politics, and governance structures among competing stakeholders that impede the core mission of education in large urban districts. Wong and Shen (2013) cite the limited capacity of both the local school board and the superintendent. Thus, "mayoral accountability aims to address the governing challenges in urban districts by making a single office responsible for the performance [of] the city's public schools" (Wong and Shen, 2013). In other words, although people believe centralization can lead to better results by decreasing the diffusion of responsibility it can also lead to the stagnancy in politics. Although the authors mentioned the severe opposition to mayoral-led

districts, they offered very little information about this opposition (Wong and Shen, 2013).

Critiques of Mayoral Control

The political arguments previously mentioned for mayoral control can also be conceptualized as a premise for more of the same politics. Mayoral control is seen as the exchange of school leadership i.e., the educational lives of minoritized Black and Brown students, in districts where they are the majority, from one group of Whites to another group of Whites. These White educational leaders, espousing deficit discourses and practices of minoritized students, through these power exchanges intend to continue to make the decisions for urban schools. This, I attribute to Walter Mignolo's (2011) westernization/rewesternization project—a theory of a different side of the same coin. I argue that Mayoral control is the classic indicator of Mignolo's (2011) concept of rewesternization. As rewesternization projects, mayoral-led educational reform efforts is an acknowledgment of "its own internal crisis of mismanagement, miscalculation, and misunderstanding" in urban schools and attempts to repair what its aggression and violence caused (Mignolo, 2011, p. 69).

Some K-12 leadership research literature regards mayoral control and integrated control as undemocratic (Wong, 2007). Integrated governance has been implemented with an emphasis on centralizing authority (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). It usurps the power of district educational leaders and it muffles legitimate grass-roots community efforts and their perspectives for effective change. Integrated governance and its structures, it is argued, allows for politics to get in the way and blocks innovation. Davis (2013) argued, "governance structures too often allow politics to play an overwhelming role in education, sometimes blocking innovation" (p. 74). Mayoral control can be seen as bullying and intimidation. Kirst and Wirt (2009) mentioned the under-examined "'bully pulpit' as a major, independent policy

strategy" of integrated governance (p. 287). In Waterbury, during mayoral-led Board of Education meetings, many examples of African American voices and perspectives were stifled in regard to matters that they deemed significant. Parent advocacy organizations in Waterbury accused the district of retaliation and various other examples cited in this inquiry.

Mayoral control is highly regarded in some political circles and amongst those in business communities. But there is also a plethora of literature that indicates the harm of mayoral control in education. Some researchers indicate that mayoral control is the antithesis of grassroots community activism in education (Davis, 2013; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Wong, 2007). Critics argue that mayoral control stifles parental involvement and has an underwhelming record of success in urban environments. Kirst and Wirt (2009) pointed to "contentious community meetings" such as mayoral led Board of Education meetings (p. 167). Karen Harvey, an African American woman, and the longest tenured Waterbury Board of Education member said to me; "he's [the mayor] the chairperson…so, for example, he can take over the running of a meeting [from] the president of the board and that's by charter" (Harvey, interview). The July 31, 2013 Waterbury Board of Education meeting minutes, a key document used in this study, highlight Kirst and Wirt's (2009) claim of "contentious community meetings". The Board of Education meeting on July 31, 2013, is extensively referred to in this study. What is apparent in my analysis of the meeting, discussions, and quotes I highlight in this study are the contentious paradoxes evident in Waterbury. Parent-led community organizations and activists raised loud and significant concerns against the mayoral led Waterbury School District. Concerns related to the implementation of turnaround, the removal of principal Erik Brown, school suspensions, and arrests and the underrepresentation of Black and Brown teachers and school administrators (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013). Kirst and Wirt (2009) contend that mayoral control by default is

stifling and as a result represents "fewer opportunities for grassroots participation in the school system for minorities" (p. 163). To this point, a parent advocacy organization in Waterbury accused the Waterbury school district of "immediate retaliation" due to an ethics claim filed by the parent advocacy organization against the Waterbury school district (Samuel, 2013).

Racial Lines and Mayoral Control in Waterbury

Neil O'Leary is the mayor of Waterbury. O'Leary, a White male member of the Democratic party, was born in Waterbury, and began serving as a member of the city police department in 1980. In 2004, he became Chief of Police, and then stepped down from that post when he was elected as mayor of the city in 2011. During his tenure as Police Chief, O'Leary was also a member of the Board of Education. O'Leary was mayor of Waterbury in 2011 when 2 schools in the Waterbury district were cited for turnaround. And although board members in Waterbury are selected by its political party (Democrat/Republican) and then elected by the public, there is a strong sentiment among the participants interviewed in this study as well as other individuals identified in my document analysis that the mayor has a strong influence upon who gets selected and thus elected (Waterbury Board or Education Meeting Minutes, 2013; Beamon; Harvey, interview).

Retired State legislator and community organizer, Reginald Beamon Sr. runs a non-profit organization in Waterbury. Beamon Sr. gave a strong indication as to how mayoral control in Waterbury was exacerbating a racial divide with regards urban school policies and reform strategies. Beamon claimed that the mayor's politics contrasted with the interests of the communities where Walsh students came from. Beamon indicated that the White mayor silenced African American Board of Education member Karen Harvey, due to her position on the board as aligned with those in the minoritized, Black and Brown communities of Waterbury. Beamon

stated, "in this case, he [the mayor] intervened, and made sure that a Black woman who was Vice Chairman of the Board would not become President of the Board [of Education]" (Beamon, interview). Beamon suggested that the mayor influenced the Board of Education election, resulting in Karen Harvey losing her voice as vice president. Mr. Beamon went on to elaborate further: "He did that as a way to punish, in some ways, this Black woman for speaking out against him [the mayor] and his initiatives. See, the mayor basically controls the Board of Education" (Beamon, interview). Beamon concluded that the mayor's ability to manipulate who gets elected to the Board is how he is able to influence the Waterbury School District with procedures and strategies that "in some ways reflects the same (political and socioeconomical) interests of the mayor" (Beamon, interview).

I interviewed Karen Harvey after the conversation that I had with Beamon. I did not disclose to Harvey what Beamon said about her being ostracized and silenced for her stance or being systematically not elected as indicated by Beamon. The following is the exchange that I had with her:

JW: So how many Board of Education members are there in Waterbury?

KH: 10.

JW: And is there a president or a commissioner and is there an election?

KW: Yes.

JW: So, who is current president and vice president?

KH: Well the current president is Mrs. Brown and the vice president is Felix Rodriguez… now I was also a former vice president but due to politics, I was voted out… so now I am just a commissioner…

JW: so normally is that the vice president eventually becomes president?

KH: no not necessarily …usually here in Waterbury… due to dirty politics here …usually… and if you have (and I said dirty politics maybe I shouldn't call it that) …some mayors (previous mayors) just let the boards do as they are

> directed by the charter. This mayor chooses, pretty much, or gives his strong support for who he wants to be president. So that's what he did this time and that's what he's done since he's been mayor…that person may or may not be what anyone in the city wants as president. But if he [the mayor] wants it, then more than likely that person will get elected. (Harvey, interview)

There were 10 commissioners on the Waterbury Board of Education. Of these 10 commissioners, five were White males, two were White females, and three were minorities: two African American women and one Puerto Rican male. The Waterbury school district consists of 32 schools, and 85 percent of the student population in the entire district is people of color, mostly Latinx and African American. Walsh School consisted of over 90 percent Black and Brown, mostly Latinx and Black students. So, the demographics of the mayor's office and the school board did not reflect the demographics of the Waterbury community or school populations.

Bullying and Intimidation Accusations in Waterbury

Dr. Virgil Franklin was the Walsh principal during the years of 1973-1986. Franklin was also the first Black principal in the city of Waterbury. Franklin is an iconic figure and beloved by many in the African American community because of what he did as a principal. When I asked Franklin about mayoral control and what his experiences were with the mayor while at Walsh, he simply indicated that it was a non-factor. During his years at Walsh School (1973-1986), he stated, "the mayor and Board of Education were background players." He acknowledged that the real power came from the community and the parents; he stated, "the real power was with Walsh School parents" (Franklin, interview). In the time of Franklin's tenure as principal, Waterbury had a history of Black organizations and organizers that would mobilize against injustices occurring against Black communities.

Franklin further indicated, "if you have parents behind you, the politicians stay out of your business. They never want to anger a sleeping giant" (Franklin, interview). Franklin described his leadership style as "collaborative", which included discussions with teachers, parents to the custodians "about what a good school needs" (Franklin, interview). He stated, "Walsh went from the bottom in student scores in the city, to 4th in the city" (Franklin, interview)!

Board members silenced. Hess and Meeks (2013) cautioned against mayoral control because of its potential to silence and marginalize minority voices. The authors noted that minority "voices are likely to be silenced under [a]…mayoral controlled system" (p. 114). Hess and Meeks (2013) also cited research and analysis that suggested elected boards offer more opportunities for minority representation and engagement beneficial to Black and Latinx students. "Black membership on boards was correlated with policies more equitable for black students and staff" (Hess & Meeks, 2013, p. 114).

Kirst and Wirt (2009) likened the "bully pulpit" of mayoral control as an under-examined policy strategy (p. 287). As part of my document analysis and data mining, I found several examples of mayoral control that could be regarded as intimidation in Waterbury. Accusations of bullying were hurled at the mayor during the Board of Education meeting on July 31, 2013. At this meeting, a vocal community advocate and former school administrator Athena Wagner had an open and intense exchange with the mayor. Members of the public were given three minutes to address the board of education. As Athena Wagner's three minutes concluded, the then board president, Mr. Stango, called for the next speaker, Carolyn Washington. According to the Waterbury Board of Education meeting minutes, the following conversation occurred among Carolyn Washington, Athena Wagner, Mayor O'Leary, and Board of Education president Stango:

Washington: "I'm relinquishing my three minutes to Ms. Wagner"

Mayor [interrupting]: "I need a point of order on that."

Wagner: "We've done it several times."

Mayor: "Well I don't know that you have done it properly."

Wagner: "Well I'm telling you we have."

Mayor: "Just because you've done it doesn't mean it's proper. Ms. Washington, you can speak"

Wagner: "She doesn't choose to; she's giving it to me"

Stango: "We had questioned that ourselves, amongst ourselves but we never went anywhere with it but I'm totally in agreement with you [the mayor]. So, Ms. Washington, Ms. Washington passes. Next speaker…(Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 18).

After a couple of more speakers addressed the board, Lawrence V. DePillo, a White male addressed the board and the mayor and stated:

> First of all, I'd like to say that it's my understanding that this board has routinely allowed surrogate speakers. People came here, signed up and gave their time to someone else and [are] allowed to speak. All of a sudden now the mayor, who does not want to hear from the public, or hear what Ms. Wagner has to say, overruled this board in a precedent set by this board. I don't think he has the authority to do it. It's a disrespect to the people who came here tonight. Obviously, the mayor thinks he can bully everyone in the City. As far as, I also see that this board is lacking a commissioner. It seems it's not very important to this mayor to have a tenth commissioner, I guess he's put out in the paper nobody's contacted him, well maybe because he bullies the public nobody wants to contact him (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 20).

This exchange at the Board of Education meeting provides an example of how Mayor O'Leary amped up the power of the mayor's office during the time turnaround was

implemented. It is an example not of a legislative policy shift, but of a cultural shift away from Board of Education and or community control[3].

> **Black vs white mayors.** Henig et al. (1999) also cited similar traits of mayoral control in cities with Black mayors.
>
> Black mayors seem no less likely than white mayors to squabble with black school boards; black educators seem no less likely than white ones to use their positions of authority to co-opt parental initiatives. Furthermore, race does not become the defining cleavage in black-led cities. Black stakeholders seem no less likely than white ones to see education problems as sever; black officials and white business leaders join in partnership arrangements intended to bring about systemic change. (Henig et al., p. 276)

In regard to the similarities between Black and White led cities and mayoral control Wong (2007) suggested "that the tensions surrounding mayoral control may at times be less about the skin color of the mayor and more about the centralization of authority" (p. 22). While it may be difficult to contend with Henig et al.'s (1999) premise and Wong's (2007) suggestion, there remains a critical component missing from their analysis.

Khalifa (2015) brings clarity to these claims with his analysis of the deep implications toward understanding White supremacy, "for it reinforces our understanding that it is systemic and can be reproduced by anyone" (p. 19). I equate Khalifa's (2015) usage of the term White supremacy to Mignolo's (2011) concept of westernization. Centralizing authority and the power grab of mayoral

[3] One of the benefits or downfalls (depending on one's politics) of mayoral control of education is that the quality of legislation or democracy, etc. is all up to a single person (more or less). This example shows that. Perhaps, Mayor O'Leary's style of governing is just the problem and not necessarily turnaround or anything else. The opposite argument can be made about how particular mayors can change the educational culture of a district and schooling, and utilize policies in ways that were not intended. My argument is race-based, but it could be personality as well or the nature of the position that a mayor holds.

control is a key trait that underlies what historically minoritized and marginalized communities have been victims of. Systems of White supremacy can be managed by anyone; even those groups who have historically been the victims of those systems.

Community voices against cronyism. Jimmy Griffin, a long-time community leader and activist in Waterbury since the 1960s, voiced his concerns about the treatment of Erik Brown. Griffin stated that the "combination between the school board and the newspaper(s)", depiction of Erik Brown was comparable to a "public lynching" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 17). Concerning the hiring of a turnaround supervisor Jimmy Griffin stated before the board,

> You know, we've got a school system that for years and years and years, has been never, never, any progress when it comes to the hiring of African-Americans, Latino teachers, and administrators. You made some progress, yes, but there's a lot of progress that needs to be made. You talk about a new slot that you're opening up, I want to see who fills that slot, I really would like to see who fills that slot. You're going to have to have two schools turned around, I want to see who fills that slot, I really want to see. I want to see if it's somebody that's really qualified or just another political crony or somebody that's in a family because that's what's happening in the school system and we got to get a grip on it. It's time to stop and pay attention to the children in our system. This is not about a bunch of families, who milks the trough or goes and lives in Prospect or Wolcott [high SES suburbs of Waterbury] and every place else and none of our teachers, administrators live in Waterbury, everybody lives out of town. And then you're insensitive to our children. This got to stop because you know we're gonna make sure that we mobilize our community from this point on and this Board is gonna listen. I just want to remind you that we're watching.

Minority teachers speak. Mr. Griffin's contentions at the board meeting did not exist in a vacuum. In June of 2015, a group of minority teachers in Waterbury applied for and received a $25,000 state grant aimed at helping Waterbury improve its recruitment of minority educators. A plan of action was offered to the State of Connecticut in a published report of the minority teachers' findings (Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). The group of minority teachers in Waterbury conducted a study into ways that the district could improve hiring Black and Hispanic teachers (Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). A heading in the report was entitled: Lack of Administrative Support / Lack of Mobility / Nepotism. It decried nepotism, district-wide, as a system that did not benefit minority teachers. Deep-rooted politics and nepotism were described as a "good ole boy network" wherein rules were "adjusted to benefit some and not all" (Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015, p. 6).The report, titled Waterbury Public School District Action Plan to Increase Representation of Black and Latino Educators, found that many of the district's minorities felt slighted, unsupported and passed over (Puffer, 2015; Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). The report also found that minority teachers in Waterbury though they had strong feelings regarding the inequity they faced, had "a love for the city and its children, along with appreciation for the dedication of fellow educators, helps maintain their commitment to working with Waterbury schools" (Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). These findings were included in the report and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education on June 30, 2015 (Puffer, 2015; Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015).

Inquiring into inequity. The Waterbury Public School District Action Plan to Increase Representation of Black and Latino Educators found that compared to similar urban districts in Connecticut, such as in Hartford and New Haven: Waterbury had less than half the number of certified minority educators (Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). The report was partially based on responses from 91 of the

Waterbury district's 143 Black and Latinx teachers. The respondents overwhelmingly indicated in the survey their willingness to mentor and encourage students to become teachers. As such, the report called for a pilot program in Waterbury to encourage and develop minority teachers from within the city. One of the authors of the report was the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, Jahana Hayes, an African American teacher in the Waterbury district and from the same North End neighborhood as students from Walsh Elementary School. The North End neighborhood is where most of the community members involved in this inquiry including myself are from. Jahana made our city and most importantly her neighborhood, including me, proud upon being named National Teacher of the Year. In her own words on CBS this morning, she stated, "I was raised by my community…" (CBS This Morning, 2016). The pride and the culture that "raised" the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, is the same community that educational leaders in Waterbury, including the mayor, refuses to listen to. Moreover, educational leaders actively resist any attempts that would lead to the empowerment of local community members.

Traits and Scope of Mayoral Control

Wong (2007) described integrated governance or mayoral control of urban school reform efforts as "difficult to isolate in a multilayered educational system" (p.2). Wong (2007) indicated that mayoral control "is not simply a recentralization of authority" (p.2). It also redefines district-wide leadership and reverses decentralization efforts. Mayoral control is identified as both formal as well as informal forms of governance (Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Manna & McGuinn, 2013; Wong, 2007). Formal integrated reform refers to the explicit legal change of governance arrangements. In the case of mayoral control, the mayor's relationship to the school board and other stakeholders is changed by statute. In Waterbury, the city charter

grants the mayor ex officio status over most boards and commissions in the city including the board of education. There was no new statute in Waterbury, mayoral control was written into its charter.

For this study, I reviewed two separate Waterbury City charters: The City's charter dated January 1, 1902, and the Charter of the City of Waterbury dated November 5, 2002. In the amendments section of the 1902 charter, sections 1 and 2 declared that the city of Waterbury should have a Department of Education. Section 3 declared, "said department shall be under the control of the Board of Education, consisting of the Mayor, who shall be ex officio chairman" (Electors of the City of Waterbury, 1902, p. 88). In chapter 4, in a section entitled The Mayor, the 2002 charter details the role and duties of the mayor as ex officio. The charter states, "The Mayor shall be an ex officio member, as hereinafter defined, of all other boards or commissions or authorities". The mayor's ex officio status is not extended to the Finance and review or the appeal boards and commissions (Electors of the City of Waterbury, 2002, p. 27). The 2002 charter also elaborates on the powers and duties of the mayor as ex officio. The charter states the mayor should have "voice without a vote" but also, the "power to vote in order to break a tie at any such meeting" (Electors of the City of Waterbury, 2002, p. 27). As mentioned, mayoral control is not a new phenomenon, as other examples across the nation reveal; however, the ex officio status given to the mayor of Waterbury appears to be a unique version of mayoral control. The ex officio status granted to the Mayor of Waterbury by charter was not utilized, as far as I learned, until the advent of turnaround in 2010-2011.

The particular local context of a city or regions is crucial to understanding how mayoral control is implemented (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Reginald Beamon Sr. mentioned varying regional contexts of local governance in the Northeast and the State of Connecticut during our conversation. Beamon shared, what proved to be, a pivotal moment that occurred as an undergraduate at the University of Connecticut

(UConn) during a municipal government class in the 1970s-1980s. Beamon described the exchange as pivotal to his political career. Beamon described his municipal government professor at UConn as a former city manager from New Jersey. The professor asked the students in the class where they were from by show of hands. Most students were regional from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. When the professor asked about Connecticut, Beamon said, "about 4 of us raised our hands. And then he [the professor] asked, 'is anyone here from Waterbury?'" Beamon told me, "I was the only one to raise my hand." The professor said to him, "Whatever you learn in this class does not apply [to you]" (Beamon, interview). Beamon went on to explain that over time and through experience he learned that the governance structure in Waterbury was unusual, which confirmed what his UConn professor had indicated. Nonetheless, Waterbury is not unlike most of the urban districts in which mayoral control of schools affects the culture of school leadership (Davis, 2013; Hess & Meeks, 2013; Kirst & Wirt, 2009). The difference in Waterbury, as it relates to this inquiry, is mayoral control of schools through the ex officio status of the city's mayor.

Traits of Mayoral Control in Waterbury

Reginald Beamon, Sr. is a retired Connecticut State Legislator; a former Waterbury elected official, and a political science professor at a local college in Waterbury. I asked Mr. Beamon about the governance structure in Waterbury and how the mayor has been able to be so influential over the district administrators since turnaround. He stated, "Okay, well first of all our charter gives the mayor the power to be the ex officio member of the board of education" (Beamon, interview). Karen Harvey and Juanita Hernandez the only two African American Board of Education members also mentioned the city of Waterbury's charter as the instrument that provided the mayor ex officio status. Hernandez stated, that the board is no

longer its own entity: "the mayor has his hands in it." Hierarchically the Board of Education was "right under the mayor" followed by the district superintendent (Hernandez, interview). Harvey noted similarly: "We have a very, very strong mayor… meaning this mayor has his hand in everything" (Harvey, interview).

The turnaround years, which began in 2011, was the first time that a Waterbury mayor had enacted ex officio status, according to my inquiry and what I was told by a range of participants in this study. Karen Harvey stated, "By charter, the mayor is part of the board of education, he is ex officio member, now it doesn't give him power but the mere fact that he is mayor he oversees, if you go with the hierarchy" (Harvey, interview). However, the use of ex officio is unprecedented, "some mayors (previous mayors) just let the boards do as they are directed by the charter" (Harvey, interview).

Ex Officio in Waterbury

My review of educational research on integrated governance in education along with archives and documents on federal, state and local policy and governance in education did not provide me satisfying answers as to what was occurring in Waterbury. The Waterbury Board of Education meeting minutes just gave indications of the enactment of mayoral control, but how it came to be was not indicated in the analysis of various documents. The meeting minutes offered the what, but not the how or processes, of mayoral control. I was unable to grasp or understand the mayor's authority over educational leadership and administration in the city of Waterbury. Reginald Beamon was able to clarify. In our interview, Beamon's mention of his municipal government course at UConn and the explicit mention of Waterbury as an outlier offered insight into the processes of mayoral control. I wanted to learn more about this from Beamon.

Voices from city hall against cronyism. I asked Beamon, in hindsight, and with years of political experience (locally in Waterbury and in Connecticut at large), what he thought the UConn professor meant. Beamon responded, "Well there was a lot of validity to it (the professor's indication that Waterbury's governance was unique in comparison to the rest of the northeast region)" (Beamon, interview). He went on to explain that eight months after graduating from UConn he was fortunate enough to get a job in the Mayor's office at city hall in Waterbury. I asked him to explain how the statement was related to what he saw happening in Waterbury specifically within the politics of education. Beamon responded:

> Ok. Let's start with teachers. Years ago, if you wanted to be a teacher in Waterbury, you needed to know someone to bring you through the system, like a sponsor. Years ago, there used to be a box in the mayor's office with names in it for teachers; their names would be pulled out of the box… [But] everything flows from the mayor's office. (Beamon, interview)

This practice of hiring teachers in Waterbury seemed hard to believe. This system of cronyism occurred in spite of all the standard checks and balances of municipal government such as civil services, human resource managers, the board of education, and superintendent etc. Perhaps, sensing my surprise and sense of disbelief, Beamon, stated, "I know. [because] I worked there" (Beamon, interview).

Voices of community activists against cronyism. Mr. Beamon shared a personal experience from his time as an employee in City Hall where he witnessed, first hand, the cronyism in the process of hiring Waterbury teachers; that in many respects reflect the frustrations of Waterbury's minoritized communities, including administrators, teachers, parents, students and community organizers. Beamon's personal experience corroborated Jimmie Griffins's claim at the July 31, 2013, Board of Education meeting where he argued that Waterbury had historically hired teachers by practicing cronyism—friends and family of those in power. Griffin is a well-known

and regarded African American, former NAACP president, and community activist dating back to the 1960s that once ran for mayor of Waterbury. Concerning the district's pending hire of a turnaround supervisor, Griffin stated,

> I want to see if it's somebody that's really qualified or just another political crony or somebody that's in a family because that's what's happening in the school system and we got to get a grip on it. It's time to stop and pay attention to the children in our system. This is not about a bunch of families. (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 17)

Voices of minority teachers against nepotism. Furthermore, the frustration with the cronyism in hiring and the mistreatment of minority school leaders and teachers in Waterbury was widespread. This frustration was further exemplified in the plan of action study, Waterbury Public School District Action Plan to Increase Representation of Black and Latino Educators by minority teachers in Waterbury. The study found that minority teachers felt there was a lack of administrative support, lack of mobility, and that there were numerous indications of nepotism and cronyism within the school district. The study decried nepotism, district-wide, as a system that did not benefit minority teachers. The deep-rooted politics and nepotism were described as a "good ole boy network" wherein rules were "adjusted to benefit some and not all" (Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015, p. 6).The report found that many of the district's minority teachers felt slighted, unsupported and passed over (Puffer, 2015). The report also found that minority teachers in Waterbury identified strong feelings of inequity.

Cronyism exacerbates the problem in schools. Because educational leaders are typically White, it logically follows that their cronies would, too, be White. Therefore, cronyism funnels a monolithic group of culturally unresponsive administrators, teachers, and staff into predominantly Black and Latinx Waterbury Schools. The discourses and practices of mayoral control and cronyism occurring in

Waterbury is another indication of educational leadership that is culturally unresponsive. Many of these White educators and staff carry with them low academic expectations of minoritized students and a low opinion of the culture and values of their communities. As Khalifa, et al. (2016) pointed out that "most" educational leaders and reformers are focused almost entirely "on instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models to address the cultural needs of students. It has become increasingly clear, however, that an intensification of these same leadership strategies will do little to address the needs of minoritized students" (p. 8). Serious, intense and widespread culturally responsive training must be taken up at the highest levels, and in a real way.

Mayoral Control as a Cultural Shift

Mayors have increasingly advocated for and gained expanded formal and informal power in education. According to Wong (2007) mayors are driven by designs "concerned with reinvigorating their cities in the face of major economic, social and cultural shifts" (p. 11). Pauline Lipman (2011) refers to these designs as neoliberal policy designs, which are "essential to receive federal economic stimulus funds and even other federal funding" (p. 61). Lipman (2011) argues that Mayoral control is pivotal in enabling neoliberal characteristics such as entrepreneurial, market-driven, efficiency-oriented, performance-based and public management style school systems.

Urban schools are central to these integrated governance efforts (Wong, 2007). Per Connecticut's 2017 State budget, Waterbury was one of 52 cities cited for an education budget increase (Rabe Thomas, 2017). Waterbury will receive a $38 million increase that will raise its total educational budget to a staggering $174 million; one of the State's highest (Rabe Thomas, 2017). The State issued total autonomy to local municipalities on how to spend that money. This has caused alarm

for some in the State because "it will be up to the municipalities to determine whether to actually spend it on their schools—or use it to close their own local budget shortfalls or make up for other state budget cuts" (Rabe Thomas, 2017). Patrice McCarthy, the deputy director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, warned, "It's not going to go to support student needs in most communities…It's important that people understand that education grants might not be being spent on education" (Rabe Thomas, 2017). Lipman (2011) reminds us that mayoral control is designed for minimal interference. Mayoral control can silence concerns and inquiries raised by individuals such as Connecticut Association of Boards of Education deputy director Patrice McCarthy, concerning federal funds designated for urban schools but diverted elsewhere.

Wong's (2007) identification of mayoral control as a cultural shift aligns with Stein's analysis of the Culture of Policy as "having its own set of interrelated traits and characteristics" (p. xii). Integral to these interrelated traits and characteristics is the presumption that the state must play a corrective role in fixing the lives of its minoritized communities. Stein (2004) stated:

> As instruments of the state, social policies are predicated on the assumption that the government can remedy the perceived problems of the country's deviant populations. The existence of social policies presupposes that the government can assuage the social problems of policy beneficiaries through funding allocations, bureaucratic design, and/or national focus. (p. xii-xiii)

Stein (2004) went on to quote various Senators in the halls of Congress when discussing the Bill that later would become the Elementary Secondary Education Act 1965. Walter Mondale, Democratic Senator from Minnesota was quoted, "This bill recognizes that a child from the slums—whether urban or rural—needs supplementary educational opportunities and special programs, to help him overcome his cultural handicaps" (Stein, 2004, p. 3). Representative Howard Smith,

Democrat from Virginia, 1965 offered a "cynical interpretation of the needs claims reflected in the Title I policy while portraying the policy beneficiaries through the lenses of race, class, region, and religion" (p. 9). Representative Smith of Virginia spoke of the "hysteria" of the "minority race" and their need for education to be put on course for "first-class citizenship" as they "unfortunately, in great numbers, have been born and raised in poverty" (p. 9). "Unfortunately," implies some happenstance circumstance unbeknownst to Representative Smith, rather than the reality that these communities, after hundreds of years of systemic inequality, found themselves living in under Jim Crow.

Stein's (2004) thesis is an investigation of the culture of policy through an "analysis of the language and behaviors of policymakers and practitioners at various stages of the policy process" (p. ix). Therefore, a cultural shift that doesn't change the fundamental premise of the culture of policy thesis, which indicates that minoritized communities require the type of government intervention, on display in the mayoral led Waterbury school district; is problematic. This type of intervention is violent: imposing, hegemonic and patriarchal. This type of cultural shift that leaves in place the core obstacles found in equity-oriented policies like turnaround as commandeered by the Waterbury mayor is indicative of Mignolo's (2011) rewesternization. Rewesternization is the attempt to revitalize the systems of power that have, historically, imposed upon minoritized, and Black and Brown communities. The change or shift, in this case, mayoral led school reform and the oppressive forms of education before it, in essence, are a concept that Mignolo (2011) identified as two sides of the same coin.

The Ghosts of City Hall, Ex Officio, and Turnaround

Lisa Lessard, a White female, community activist and a parent of a student in the Waterbury School District raised concerns about corruption at the Board of Education meeting on July 31, 2013. She mentioned that the State of Connecticut Board of Education commissioner at that time, Stefan Pryor, informed her that "the Waterbury educational system is on [his] educational radar because he saw past fiscal mistakes" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 4). With the infamous history of Waterbury mayors in mind, (Waterbury mayors have been involved in political corruption, including graft, which led to the indictment and convictions of two Waterbury mayors in 1992 and 2002), I asked Karen Harvey a question about mayoral control. I was curious about her thoughts on the scandalous history of Waterbury's City Hall and its connection to what was happening in education in general and specifically in regard to turnaround at the time. After a long pause and a deep breath Karen Harvey stated:

> I think as long as you keep the mayor's position as ex officio; that (corruption) will always exist in the education system. 60% of our (city of Waterbury) budget is in education. Which means we control a lot of money. And with a mayor like this mayor that has his hands in everything, I mean he has done some good, but some things he needs to keep his hands out of …and let the school system, those that have been educated and trained to run the school system, run it. So as long as that ex officio position is in place the political part of it; that corruption will always exist until we remove that. (Harvey, interview)

Karen Harvey's analysis of Waterbury's infamous mayoral past is corroborated by Reginald Beamon's assessment of what was occurring in the Waterbury school district. He said this:

> I will put it this way: all politics is local and all local politics is about one thing—money. And the bottom line here is whether it was Crosby or Walsh as a turnaround school you had the purse strings coming from the State (Connecticut) with special grants of which principals had autonomy to hire, and to implement what they felt their schools needed in order to succeed. There's no way. In the city of Waterbury. With all that kind of money coming in. They (City Hall/Waterbury's mayor) were gonna allow non-political players and those who look like 'us' control those purse strings. That's from a political standpoint. (Beamon, interview)

In contrast to the accusations by members of various communities in Waterbury at the Waterbury Board of Education meeting on July 31, 2013, the mayor, arguably the most powerful White male in Waterbury, who oversees a majority Latinx and Black school district, offered a much different assessment of what was occurring in the district. According to meeting minutes the mayor contested, that from his "numerous meetings and conversations" with the State of Connecticut Board of Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor and the State of Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy, "they both have enormous respect for what's happening in this district" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 31).

Stifling Grassroots

Wong (2007) suggested that mayoral control stifle the voices and the grassroots community efforts for urban school reform and that decentralized political power is more likely to reflect urban community grassroots organizers' needs and values. The mayor's ability to apply "institutional pressure" to stifle community-based urban reform efforts is a formidable tactic (Wong, 2007, p. 3). In other words, often under mayoral controlled educational structures, urban community members

and organizers, those who best know their communities and their children, their educational reform efforts and initiatives are stifled and marginalized. Discursively, those in urban communities are locked in by a colonizing grammar. Westernized discourses and rhetoric (westernization/rewesternization), including centralization and decentralization, are designed and employed to determine the limits and possibilities of educational reform.

Despite scholars who hesitate, I argue that mayoral control is, in fact, both decentralization and a recentralization strategy. It is decentralization as power is being seized from local school boards and nestled into the halls of city hall. It is recentralization as power over education in local districts emanate from city hall. However, this decentralization/recentralization occurs at the top as decentralization or grassroots community efforts of empowerment are stymied as indicated by Wong (2007) and others. Pauline Lipman (2011) posits that "mayoral control is a critical tool to restructure school systems from the top with minimal public 'interference'" (p. 47). Therefore I argue that these political discourses of centralization and decentralization are what Walter Mignolo (2011) conceptualized as westernization/rewesternization.

Under this system of educational reform; White educational leaders intend to maintain power and administer educational policies for minoritized/marginalized Black and Brown communities. Centralization and decentralization, when looked at through Walter Mignolo's (2011) decolonizing lenses are educational strategies that are essentially two sides of the same coin. Kirst and Wirt (2009) pointed to a few examples of mayoral controlled school systems and a tradeoff that cannot be ignored: On the one hand "contentious community meetings" such as mayoral led Board of Education meetings (p. 167) and "fewer opportunities for grassroots participation in the school system for minorities" (p. 163), and on the other, political gains such as raised test scores and fiscal accountability. I ask, is this a worthy

tradeoff? It depends on whom you ask and what your politics are and how they relate to what is best for minoritized—Black and Brown students and their communities.

Strong Mayoral Presence

Mayoral control is a key component of educational administration and leadership within the Waterbury school district. Mayor O'Leary of Waterbury has been highly visible since two schools in the district were cited and chosen (due to low-test standardized scores in reading and math) for turnaround in 2010-2011. At the July 31, 2013 Board of Education meeting, there was an exchange between the mayor and one of the board members worth noting. The exchange centered on the hiring of a Supervisor of School turnaround. A board member raised an issue with the tenure of the turnaround Supervisor, noting that the funds would be temporary and was afraid the position would be permanent even after the need for turnaround ended. The Mayor respectfully disagreed with the board member and stated what he was looking for in a candidate,

> I am looking for someone who is experienced, someone who is excited to be a part of a turnaround Program, someone who is highly touted not only by the management of this district but I'm sure we'll get recommendations from the State of Connecticut. I'm looking to get the best of the best…This person will oversee the turnaround schools at Crosby and Walsh. This person will be responsible for ensuring success of that turnaround. (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 9)

This quotation is indicative of how the mayor shows little interest in what educators and community members think. Karen Harvey equated the mayor's educational decisions in the district as political. She stated, the mayor,

> Pulls the political card …because he can select who he wants as the president [of the Board of Education] the person is not [or can be someone who does not] particularly care for students; but that person will be someone who will push the mayors [agenda] on education and that's where it gets a little hairy because what he may want may not be good for the kids. (Harvey, interview)

The types of educational strategies emanating from the mayor's office are an example of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988). The cultural insensitivity and lack of cultural response on the part of the mayor are also indicative of the need to examine possibilities for a robust culturally responsive leadership agenda.

Concluding Remarks of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 explored literature on mayoral control of educational structures in light of mayoral control occurring in Waterbury. In this chapter, I expounded upon mayoral control as an integrative governance strategy that was used in the Waterbury, Connecticut School District in light of the turnaround school reform policy that began there in 2010-2011. In this chapter, I contextualized mayoral control from scholarly perspectives as well as from the perspectives of the participants in the inquiry. Integrated governance and mayoral control, according to educational/policy research, insights from participants in this study and decolonizing concepts described what has been happening in Waterbury following the implementation of turnaround into two of its failing, low-performing, urban schools.

Chapter 4

Turnaround

When I began this inquiry, it was to assess the turnaround policy that was implemented into two schools in Waterbury beginning in the school year of 2010-2011. The two schools were Walsh Elementary School and Crosby High School. Both schools combined have over 85 percent Latinx and African American students. Walsh, the primary focus of this inquiry, is located in an economically deprived urban community that features abandoned buildings and blight. As I began examining the criteria for the federal turnaround policy, I learned that the premise for turnaround and its enactment and funding as a school policy, emerged as a result of the largest federal educational initiative in the history of the US—the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (Stein, 2004; US Dept. of Education, 2010).

I then began to follow the trajectory of the implementation of turnaround in Waterbury from its initiation in 2010-2011 through 2016. During the time of this inquiry, three major events occurred in the Waterbury community. These events were interconnected and became the focal point of this study. These three events began with the impact that turnaround had on Walsh School—the children and the community. The second event was the impact turnaround had on the then head principal at Walsh, Erik Brown. Through my research, I found that Brown was beloved by the African American as well as the Latinx students and families at Walsh. However, after the implementation of turnaround, Brown was controversially demoted and removed from Walsh, against the wishes of the local community. The third event that emerged as a result of this inquiry was the advent of mayoral control. The mayor of Waterbury is the ex-officio leader of the Waterbury Board of Education and in essence the educational leader for the school district.

This chapter and the following (Chapter Five) will present these three events in the form of life history. This chapter focuses on Walsh Elementary School as a result of turnaround and the fallout of Erik Brown's removal.

Turnaround in Contemporary School Reform

The federal turnaround policy has been mentioned cursorily throughout the preceding chapters. turnaround is an integral part of the phenomenon under study, along with mayoral control, and the perspectives and stories of members of marginalized communities in Waterbury, Connecticut. In the first portion of this chapter, turnaround will be explored in depth. Discourses associated with turnaround, and various inquiries exploring turnaround in schools will be explored as well.

Turnaround is part of the legacy of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 and as such is subject to the same cultural norms that went into equity-oriented education policies and conceptions of disadvantaged and impoverished children (Stein, 2004; US Dept. of Education, 2010). ESEA and each of its iterations since 1965 focused on minoritized and impoverished students. These students were branded with labels such as educationally disadvantaged, at risk, and Title I students. Stein (2004) stated, "such students were most often provided remedial educational opportunities delivered by practitioners paid exclusively through the school's Title I budget" (p. xv). turnaround is marked by a significant discursive shift in ESEA language and behaviors marked by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2002. Language and routines associated with NCLB in 2002 shifted the focus from students, labeled failing and at risk, to their schools and to a larger extent their communities (Duke, 2012; Stein, 2004).

The Turnaround Phenomenon

The term turnaround refers to an educational administrative initiative for school improvement, specifically to raise student test scores. School turnaround is a significant educational reform, particularly in urban education (Carpenter, Bukoski, Berry, & Mitchell, 2015; Cucchiara, Rooney, & Robertson-Kraft, 2015; Duke, 2012; Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). Between 2010-2014 as part of the School Improvement Grants [SIG] program and a key component of the Department of Education's [DOE] strategy for helping the nation's lowest-performing schools, over 1600 SIG grants were granted to the lowest performing schools deemed to have the greatest need (LeFloch et al., 2014; "School Improvement Grants National Summary, School Year 2012-13," 2013; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). The School turnaround model emerged with the passage of the American Recovery and Reimbursement Act (ARRA) of 2009, which was followed by a major shift of the SIG program (LeFloch et al., 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). The ARRA boosted total SIG funding in the fiscal year of 2009 to approximately 6.5 times the original 2009 appropriation through Title I, section 1003(g) of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (LeFloch et al., 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). A high concentration of these grants went to urban schools (Peck & Reitzug, 2014). In its current educational usage turnaround refers to the rapid and significant academic improvement of consistently low-performing schools (Carpenter et al., 2015; Duke, 2012; L. Maxwell, 2009; Peck & Reitzug, 2014).

Eligibility for turnaround. To be eligible, states must identify the schools that exhibit persistent low-performance in math and reading, such schools perform in the bottom 5 percent of each state's standardized tests (LeFloch et al., 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). Federal guidelines indicate that states must create three tiers of school eligibility for the SIG program:

- Tier 1: One of the following: schools performing in the bottom five percent of the state's standardized test scores and currently enrolled in Title I program improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, or Title I high schools with a graduation rate under 60 percent. Walsh Elementary and Crosby High schools in the Waterbury school district were Tier I schools; cited as among the State's "persistently lowest-achieving schools" (US Dept. of Education, 2010, p. 6).
- Tier 2: Schools performing in the bottom five percent of state-administered standardized tests and eligible, but that do not receive, Title I funds with a graduation rate under 60 percent.
- Tier 3: Title I schools that are not in the program improvement, corrective action or restructuring (Carpenter et al., 2015; LeFloch et al., 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015).

The guidelines for determining the lowest 5 percent of a state's school are left up to each state. The selection process is ambiguous and can be tricky (Trujillo & Rene, 2015). Schools are prioritized based upon assessments determined by each state, which then determines weight factors—one procedure over another, absolute test scores or a lack of test score progress over time (Trujillo & Rene, 2015).

In addition to identifying low-performing schools, states were also asked to choose one of four intervention models, each of which Strauss (2011) pointed out derived from corporate practices in the private sector, they are: turnaround (also the name of the broader program), transformation, restart, or closure (Carpenter et al., 2015; LeFloch et al., 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015).

- Closure: the school must close (Carpenter et al., 2015; LeFloch et al., 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015).

- Restart: the school is converted or closed and reopened under a charter school operator, charter management organization, or education management organization.
- Transformation: the school's principal is fired. Accountability systems are created to reward and sanction principals and teachers based upon student achievement. Teacher recruitment, retention, and professional development strategies are implemented along with a series of structural and curricular changes.
- Turnaround: the school's principal and up to half of the teachers are fired. The Waterbury school district chose the turnaround model for Walsh and Crosby (US Dept. of Education, 2010).

As of 2014, the turnaround model was chosen by 20 percent of the 1600 SIG-funded schools in the United States (Trujillo & Rene, 2015). The evolution of the current educational application of the turnaround model began with the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Duke, 2012). The passing of NCLB devoted a great deal of attention to students labeled at risk (Duke, 2012). According to Duke (2012) prior to NCLB, "at-risk" referred to children that came into schools with certain social dilemmas, such as poverty. However, NCLB raised another possibility, that in addition to poverty, the schools that children were required to attend could also place them at-risk. Under NCLB, schools, once deemed a safe haven for children labeled educationally disadvantaged, at-risk, and Title I, was now being labeled at-risk in themselves (Duke, 2012; Stein, 2004). The discursive shift meant that not only students but also their schools were deemed at risk and problematic.

From at-risk kids to at-risk schools. Daniel L. Duke (2012) noted, "students were at risk, in other words, by virtue of the school they were required to attend" (p. 9). This discursive shift in the connotation of at-risk by NCLB restructured the entire educational reform movement (Duke, 2012). The politically charged

discourses inherent in NCLB, and to its predecessor turnaround, placed entire schools under duress, including principals, teachers, students and their parents. This turmoil can be seen in Waterbury and the greater urban community where the children lived. Stein (2004) noted, "The new focus of the school as the policy target shifted the notion of poverty and its consequences from the indiviudal children to entire schools, communities, and areas" (p. 81). This policy shift does not appear to account for, nor consider, historical and social-political context in which these schools and communities exist (Stein, 2004). Walsh and Crosby were identified as Tier I schools, which is the most chronic of all low-performing schools (US Dept. of Education, 2010). Recommendations for these schools according to the State of Connecticut's application ranged from school closure to displacement of educators and staff, allocating grant funds for additional training and resources and school transfers of students (US Dept. of Education, 2010).

It is important to note that the labeling of schools as low-performing or at-risk was determined on the basis of criteria that came from federal government policies (Duke, 2012; Stein, 2004). These federal policies did not share the community cultural values of Waterbury where schools were valued for characteristics other than standardized test scores.

Implementation of Turnaround and Accountability

Once turnaround is granted and implemented, schools must comply with the Adequate Yearly Progress report (AYP). If schools are non-compliant with AYP for two consecutive years, they must develop a School Improvement Plan, use a share of their Title I funds for professional development, and provide students with an option to transfer to another school. After a third consecutive year of failing to make AYP school programs and tutoring services for students would have to be provided (Duke,

2012; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). The State of Connecticut gives local school districts autonomy in AYP reporting measures and standards (US Dept. of Education, 2010).

AYP in Waterbury. On December 3, 2010, Michelle Rosado, on behalf of the State of Connecticut Department of Education, as part of the turnaround application process, applied for School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding for Title I eligible schools. In the Purpose of the Program section of that application, it stated: "school improvement funds are to be focused on each State's 'Tier I' and 'Tier II' schools" (US Dept. of Education, 2010, p. ii). In this application, Walsh and Crosby are the only two Waterbury Schools cited as Tier I schools. Tier I schools "are the lowest-achieving 5 percent of a State's Title I schools in improvement" (US Dept. of Education, 2010, p. ii). Walsh and Crosby, due to their citation as among the State's "persistently lowest-achieving schools", were to be AYP compliant as part of the funding criteria for turnaround (US Dept. of Education, 2010, p. 6). The State of Connecticut requests a plan of action for non-compliant schools, schools that are not reaching their yearly academic goals.

School culture in Waterbury. Stein (2004) explained how the evolution of categories and discourses of the culture of policy folded Title I beneficiaries into constructs to be viewed as "potentially dangerous and disruptive" (p. 59). AYP requirements affected the school culture of Walsh and Crosby in many ways. For instance, there was a more pronounced police presence in school buildings at Crosby (as well as the other urban middle and high schools in the district). In an article published by CBS 46 it was noted, "at many Waterbury public schools, it is becoming a more common sight to see school resource officers [police]" (Naples, 2014). In the 2012-13 school year the Waterbury School District reported 384 arrests. Waterbury Board of Education member Karen Harvey placed the, significantly high, number of arrests in context by questioning the lopsided number of minority teachers in comparison to the students in the Waterbury district. "Over 75 percent of our

students are minority. Yet less than 5 percent of the teachers and administrators are minorities" (Naples, 2014). Parents and community members have complained at Board of Education meetings as well as to media about police being notified before parents about discipline concerns, which often times led to arrests (Naples, 2014). These shifts, away from contacting parents and community intervention to police intervention and criminalizing school behaviors, went against local cultural norms.

The discipline culture in Waterbury. The discursive shift from considering at-risk children to at-risk schools was evidenced by how Waterbury schools were framed (impoverished, low-performing, at-risk, uninvolved/unconcerned parents, future criminals, et.al), as well as in the strategies utilized for educational policy implementation. The shift away from student intervention with parental and community-involement to police-intervntion and criminalizing students in Waterbury is an important component of this study. After year one of turnaround and as part of the AYP criteria, the Waterbury school district issued a report signed by the school superintendent Kathleen Ouelette on June 19, 2014. The report was a "district self-diagnostic tool" to identify needs and strengths within the district (Waterbury School District, 2014, p. 3). In a section of the report titled "Culture & Climate", the Waterbury School District identified its strength as having increased capacity of schools' responses to "negative student behavior" (Waterbury School District, 2014, p. 3). This "strength" is predicated on the district's creation of a job position called "behavior technicians" to help decrease school suspensions along with an increase of police officers in the Waterbury schools. A school "security and school safety coordinator" was hired. The duties and plans of the coordinator were reviewed and coordinated with the Waterbury Police Department (Waterbury School District, 2014, p. 3). These tactics resulted in an escalation of district-wide student arrests that, in some years, reached close to 400 (Naples, 2014; Waterbury School District, 2014). This study found that disciplinary culture was shifted away from local preferences

while ignoring community norms and values (Crosby; Franklin; Harvey; interview; Naples, 2014).

Cops and schools. The Waterbury School District received widespread complaints about school arrests in the years preceding turnaround. In 2015, Connecticut Voices for Children, published a report titled Keeping Kids in Class: School Discipline in Connecticut, 2008-2013 analyzed data statewide (Iverson, Joseph, & Oppenheimer, 2015). The report noted "Extensive research shows that excluding children from school for disciplinary problems is often ineffective and counterproductive. Children learn best when they are in school" (Iverson et al., 2015, p. 1). Additonally the report found that Black students were five times more likely to be arrested, five times more likely to be expelled, and more than six times more likely to be assigned out-of-school suspension than White students. Further, Latinx students were arrested three times more, expelled twice as often and suspended four times more than White students. These problems were exacerbated in the poorest urban districts, such as in Waterbury. Compared to students in wealthy suburbs, the poorest students in Waterbury were arrested 23 times more, expelled 17 times more, and cited for out-of-school suspension 24 times more than their wealthier counterparts (Iverson et al., 2015). These data reinforce the deleterious claims that culturally unresponsive policy and or leadership have upon schooling in minoritized communities. Furthermore, we can see the need for and the potential that Culturally Responsive Leadership models can have in correcting these predicaments.

Waterbury Board of Education member Karen Harvey correlated school suspensions and excessive disciplinary action of Black and Latinx students to a lack of "Black male [Latino] role models" (Harvey, interview). In my personal conversation with Harvey, she expressed concerns that reflect broader statistical concerns concerning low numbers of teachers from Black and Brown communities,

specifically culturally responsive Black male teachers in districts with large numbers of Black students. She stated that "the role models that need to be in front of the kids need to be increased" there needs to be an increase in Black and Latinx teachers "that will stand in front of our students every single day and teach our students" (Harvey, interview). Furthermore, she stated "kids come from different backgrounds people say, 'oh it's poverty' I don't buy that …I think that we need to infuse into school's representation that is similar to what they see out here in the world" (Harvey, interview). In this statement, Harvey rejects the culture of poverty ideology that fueled a culture of policy discourse that fuel equity-oriented policies such as ESEA 1965 and its subsequent reauthorizations and policy practices such as turnaround (Stein, 2004).

Minoritized local school officials, such as Karen Harvey, and others perceive ESEA and turnaround as culturally unresponsive leadership. Denoris Crosby is a retired African American administrator at the Connecticut State Board of Education and a former high school principal and teacher with over 30 years of experience as a Connecticut educator. Crosby said to me in conversation that he was a "huge advocate" of parental involvement, and that as an administrator and teacher over the years that he always welcomed parents. Furthermore, as for the cultural deficit depictions of minoritized communities, parents and students—fundamental to the culture of policy discourses—Crosby said, "I never went with that" (Crosby, interview). Although Crosby is just one example he is evidence of a culturally responsive and inclusive school leader.

Contemporary Turnaround and its Place in History

According to Russakoff (2015), the contemporary education reform model rests upon a generations-old foundation. This generations-old model of education and schooling began with rich White early 20th century industrialists. Duke (2012) argued that the role of policymakers is more significant "than educators, their professional organizations, and university-based researchers" (p. 23). However, there is not a consensus among educators regarding Duke's (2012) claim. It should be noted that policymakers and their agendas face resistance at each level: from the policy arena to the schools. In any case, in this study of the Waterbury School District, Duke's (2012) claim proves true.

Money and the Local Politics of Education

Reginald Beamon Sr.'s statement that Waterbury politics' only concern was money; lends credibility to Russakoff's (2015) analysis of rich Whites guiding contemporary schooling and education reform. Furthermore, Beamon's statement proves insightful regarding the disconnection between policymakers and educators and educational researchers argued by Duke (2012).

Beamon suggested that it was improbable that the Whites in power in Waterbury would, willingly, share political power and control of the lofty purse strings attached to education in Waterbury with minoritized community members. "There's no way. In the city of Waterbury, with all that kind of money coming in, they were gonna allow non-political players and those who look like 'us' [African American] control those purse strings. That's from a political standpoint" (Beamon, interview). Furthermore, Black and minoritized community members working for the best interest of poor urban students appear as troublesome, are often ostracized and pushed out of the district.

This disposition and use/abuse of power are aligned with Young's (2004) critique of the ways Eurocentric power structures and systems relegate minoritized communities to the periphery. This Eurocentric disposition has positioned itself as omnipotent and universal (Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2012).These Eurocentric dispositions manifest themselves in educational policies, discourses, and practices. Eurocentric educational policies are the antithesis of culturally responsive leadership.

Duke's (2012) claim that policymakers and their agendas supersede goals of educators is corroborated in this study when looking at the Connecticut State Government. For example, in 2017[4], the State of Connecticut granted education budget increases for 52 cities and towns in the state. As a result, Waterbury received a $38 million increase in their education budget. Though the funds were intended for education the Governor declared that municipalities could spend the money however they deemed suitable[5].

Patrice McCarthy, the Deputy Director of the Connecticut Association of Board of Education furthers Duke's (2012) contention that political decisions can be detrimental to the best interest of schools and advocates of education in minoritized and impoverished districts. McCarthy was aghast by the governor's decision to allow local municipalities autonomy in directing additional funds[6]. McCarthy noted that, if the aid is not required to be spent on education then it should not be called education aid. Moreover, McCarthy stated that no one should be surprised when local municipalities do not use the money on education. "It's not going to go to support

[4] 2017 is outside of the scope of my 2011-2016 life history case study timeline. But the information is pertinent to this inquiry.
[5] This is not suggesting that the city of Waterbury could not use the money for other non-educational expenses that may be related to schools and can benefit schooling overall. Benefits such as book bag giveaways and paving roads near schools. However, one of the questions that continued to come up in this inquiry was; where is the money for turnaround going?
[6] The local municipalities (Waterbury) could become more culturally responsive and inclusive; and incorporate the concerns of the 85 percent Black and Brown population into their fiscal decisions.

student needs in most communities…It's important that people understand that education grants might not be being spent on education" (Rabe Thomas, 2017). The transparency, or lack thereof, of local government spending, is further complicated by Waterbury's long history of mayoral corruption and graft (Leduff, 1991). Aware of this history, concerned residents, who know that the mayor controls the city's educational budget, worry that the money deemed for education in the poorest communities will not be used there.

Voices from a Community

It is important to note that most of the students attending Walsh Elementary School were not White; however, almost all of the teachers and staff were White. In an interview with Athena Wagner, I asked her about Erik Brown, she stated, "he's a good educator, he's fair, he knows his craft and in an urban district he is culturally competent" (Wagner, interview). Jonell Pendarvis, an African American woman and parent of a Walsh student during Brown's tenure, stated, "Most parents were upset because they liked him [Erik Brown]; they felt he had been singled out" (J. Pendarvis, interview). Jonell Pendarvis' son Gerron Pendarvis at the time of our conversation in 2017 was a junior in college. When asked about Erik Brown, Gerron said to me that Brown gave him "life lessons" and talked to him about "real life stuff" (G. Pendarvis, interview). Waterbury Board of Education member, Karen Harvey, stated, "I am a big fan of Erik [Brown] I believe in listening to what the kids want and what the parents want…However, I am one… [the] only [African American] sitting on the board… when [we were] going through this with Erik" (Harvey, interview). In her response, Karen Harvey referenced that, she, the only African American on the Waterbury Board of Education, was the lone voice in favor of Erik Brown remaining the principal of Walsh. Juanita Hernandez the other African

American (self-identified) board member became a board member after the decision was made to remove Erik Brown from Walsh.

Educational leadership should be cognizant of the significance of cultural factors in all aspects of human endeavor, particularly school success. To many in the communities that Walsh School served, Erik Brown was considered family. He was more than just a principal to the students at Walsh. During a Board of Education meeting, parents expressed remorse as they retold stories of their children crying and being sad because of the departure of Erik Brown from his school community (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013). Due to the outpour of support from community members, it can be argued that Erik Brown was serving a local need to students and their families, beyond test scores, that was not recognized by the criteria of the turnaround policy, specifically and not valued by the educational administration in the Waterbury school district.

Policy, leadership and contrasting community voices. Federally mandated policies such as turnaround do not account for local community perspectives. Duke (2012) argued that policymakers are driving universal approaches to school reform, hoping "to get low-performing schools to function like high-performing schools" (p. 23). This low-performance vs. high-performance dichotomy is based upon assumptions steeped in White cultural dominance and norms. This cultural dominance is an epistemological imposition designed as educational standards of knowledge imposed and projected as universal/global designs (Mignolo, 2012).

Educational leadership and community support. Erik Brown and his, then, vice principal Maria Zillo received widespread support from Walsh parents and many other stakeholders in the Black and Latinx communities in Waterbury. This community support was in contrast with a White hierarchy of educational leadership in Waterbury that included the mayor, the superintendent and a majority of the

Board of Education members. As a result, both Erik Brown and vice principal Maria Zillo were removed from Walsh. In the early implementation stages of turnaround at Walsh, Walsh School Governance Council President, Athena Wagner, stated to the local newspaper, the Waterbury Republican American, "I see an absolute determination to rid the school of its administrators regardless of the sentiments of parents and some staff" (Groman, 2013). Three years later, in that same newspaper, Wagner expounded, "it seems that people here, administrators, staff, that genuinely care about these children and go above and beyond do not get the support they need from central office" (Puffer, 2016b). Wagner's statements are examples of a local response to educational leadership that is culturally unresponsive, which is experienced by local people as a kind of cultural violence.

The cultural violence on display in Waterbury is, among other things, epistemic. Epistemic violence refers to the damage done to the ways of knowing and understanding of minoritized communities and communities of color (Spivak, 1988). Santos (2014) called this violence against knowledge epistemicide. This epistemic violence or epistemicide, are the end results of what Mignolo (2012) called "hegemonic epistemology" (p. xvii)—an unflinching Eurocentric disposition unwilling to give up power or empower those in communities who are culturally predisposed and inclined to best serve their communities. This hegemonic epistemology is enacted through education reform policies and is implicated in aiding in the death of these communities. In order to truly reform and revitalize urban communities, such policies must be identified, understood, decolonized and resisted: in thought, in practice, and out-loud.

The mayor and the last word. Perhaps, Duke's (2012) contention that the role of policymakers is more significant "than educators, their professional organizations, and university-based researchers" (p. 23) is best captured in the closing statement of the mayor of Waterbury at the contentious Board of Education

meeting on July 31, 2013. The July 31, 2013 Board Meeting was flooded with community activists, parents, and students voicing their concern for the turnaround strategies being used and the removal of Erik Brown from Walsh. According to the minutes, the mayor concluded the meeting by saying,

> The facts are that as the Mayor of the City of Waterbury I've had numerous meetings and conversations, in person and telephonically, with [State of Connecticut Board of Education] Commissioner [Stephon] Pryor and Governor Malloy and they both have enormous respect for what's happening in this district and I think you all should be proud of the work that Superintendent Ouellette has done. Lucky for you guys I'm done. Thank you. (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 31)

There is a clear difference between the mayor's "facts" as stated above and the lived reality of activists, community leaders, parents, and children in the African American and Latinx communities in Waterbury. Hegemonic epistemology (Mignolo, 2012) and its resultant epistmicide (Santos, 2014) allow us to see, further into, the aforementioned chain of apparent contradictions on display in Waterbury.

Paradox in the Turnaround Policy

The school turnaround movement is aligned with a history of educational reform that is paradoxical in nature. Scholars Peck and Reitzug (2014) and Trujillo and Rene (2015) noted a series of paradoxes that characterized the recent fervor of turnaround. For example, the concept of turnaround mirrors concepts and strategies found in organizational management literature over the past 30-40 years. Yet, educational leadership's contemporary embrace of these, now dated, organizational management concepts and strategies are perceived as an innovative-silver-bullet to quickly and drastically—turnaround—improve low-performing schools (Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015).

The literature on the federal government's turnaround policy places a heavy emphasis on distributed leadership; yet at the same time application of the turnaround policy places the principal as nearly solely responsible for school success or failure (Peck & Reitzug, 2014; Trujillo & Rene, 2015). This can be seen in Erik Brown's case. The Connecticut Commissioner's Network that was created as a result of turnaround, audited Walsh School and Erik Brown's leadership practices while he was principal. In spite of their stated commitment to distributed leadership, the Connecticut Commissioner's Network determined Brown was solely responsible for the failures of the school from low academic performance to the implementation of new curriculum and teacher staff development strategies. In practice, it could not have been the sole responsibility of Erik Brown to raise achievement at Walsh; the superintendent, as well as the school Board of Education, would have also been involved in all of the policy implementation at the time. Erik Brown's attorneys made this argument for distributed leadership in his federal lawsuit (racial discrimination) against the Waterbury Board of Education and the superintendent of schools (United States District Court & District of Connecticut, 2016). The United States District Court Judge assigned to the case, Michael P. Shea, agreed with this sentiment.

Parental Involvement and Turnaround

A central intent of the turnaround model for school improvement is to improve outcomes for students, yet there is only scant mention of students and their needs in the literature on turnaround policy. According to Peck and Reitzug (2014) students are separated by their "achievement" (meaning test scores) and thus essentialized as concepts—student-achievement—(low-performing vs. high performing), which dehumanizes them.

Trujillo and Rene (2015) highlight that the involvement and support of parents is essential for effective schooling, yet parental involvement is only

marginally mentioned in turnaround policy literature. However, Connecticut sought to address this omission by creating the School Governance Council (SGC). Connecticut designed the SGC to be a liaison between the schools in turnaround and the families of their students. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) facilitated the turnaround process. State Commissioner Stefan Pryor initiated The Commissioner's Network: High School turnaround Plan of Action (Pryor, 2013). The commissioner's network is known as The Network. In the overview section of The Network's plan of action for turnaround it states, "The Commissioner's Network (the Network) is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to dramatically improve student achievement in up to 25 schools" (Pryor, 2013, p. 1). The statute goes on to claim, "the network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner" (Pryor, 2013, p. 1). The Network stipulates that no more than 25 schools can be a part of the network per year and only 2 schools per district. Once The Network selects schools the local school board must establish a turnaround Committee. With the establishment of the turnaround Committee the CSDE, in consultation with the local board of education, the school governance council, must conduct "an operations and instructional audit of the school" (Pryor, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, "the turnaround committee, in consultation with the School Governance Council, shall develop the turnaround Plan" according to the state statute C.G.S. 10-223h(d) (Pryor, 2013, p. 1). The State of Connecticut initiated the SGC to capitulate to the turnaround policy requirements for parental involvement.

The turnaround committee and SGC at Walsh. Though SGC was developed to connect the turnaround schools with community stakeholders, Athena Wagner told me that the design of SGC essentially rendered SGC ineffective and powerless. She stated that though she was school governance council president at

Walsh she was not a part of the turnaround committee's audit of Walsh School. Moreover, the details of the audit of Walsh were never shared with her. Ultimately, the audit served as the impetus that led to the removal of Erik Brown from Walsh. The audit conducted by the turnaround committee claimed that over 30 staff members at Walsh accused Erik Brown of bullying and intimidation by the mostly White teachers and staff at Walsh. Athena Wagner's exclusion from the turnaround Committee's audit of Walsh may have been in violation of the state statute C.G.S. 10-223h(d). As The Network guidelines clearly indicate that collaboration between the SGC and the local turnaround committee is necessary for the audit and creation of turnaround strategies for state turnaround schools (Pryor, 2013). This overstep is significant because the SGC had a stellar reputation with Walsh parents and their communities.

The turnaround audit and findings. According to the superintendent and the Waterbury Board of Education, Brown was demoted due to 30 complaints gathered from—the mostly White—teachers and staff during the turnaround Committee's State-mandated audit. However, Wagner felt the findings were not credible; and furthermore these perspectives should not have been the only perspectives that mattered. As a result, a result of the turnaround committees findings against Erik Brown, Wagner presented to the Board of Education a petition of 60 signatures from Walsh School parents that wanted Brown reinstated as principal at Walsh, to which she asked, "so is it only the teachers that matter?" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 4). In addition to Wagner, Joshua, a Walsh School student addressed the Waterbury Board of Education at a meeting held on July 31, 2013. During his presentation to the board, Joshua proclaimed: "I want Mr. Brown back at Walsh school" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 17). And lastly, Ramona Diaz, a Latina parent who addressed the board on the same day; stated that the removal of Erik Brown from

Walsh was like a "punishment" to the kids—who were never asked their perspective of Erik Brown by turnaround auditors (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 18). [7]

Reflections of Principal Erik Brown

I interviewed Gerron Pendarvis a former student at Walsh during Erik Brown's tenure. At the time of our interview, he was a junior in college on a full scholarship to play division 1 football in New Jersey. Pendarvis was a student at Walsh from 3-5th grade with Erik Brown. I asked him his thoughts about Erik Brown losing his job. Pendarvis had not known that Brown was no longer the principal at Walsh. He also did not know of all the turmoil that had occurred at Walsh: the fallout from turnaround implementation, the removal of Brown and the racial divide that occurred due to White teachers lodging complaints against Brown amidst overwhelming support from many Black and Latinx parents and community members. The following is the exchange between Gerron Pendarvis and I.

> JW: So when you heard about… (Brown) in 2013, so 3-4 years ago, you were still in High School; how did you feel when you heard about him losing his job?
>
> GJ: I didn't even know he lost his job.
>
> JW: Oh really?!
>
> GJ: Yea I didn't know.
>
> JW: Ohhh so until just now when I told you?

[7] It is believed by some, but can't be proven that the White teachers were either coerced into saying they were being bullied, or that the number of complaints against Brown is inaccurate. The number came from an investigation by the Turnaround Commissioner at the outset of Turnaround in 2013, which was the impetus for Brown's removal. The report said that there were 30 teachers that made that claim; however, the report to my knowledge has never been made public, even though it's often quoted in the media. I searched, but was unable to find the report, and the investigators and community activists couldn't retrieve it either.

GJ: Yea. Oh yea.

JW: So well let me explain what happened: back in 2013 Walsh was affected by students having low-test scores. So as part of this program to turnaround the school and boost test scores … (Brown was) demoted (and) he ended up losing his job (as the head principal at Walsh)…

GJ (cutting me off): I wouldn't say that it was his fault for low-test scores. He tried a lot. When I was there he tried a lot, he pushed the teachers a lot. He would get on them about our grades and stuff like that. (G. Pendarvis, interview)

Turnaround and Erik Brown

Juanita Hernandez, one of the two African American women commissioners on the Waterbury Board of Education asserted that turnaround was a good thing. She indicated that efforts to change low-test scores at Crosby High and Walsh Elementary schools were positive. Mrs. Hernandez noted that there were signs of improvement following the implementation of turnaround programs. It is important to note, however, that Juanita Hernandez became a commissioner after turnaround was implemented and Erik Brown was removed from Walsh.

Karen Harvey, the second of the two African American commissioners, and the longest-tenured commissioner on the Waterbury Board of Education also displayed positive regard for the intent of the turnaround program but did so cautiously. She stated,

> What it (turnaround) has done is it's opened doors for resources, that's what it's supposed to do, and divert money to schools who are suffering, our students that are needing academic help, so in that regard it puts attention and focus on those schools. (emphasis added) (Harvey, interview)

She elaborates further, perhaps in reference to her previous doubtful tone:

> The ugly portion (of turnaround) is the mayor in his position, and he did this quietly, but he more or less influenced who we put in there as a principal, we have for example, we have a principal who was in there who was African American and the [White] mayor wasn't really that keen about him, and so he worked on ways to get him out…now we can't point out…put our fingers exactly on what he did but he did express that he didn't have confidence in that particular principal… however, the parents loved him, the kids loved him, and uh it didn't matter because this is what the mayor wanted. (Harvey, interview)

In her response, Ms. Harvey indicated that Erik Brown was not the principal the mayor wanted during the turnaround process. However, mayoral control and culturally unresponsive educational reform policies and leadership practices contributed to the removal of a principal who was well loved by the parents and children of Walsh Elementary School.

The Mayoral Rebuttal: July 31, 2013

Harvey's statement regarding the mayor's lack of enthusiasm for Erik Brown was corroborated by Board of Education meeting minutes. The mayor is quoted extensively about his view of Erik Brown in the minutes from July 31, 2013. Community members, parents of Walsh students, Walsh students, and community activists voiced concern regarding the removal of Brown and turnaround implementation strategies. Toward the end of the meeting, the Mayor addressed the board and is quoted as having "motion sickness" and stated he was "disappointed" at "the people…so vocal…spewing their cynical comments" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 29).

The mayor, addressing the Board of Education expressed hope that the Board had "learned something from the Walsh School debacle" (Waterbury Board of

Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 29). The mayor continued to explain, "and I call it a debacle because when I was the Police Chief I used to visit Walsh School regularly" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 29). As a result, the Mayor continued, "I had a relationship with Mr. Brown so I feel like I'm entitled to say what's on my mind based of my knowledge" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 29). The Mayor's statement concerning Erik Brown and the people that came to support him was roughly around 1700 words. The mayor conceded, "I actually think Mr. Brown is probably a very good teacher. I think he's a good person. I think he tries" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 30). The Mayor went on to explain that based on his "research", Erik Brown should never have been made principal at Walsh. The mayor likened Erik Brown and his appointment as principal of Walsh without ever being an administrator to his "world" as a police officer. "So in my world that would be like taking a patrol officer and putting him in as the Chief of Police" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 30).

The mayor went on to acknowledge the significant presence of various community members in support of Erik Brown at the meeting, however, he reiterated that the Superintendent and the Board of Education made the right decision by removing Brown from Walsh. The mayor assured the Board and those in attendance that he, as mayor, had been in contact with the Commissioner of the State Board of Education and the Governor of Connecticut and that they "both have enormous respect for what's happening" in the Waterbury school district (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 31).

A Community Speaks and Addresses Turnaround

When I asked Reginald Beamon, Sr. his thoughts on turnaround, he referred me to others, such as Harvey, Hernandez, and Athena Wagner. Reginald Beamon, Sr. is a retired Connecticut State Legislator of 20 years and a former local Waterbury elected official, State Representative. Mr. Beamon is a community activist and organizer and runs a non-profit organization in Waterbury designed to help inner-city youth and young males with job training and educational initiatives. He is also a political science professor at a local community college. Beamon admitted that he was less aware of school policy than the aforementioned. In any case, I still wanted to hear his perspective so I pushed further and asked his opinion of turnaround as a politician when considering the broader context of Waterbury politics. Beamon said, with the turnaround schools you had the purse strings coming from the state [of Connecticut] with special grants of which principals had autonomy to hire, and to implement what they felt their schools needed in order to succeed." Beamon further indicated that in his opinion money allotted for turnaround would be controlled from one source (City Hall) and suggested that such principal autonomy could be problematic in Waterbury, especially because of mayoral control. Beamon was emphatic that non-White and non-political players would not be allowed, or voluntarily empowered, to control Title I funds of which substantial increases emerged due to turnaround.

The Erik Brown Roadblock

Beamon was elected for multiple terms as State Representative and had an insider's perspective on local politics and governance in Waterbury. Beamon's emphasis on the power that turnaround would grant Erik Brown, via hiring and spending autonomy, suggests that Beamon (according to his perspective as an

experienced political player in Connecticut as well in Waterbury) knew that City Hall and the mayor's office would not support Erik Brown being in control of the funding designated for Walsh Elementary School. Erik Brown was demoted and subsequently removed from Walsh during the middle of the school year in 2013.

The Fallout from Brown's Removal

Denoris Crosby, an African American male, was a retired state of Connecticut administrator at the Connecticut State Board of Education and a former high school principal and teacher. Due to his experience working with problem schools, Crosby was recommended to temporarily replace Erik Brown. When asked about the turnaround policy specifically, Crosby stated that he "didn't think much of it" and thought of it as a "money grab" (Crosby, interview). During our interview, Crosby had this to say regarding school personnel at Walsh Elementary School: "teachers/staff, excellent, very good staff" (Crosby, interview). Crosby also noticed a very distinct "culture of fear and intimidation" at Walsh. Crosby noted a

> Culture of fear and intimidation… and [I] understood their [teachers and staffs] sentiments because they didn't know why I was there [after Brown's removal]. I Tried to make them feel comfortable, [I] brought in coffee and donuts to break the ice… [I] was not sure why the trauma was there. (Crosby, interview)

Mr. Crosby indicated that he had empathy for the staff at Walsh having just lost their principal and the uncertainty of their futures due to turnaround along with the anxiety of his presence and various other related uncertainties.

Tragic cases of turnaround. Mr. Crosby's analysis of Walsh was reminiscent of a study of turnaround conducted in a school in Texas. Amanda Walker Johnson's (2013) critical ethnography cited J High School in Austin Texas. J High School implemented the turnaround intervention model school closure (one of the 4

intervention models of turnaround, i.e. turnaround, restart, school closure and transformation) for persistent school failure. Johnson (2013) claimed that her historical analysis of J High School illustrates the contradictions of desegregation. The author asserts that there is a connection between "failing" schools and segregation in Austin in particular and the United States in general.

> Behind the "failure" of J High School lie the traces of the contradictions of segregation and desegregation policy, the imprint of tactics made to evade equity orders, as well as the retranslation of the goals of educational policy in Texas from the 1960s to 2009, from redress to punishment. (Johnson, 2013, p. 236)

The author contended that the turnaround approach used in J High School ended with a traumatic closing that the author called "shock therapy." Johnson (2013) concluded that J High's closing signaled a familiar shuffle between neglect and extreme means of intervention, which, in many respects mirrors what is occurring in Waterbury.

Similarly, Carpenter, Bukoski, Berry, and Mitchell (2015) explored turnaround strategies in the context of high-stakes accountability and its utility toward improving persistently low-achieving (PLA) schools. A key finding of their study was that turnaround principals were "confronted with the brutal reality of standardized success on federally defined measures" (Carpenter et al., 2015, p. 25) as the driving indicator of school success.

Spillane and Lee's (2014) longitudinal mixed-methods study of novice principals in Chicago Public School system (CPS) explored the "reality shocks" that these new school leaders experience. In their study, the authors share the experience of Rich, a young White principal, who was thrust into the turmoil of school turnaround. Rich recalled that it was like being pulled in "about 100 very different but not always complementary directions" (Spillane & Lee, 2014, p. 450).

Turnaround success. Hitchings and Zeitz (2015) investigated the effectiveness of the turnaround policy's transformative intervention model in 19 low-performing schools in Kentucky. The 3-year study was a comparative analysis between the achievement scores of students attending transformation high schools versus those attending turnaround schools. While controlling for differences in SES and race in the schools' population, the study determined that both transformation and turnaround models produced significant increases in test scores over time. The researchers adopted a "postpositivist worldview" and employed a quantitative research approach that they defined as "testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (Hitchings & Zeitz, 2015, p. 81). The "problem" with the study's design, Hitchings and Zeitz (2015) noted, was in line with traditional postpositivist philosophy "in which causes determine effects or outcomes" (p. 81) especially as it relates to the assessment of federal implementation of turnaround and its influence on student achievement.

Hitchings and Zeitz (2015) results found that controlling for race, SES and reduced-lunch status were possibly "confounding" and noted that the population of ethnic-minorities was higher in turnaround schools. The authors sought to address the confounding variables of race, SES and reduced-lunch status by analyzing data of "white students only since that was the only ethnic group that had sufficient data from schools in the two models" (Hitchings & Zeitz, 2015, p. 118). The authors concluded that both models, transformation, and turnaround, produced significant increases in student test scores in these schools over the 3-year period of the study. I argue that causes and effects that are blind to the impact of race and SES are of little value to my study when participant's entire life histories are viewed through the lens of race and SES. This postpositivist perspective, in essence, makes the argument for "'turnaround' success" blurry at best.

In a qualitative case study of turnaround in a Philadelphia school, the conceptual lens of Congruence Model was utilized to emphasize the importance of "fit". Wu (2015) found that low-performing Frederick Douglass was able to successfully turnaround their school serving the same neighborhood and student population. Wu (2015) stated that the predominately "almost 100% black" (Wu, 2016) school Frederick Douglass in Philadelphia was turned around without the traditional method of bussing in students from other parts of the city. In other words, the majority Black student population at Frederick Douglass School in Philadelphia was turned around with its original pre-turnaround student population.

Equity-Oriented Policies and Parental Involvement as Resistance

As a seasoned educator in the Connecticut schools, Denoris Crosby was a "huge advocate" of parental involvement. Crosby does not subscribe to the "myth" that Black parents do not care. He said, "I never went with that" and cited his own examples and initiatives as a high school principal in Connecticut and saw parental involvement as the better alternative to turnaround in general and the implementation strategies of the Waterbury school district specifically. Mr. Crosby's perspective is what Stein (2004) analyzes as resisting culture of policy.

> Legislators frame social problems through proactive rhetorical portraits of policy beneficiaries based on assumptions about the lives that those affected by the policy lead. Federal, state, and local bureaucrats interpret the policy regulations that are built on these assumptions about the lives of the populations served. Local practitioners make their own sense of policy mandates, further interpreting the policy's intent and combining and challenging the policy prescriptions with personal beliefs about the policy beneficiaries. (Stein, 2004, p. 136)

In other words, Crosby not subscribing to the myth that Black parents do not care is his resistance to culture of policy frameworks that undergird equity-oriented policies.

Furthermore, his advocacy of parental involvement is due to his experiences and engagement with policy beneficiaries. Crosby is reinterpreting equity-oriented policies and challenging the deficit discourses aimed at policy beneficiaries.

Stein (2004) deemed that this "myth" cited by Crosby, was integral to culturally unresponsive leadership policies that accused parents and students of lacking "'standard American values'" (p. 42). Crosby spoke in contrast to Stein's (2004) analysis of ESEA and the literature that cultivated so-called equity-oriented educational policies.

In this chapter I provided further analysis to the turnaround policy, and how it was implemented at Walsh Elementary School; along with examples of its implementation in various other states and contexts. The Walsh case provided raw emotions and reignited community activism in Waterbury. Waterbury has a long history of community activism that dates back to the earliest years of African American migration to the city. I plan to pay close attention to the educational administration and leadership discourses and practices in Waterbury for years to come. This reignited spark of community activism has been met with strong resistance descending from the mayor's office.

This chapter set out to show the affects of equity-oriented policies. Equity-oriented policies are couched in culture of poverty discourses. These discourses attempt to convey a cultural deficiency in policy beneficiaries. Stein (2004) refers to this specifically as the culture of education policy, which produced the turnaround policy. Turnaround was implemented into the Waterbury school district in 2011-2012. The turnaround policy as implemented in Waterbury was culturally unresponsive, several examples of this were cited in this chapter, such as a beloved principal, Erik Brown, being demoted and removed. The removal of Erik Brown from Walsh caused an outcry that consumed Walsh, students, parents, community organizers and activists from across the city. Grass-roots parental organizations

emerged and were emboldened as a result of an array of troubling facts. Disconcerting events included the silencing of Walsh parents and the marginalization of non-White administrators and educators in the district. A type of hegemonic epistomolgy was on display in Waterbury causing violence to the culture of Black and Latinx students and their communities. This violence is what Spivak (1988) identified as epistemic violence. There is a culturally responsive resistance to this violence on display in Waterbury.

Chapter 5

Culturally Responsive School Leadership

ESEA 1965 and Title 1's claimant as equity-oriented policy was questioned from their inception. Policy beneficiaries, Black and Brown students and their culture was demeaned and devalued according to standards and values not their own. Stein (2004) argued, "the comparison to a middle-class norm, spoken in the halls of Congress since the mid-1960s, is echoed in the halls of school in the mid-1990s" (p. 93). The congressional hearings leading up to the passage of ESEA 1965 as well as 1970 for reauthorization of ESEA and Title 1 were fueled by inflammatory discourses

and rhetoric in regards policy beneficiaries (Stein, 2004). Blacks and other policy beneficiaries, their culture and their values, were culpable and condemned for their difference to Whites and White norms. Furthermore, in a 1970 analysis of the first 5 years of ESEA's implementation in schools serving African Americans, the NAACP determined that ESEA was culturally unresponsive toward African American students and that Title I funds were being misallocated away from their needs (Stein, 2004). The NAACP was asserting that a culturally responsive approach was missing from these policies (ESEA and Title 1) as well as from the policymakers (some members of Congress). The NAACP's analysis stood "in stark contrast with the overall focus of congressional discourse, in which instruction was to overcome the child's cultural background" (Stein, 2004, p. 58). Stein (2004) maintained that ESEA and Title I were propelled by negative discourses that framed policy beneficiaries' culture as deficient and culpable. Nonetheless, the NAACP in its analysis asserted its "strong support for Title I policy and its commitment to [minoritized] students" and further asserted a need for instruction "more relevant to a child's cultural background" (Stein, 2004, p. 57). Effective Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) recognizes the entrapments caused by epistemological imposition. This means that culturally responsive leadership is sensitive to the learning styles, disposition, and culture of minoritized students.

In Chapter One I introduced a concept known as Culturally Responsive School Leadership. Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) contend that Culturally Responsive Leadership (CRSL) in education is a pivotal metric for understanding effective and impactful relationships between urban community members and educational leadership. Key elements of CRSL are to identify and unpack biases that school leaders have concerning students from urban environments. I note that these biases can occur in Black educators as well; as found in Khalifa's (2015) Can Blacks be Racist? Black on Black Principal Abuse in an Urban School Setting. I do not

essentialize culturally responsive concepts as something that only and all Black educators partake in. As such, I interject what Khalifa (2015) and what Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux (2001) in The Color of School Reform, found: that Black school leaders and educators can and do sometimes espouse the same and similar oppressive and imposing educational expectations and disciplinary tactics upon students of color as do Whites. Khalifa's (2015) study offered "deep implications for our understanding of White supremacy, for it reinforces our understanding that it is systemic and can be reproduced by anyone" (p. 19).

Furthermore, I do not intend to essentialize that educators from other cultures cannot be culturally responsive to students of different cultures. I do, however, maintain that equity-oriented policies and their impact are formidable and that students of color are deeply impacted by ideologies and discourses that find deficiencies in their identities and their cultures. Furthermore, Khalifa et al. (2016) recognized "that culturally responsive leadership is needed in all settings including those not dominated by minoritized students, and that not all students of color are minoritized" (p. 4). Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) contend that effective culturally responsive leaders interact fluently between school and community.

The examination of culturally responsive leadership principles in this chapter is offered to provide a contrast to the effects of turnaround that occurred in Waterbury. In order to illustrate what culturally responsive leadership could look like, I summarize recent literature in Educational Administration that focuses on effective culturally responsive leadership examples. I also focus on interviews that I had with participants in this study, who emphasized, in their own ways, the significance of culture and its impact on schooling. (CRSL) was a key theme that emerged with everyone that I interviewed for this study. CRSL concepts were also indicated through my document analysis of turnaround in Waterbury such as meeting minutes from the Waterbury School Board of Education, particularly the meeting held on July

31, 2013. Khalifa et al.'s (2016) premise that "culturally responsive leaders develop and support the school staff and promote a climate that makes the whole school welcoming, inclusive, and accepting of minoritized schools" (p. 3) provides the premise for the examples for which my arguments rest. This study provides insight into a conscientious collective of educators, administrators, parents, students, and politicians, most of who are African American and Latinx of variant ages, gender and socioeconomic status (SES).

A Culturally Responsive Turnaround Effort

In an exploratory, qualitative case study of a Texas high school, Reyes and Garcia (2014) investigated turnaround of a failing school with high enrollments of impoverished Latinx students who are English-Language Learners (ELL). This research design was used to explore the leadership practices that impact student achievement of Hispanic ELL students. The authors chose this under-researched demographic with the purpose of understanding the practices of a professionally/culturally/linguistically responsive principal and school leader and his effect on student performance in a historically failing school. This context, the authors argued, is pertinent to turnaround success. This study is important to me because it provides a warrant for implications for the types of turnaround success that Erik Brown could have had at Walsh. It appears, from what I learned while conducting this study, that Erik Brown shared many of the qualities of the principal in the Reyes and Garcia (2014) study. Furthermore, while admittedly speculative the Reyes and Garcia's (2014) study offers clues as to what an empowered Erik Brown could have accomplished if he were supported by the educational administration and leadership in Waterbury.

Social Capital as a Tool

Reyes and Garcia (2014) selected a school rated as high-performing by the state education agency. The school enrollment was around 700 students including 96% Hispanic, and 96% Low-Income and 63% ELL. The study showed that the principal practiced a clear understanding of traditional professional knowledge, skills, and experiences. The study also showed that the principal's background knowledge and skills—social capital—as a culturally/linguistically responsive school leader connected him to the families and teachers. The authors argued that data revealed that the principal's social capital attributed to increased student achievement. The principal identified as Mexican rooted in Mexican culture—music, art, dance and literature (Reyes & Garcia, 2014).

Traits of Culturally Responsive Leadership in Waterbury

I never uttered the words or the concept—Culturally Responsive Leadership—to Athena Wagner. Nonetheless, the Reyes and Garcia (2014) study correlated well and is useful for imagining what district support of Erik Brown could have looked like in Waterbury during turnaround. When I asked Athena Wagner about Erik Brown her remarks were indicative of a culturally responsive leader. My statement was, "tell me about Erik Brown" and she replied:

> He's a good educator, he's fair, (and) he knows his craft. And in an urban distric,t he is culturally competent. So when it comes to teachers; he tries to help develop them instead of banging them in the head (this expression means, he tries to help develop them as opposed to humiliate them or shatter their confidence) if they are weak or if they fall short in a certain area. He tries to help to develop them. With (regards to) the children, he becomes very familiar with parents and the community. So the parents know him they come to love him; because they know that he loves the kids. He cares about them. He's not going to do anything to hurt them he's not malicious there's

> no malicious intent when it comes to discipline, but he will check them and check them good. And usually, the parents are on the same page with him. (Parents will respond) Ok, Mr. Brown, you got it. We are good (Parents were open to letting him do his job as he saw fit). I'll deal with the rest when I, (the parent) get home (with regards matters of discipline)…but he knows his craft. (Wagner, interview)

Educational researcher Battiste (2013) called decolonizing education an "act of love" and noted that: "To understand education one must love it or care deeply about learning and accept it as a legitimate process for growth and change" (p. 190). Athena Wagner spoke of love and care between Brown and his students and by extension their parents. Wagner's impression of Brown pushed my thinking further into whom Erik Brown was in the eyes of parents and students of the Walsh School community. There are several exchanges that occurred at Board of Education meetings that I uncovered in my document analysis that offered insights. For example, there was Joshua; a Walsh School third-grader's statement to the board "I want Mr. Brown back at Walsh school" (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 17).

Encompassing Community

Ramona Diaz, a Hispanic mother of a Walsh student also addressed her concerns of Erik Brown's removal and the impact it had on the school and her child. She stated through a Spanish translator—a Board of Education commissioner, Mr. Rodriquez—

> She said goodnight her name is Ramona Diaz. She's a parent of one of the children at Walsh School. She's here to say that she didn't forget what you guys are doing at Walsh School. She said what you're doing to change the principal at Walsh School are worrying the kids at Walsh. She said she used to

> go there and witness what Mr. Brown used to do with the kids and that now it's terrible, the conditions that Walsh is currently in. She said she can promise you that having a child at Walsh School that Mr. Brown and Mrs. Zillo (the vice principal at Walsh that was also removed with Erik Brown) were excellent principals. What she was saying is, what she sees happening, it's like a punishment, you didn't do this but I'm still gonna demote you, that we can figure out a way to resolve the issue without harming the children at Walsh. She's saying that (asking if) someone brought to your attention what was going on with the students at Walsh, did someone investigate and speak with the kids to see how they felt during the investigation process, she's saying (asking) did someone do that. That you were only taking the information from the teachers and that's what you based your investigation on. She saw the before and the after (Walsh school with Mr. Brown and Walsh after Mr. Brown left) and the difference of that. (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 18-19)

Ramona Diaz's comments speak volumes to what had occurred at Walsh, some of which is not apparent in the transcript. For example, during Erik Brown's tenure as principal, Walsh held daily morning meetings in the school gymnasium before the start of school. Morning meetings, I discovered, were used to infuse positivity and a sense of community into the school. Parents were welcomed and many of them attended and the children enjoyed the morning meetings as well. However, after Brown was removed from Walsh the morning meetings changed and eventually stopped because turnaround policies do not recognize morning meetings as important features of school leadership. Parents, as well as children, were upset about the morning meetings being discontinued after Brown's removal. Parent organizers circulated the memo notifying them of the stoppage. Parents responded to this stoppage and decried it was an "immediate retaliation against Walsh parents

and STUDENTS following a States ethics complaint against the Waterbury School District filed by a parent advocacy organization" (Samuel, 2013)! Members of the parent advocacy organization organized a protest against the stoppage and posted this on their social media platform:

> On April 9, 2013, notice was sent to ALL Walsh School Parents and Guardians banning them from participating in school-wide informational 'morning meetings' that parents have been attending for over seven years allowing them to actively engage in their children's education. (Samuel, 2013)

Organized parents in Waterbury were irate at the memo that canceled the morning meetings. In retaliation, a memo circulated to organize and protest the order citing legal rights of parents. It was noted in the memo that parents should drop their kids off at the front entrance and leave. Furthermore, "despite the 58% Hispanic population [at Walsh], the notice was not translated in Spanish" (Samuel, 2013).

The Latinx parent, Ramona Diaz was responding in part to what many felt upon Brown's removal from Walsh and although the translation of her words according to the transcript does not mention the morning meetings explicitly there are those implications in her address to the board. Furthermore, there was wide sentiment that parents and students were upset that the morning meetings had ended. Joshua, the Walsh student, just quoted above at the board meeting was specific about the morning meetings. He stated to the Board of Education on July 31, 2013.

> Since he [Erik Brown] was removed the morning meeting has changed. The morning meeting was different to do everything. The morning meeting changed we didn't do everything we wanted to do with Mr. Brown and I was kind of upset that we couldn't do it Mr. Brown's way. Thank you. (Waterbury Board of Education Meeting Minutes, 2013, p. 17)

Encompassing Community was a major finding in the Reyes and Garcia (2014) study. The authors found that a school culture that welcomed parents contributed to the success of turnaround. The changing of school culture, the increasing of teacher professionalism, and incorporating Hispanic art and culture attracted parents. At open house, the school invited every member of the extended family, including siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Pertinent to staff development was the importance of having parents participate in their children's education (Reyes & Garcia, 2014).

Khalifa et al. (2016) argued that "culturally responsive leaders develop and support the school staff and promote a climate that makes the whole school welcoming, inclusive, and accepting of minoritized schools" (p. 3). Juanita Hernandez, a Waterbury school board member said about the disconnect felt by minoritized parents in the Waterbury school district "I think the disconnect between the school and parents is the parents don't feel they are welcomed (into their kids' schools). I think that a lot of times they feel they are being belittled and they are not getting that respect" (Hernandez, interview).

Battiste's (2013) argument for decolonizing education points to colonizing and imposing constraints of education to which she says that "to accept education as it is, however, is to betray it" (p. 190). Patel (2015) points to a "deleterious role in perpetuating and refreshing colonial relationships" found within education (p. 12). The paradox between who Erik Brown was in the eyes of the urban community among Latinx's and Blacks who made up over 90 percent of the student population at Walsh, and who Erik Brown was in the eyes of the educational leadership in Waterbury, including the mayor, the superintendent and 8-9 of the 10 Board of Education members whom are all White and from the suburbs, became astonishingly clearer.

Who Erik Brown was, or at least who he had the potential to be, looks different when he is viewed through the gaze of culturally responsive leadership: as a competent educator, that valued the culture of the students at Walsh; that could relate and interact with them and their parents and the communities that they come from. Was Erik Brown an effective culturally responsive leader that most, Latinx and African American parents and urban community members saw him as? Or was he the incompetent educator that the mayor, the superintendent and some of the Board of Education members and several media accounts framed him as? Additional insight and perspective were offered in an interview I conducted with one former student and a parent. One former student that I spoke with was at the time a junior in college. I also interviewed his mother. I was able to interview both of them separately. The former student's parent is named Jonell Pendarvis and I talked with her first.

Vision and Creativity

Ms. Pendarvis' son was at Walsh from grades K-5. Erik Brown arrived when her son was in 3rd grade. Grades Kg-2nd there was a different principal at Walsh. Also of interest was the fact that Ms. Pendarvis did not remember anything about the principal before Erik Brown: except that he was a White male. Pendarvis offers an interesting perspective since she has a before and after understanding of Erik Brown and his leadership at Walsh. I stated to Ms. Pendarvis, "tell me how (Erik) Brown was as a principal". She responded,

> I liked him because he was strict. I mean the kids were kinda wild; I aint gonna (front) (a cultural expression: meant she was being honest) …You know how Walsh school is. I don't know if you know… (but) he brought more school structure. Some of the kids didn't like him but that's because he was so hard (In our cultural expressions, these are positive aspects regarding Mr. Brown's leadership style). (J. Pendarvis, interview)

Ms. Pendarvis' depiction of Erik Brown as someone she liked, but also as strict may seem contradictory. Battiste (2013) reminded us of the "act of love" needed in decolonizing education that those actions of love must be accompanied with a profound understanding of the growth and change potential in education. And that simply accepting the constructs and constraints that education imposes upon marginalized and minoritized communities is an act of betrayal. Erik Brown showed signs of having the foresight and the insight needed to infuse the growth and change into Walsh School. Furthermore, Brown proved to be resistant to accepting what had been occurring at Walsh.

Furthermore, the Reyes and Garcia (2014) study in Texas found Vision and Creativity—a vision for the future and creative methods of making that future—a key aspect in their analysis. Student achievement was intertwined with building a culture of high achievement. I asked Jonell Pendarvis how she would describe the school culture during her son's years at Walsh with Erik Brown; she pointed out "he played no games [and] it was [very] organized" (J. Pendarvis, interview). I asked how, she and other Walsh parents, felt when Brown was removed. She stated, "most parents were upset because they liked him they felt he had been singled out" (J. Pendarvis, interview). I followed up and asked her why did they think he had been singled out? She stated,

> …Teachers were getting upset with him saying he bullied them because he held them accountable if he felt they weren't doing their job (most of the

> teachers at Walsh were White women)… like you're not gonna sit there and socialize in the hallways and not teach the class. They were so used to doing what they wanted and now there was somebody in there demanding that you do what you were supposed to do, doing what you were getting paid for. (J. Pendarvis, interview)

Culturally Competent School Culture

Ms. Pendarvis indicated that teachers were not doing their jobs and that Brown was trying to change the culture and hold teachers accountable. Instituting a Cultural Competent School Culture was a key finding in the Reyes and Garcia (2014) study. The authors argued for the significant role school culture played in turnaround success of a school from consistently failing to a consistently high achieving school and that fusing cultural changes into teachers and staff was imperative. The principal reshaped school culture by reinforcing positive aspects of school culture and worked to transform the negative aspects (Reyes & Garcia, 2014).

Ms. Pendarvis told me that Gerron, her son, did not like Erik Brown and indicated that Brown commanded respect and that he had a similar way with parents as well. I asked was he [Brown] disrespectful in any way? She responded, "No! He wasn't disrespectful at all" (J. Pendarvis, interview). Furthermore, she indicated, "It was his whole body language that kept the kids in line … he just commanded respect that way…" (J. Pendarvis, interview). I wanted to get her son's perspective, now a young man in college in New Jersey at the time of the interview. She gave me his number. His name is Gerron Pendarvis.

Much like his mom Gerron had no recollection of his principal at Walsh before Erik Brown arrived. But now as a 20-year-old young man, and a Division 1 college football player, Gerron had vivid memories of Erik Brown. Gerron recalled that, as his principal, Erik Brown, was "a real strict guy". He described instances when Brown

gave him "life lessons" and planted seeds about "dressing up" (G. Pendarvis, interview). He stated, "he (Erik Brown) would give out awards (referencing the morning meetings) such as principal of the day …you'd have to dress up, suit and tie, (and give presentations) and how kids out here normally don't do that stuff…" (G. Pendarvis, interview). I asked Gerron to reflect back on these "life lessons" now as a young college student, and what his thoughts are now:

> He taught me how to tie a tie and stuff, things that I needed later on in life. And now I am used to wearing a suit now from then (from the Walsh experiences)… and now since I am in college now wearing a suit and tie for presentations is normal to me and I am used to it now and other kids on my team (college football player) I have to help them tie their ties and help them with presentations. (G. Pendarvis, interview)

Semblances of the creativity and vision showed by Erik Brown, as indicated by Gerron, are also indicated in the Reyes and Garcia (2014) study. They found that the principal was creative in his efforts, as such he "combined the culture of respect and high achievement with the culture of music, art, dance, and literature" (p. 365). When I asked Gerron about the manner in which he saw Erik Brown in grades 3-5 as compared to now he said, "I see it differently now… it was part of his job; (to be strict with the kids) but now I understand that he cared a lot about the school and the kids in it" (G. Pendarvis, interview).

I asked Gerron about the differences between the principal before Erik Brown arrived and Mr. Brown. He could not recall anything except that the principal was White. In spite of the "real strict" Mr. Brown, Gerron recalled fond memories and excitement as well "the school was going good and stuff we played games in the gym…" (G. Pendarvis, interview). I asked Gerron how did it make him and his friends feel when their new principal was a Black male (I am asking about his first encounters with Erik Brown),

Ha-ha (laughs) at the time we probably didn't have no opinion on it (I followed up and asked). Now when you look back what do you think? I think it was good now that I look back at it. I think for him to come in as a minority to that school with a bunch of minorities, he understood where we came from… more than other principals had. And he pushed us harder. (G. Pendarvis, interview)

White Privilege in Black and Brown Spaces

Kelly Quinn is a White female, who just a few years prior to Erik Brown's tenure at Walsh School was a city of Waterbury employee and a school crossing guard there. Kelly told me a story about what happened one day after school as she was helping the Walsh elementary students cross the street. Two Puerto Rican brothers—students that she knew from Walsh came to her afraid because some kids wanted to fight them after school. Kelly said she told the kids to wait a few minutes and she would walk them home, which was just a block from where the school was located. The vice principal of Walsh (White male) at that time noticed Kelly, who was the crossing guard, talking with kids and rushed over sternly to inquire. The vice principal asked, "what are you doing here" to the kids (Quinn, interview). Kelly replied that they were waiting with her and that she would walk them home because some kids were waiting to fight with them. The vice principal said sternly to the two students, brothers, come on! He walked the two Puerto Rican students home, which was in view of where the crossing guard was. After the vice principal returned he said to Kelly: "I do not understand why you care so much for these kids" (Quinn, interview). Kelly asked the vice principal what did he mean. The vice principal responded, "they will all be drug-dealers when they get older" (Quinn, interview).

Kelly explained to me that the vice principal would not have said these things to her had she been Black or Puerto Rican and, in fact, he only said this to her because she was White. She explained that, from her experiences as a White female, most Whites are comfortable expressing their racism and bigotry to other Whites; anticipating and taking for granted that all Whites are confidants in their bigotry and racism. Ms. Quinn's experience as a White woman underscored Albert Memmi (1999) analysis of Racism. Memmi (1999) called racism a strange enigma in that almost no one sees her or himself as racist, yet racism exists as a persistent and tenacious

reality. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2010) labeled this phenomenon Racism Without Racists. Bonilla-Silva (2010) argued that most Whites will publicly denounce Blacks for playing the race card for demanding equality or other forms of justice: while, as Quinn revealed, privately display and admit to the most vitriol forms of racism amongst themselves and their ideological counterparts; though in some instances they miscalculate their allies, as was the case with Kelly Quinn. Kelly expressed how this vice principal felt camaraderie with her as she explained he was her teacher years ago when she was in high school. Also, while she was in high school he frequented an Irish restaurant where she was a waitress, Kelly and the vice principal were both Irish, he also knew her family and felt comfortable. Kelly described this experience as "a piece of White privilege that other White people feel the same way that you do" (Quinn, interview).

Kelly's insight and analysis went further, she continued: "As an administrator of the school if he was comfortable conveying this deep-seated, but hidden perspective about the minority kids", which 95 percent were at Walsh, how much effort was he putting into these children (Quinn, interview)? She offered as an example: "imagine a young white idealistic teacher who really wanted to help the kids and here's her supervisor" making recommendations and suggestions to not care so much. She continued, some Whites would say, "I'm not racist", as the premise and preface, and go on to say and do the most racist thing as part of their privilege and they assume that we are in the same "bubble" because we are both White (Quinn, interview).

These are realizations she described as components of White privilege and part of their upbringing that manifests in the ways some Whites dealt with her as a White person and in contrast to how they would deal with Blacks or other minorities. The conversations and the interactions that Whites have with her and with Blacks are notably different: thus, I reiterate the strange enigma argued by Memmi (1999) and

Bonilla-Silva's (2010) racism without racists theories here for emphasis. Kelly is very candid and sensitive about these topics, undoubtedly, in part because her son's father is Black and her son is a teenager and a young male of color. Kelly said she had to endure racist remarks and actions from friends and family because of her Brown child.

School Administrators and Culturally Responsive Leadership

Khalifa (2015) pointed out in his brief historical analysis of culturally responsive leadership, the pertinence of culturally responsive leadership among Blacks given the racist context that they faced early on; "Black principals were of such utility to the Black community because they demonstrated culturally relevant leadership within the school and served as community leaders" (p. 4). Added to this legacy is Dr. Virgil Franklin, the first African American principal in the city of Waterbury and also the first African American principal at Walsh School (1973-1986). Mr. Franklin was Walsh's principal when Tameka Lott M.D., attended in the 1980s. Tameka Lott, currently a medical doctor, when asked about Mr. Franklin stated unhesitatingly that Mr. Franklin "was like a second father to me and all the students there. In hindsight; I think I'm just honored to have had him as our principal as a Black father figure, role model, mentor, yea he was great" (Lott, interview).

I was able to interview the only two active African American Board of Education commissioners in Waterbury. Of the 10 commissioners on the Waterbury Board of Education, these two African American commissioners acknowledged to me that their perspectives and their voices, often in the best interest of the urban communities, were marginalized. Both Juanita Hernandez and Karen Harvey are both deeply connected to the urban and African American communities in Waterbury. They often discussed their frustrations with their White peer commissioners, who

often revealed their disconnect from the people in the majority Latinx and African American school district that they served.

Free Meals Ain't Free for the Poor

Juanita Hernandez told me that as a minority board member trying to serve the best interest of minority students she said, "there's a lot of things working against us" (Hernandez, interview). She offered one example that occurred during a board meeting concerning Walsh School. Ninety-five percent of Walsh students received free and reduced lunch. Due to an afterschool program the school offered, Walsh qualified for a federal grant that would have provided the kids participating in the program with a meal or a snack during the afterschool hours. Mrs. Hernandez explained to me the back and forth that occurred at the board meeting because of reluctant, rather non-compliant board members, who saw the program as unfavorable although it would not have cost the district any money and would have had provided nutrition for the students who were in a school that, again, 95% of its students qualified for free/reduced lunch.

Mrs. Hernandez was extremely animated about this issue. She stated rhetorically, "We gotta fight you for that? Really? Wow" (Hernandez, interview). Further, she stated to the members of the board of education, "I don't really believe that you realize who you are working with" (Hernandez, interview). Mrs. Hernandez admitted to me how dumbfounded she was at members on the Board of Education and the educational leadership in Waterbury that refused to agree to the program that would have provided students that stayed after school with a free meal or snack as part of the afterschool program.

Government Policy as Corrective and Colonizing

According to Stein (2004) a key trait found in the Culture of Policy framework—an infusion of cultural deficit discourses that encompass equity-oriented policies—is the concept of government as corrective. In regards, this government as corrective trait found in equity-oriented policies Stein (2004) identified it as "a presumption that government institutions can fulfill a corrective role in the lives of the country's deviant inhabitants" (Stein, 2004, p. xii). This government as the corrective approach was also on display in the Waterbury School District as indicative in some of its discipline tactics.

Mrs. Hernandez raised concerns of an exorbitantly higher number of children of color being arrested and suspended from school as compared to their White counterparts for the same and similar infractions. She talked about a disconnect between the school system and parents in the district and complaints from parents; "I think the disconnect between the school and parents is the parents don't feel they are welcomed (into their kids' schools) I think that a lot of times they feel they are being belittled and they are not getting that respect" (Hernandez, interview). Mrs. Hernandez talked about evolving grassroots committees; one, in particular, that would bring parents and community members together with educators and administrators to address these and other concerns raised by parents. This grassroots committee is designed to foster efforts to have the community feel respected and welcomed in the school system.

> We have gotten a lot of complaints that they don't feel like they're welcomed and I think that they (the schools) should be able to take the advice that the parents (are) giving them about their child because who knows your child better than you? You know you may see something in this kid that nobody else sees and we need to respect that and listen to it and try to collaborate

with each other and find the best way to get those kids on track. (Hernandez, interview)

I analyze this government as a corrective approach to school discipline as colonizing. Part of an imposing ideology accentuated by Walter Mignolo's (2011; 2012) concept of westernization/rewesternization: Westernization being the expansion of the west's epistemologies and values, which disavows other values and epistemologies. Rewesternization is recalibration attempts due to misunderstandings and miscalculations of westernization constructs. Resisting and combatting these global designs are designed "to decolonize the imperial idea of universal history, to contribute to legitimizing the pluriversality of knowing, seeing, [and] believing" (Mignolo, 2012, p. xiv).

This framework is useful for understanding the ways in which Mrs. Hernandez described minoritized families are silenced by school practices even though as Mrs. Hernandez astutely asked, "who knows your child better than you" (Hernandez, interview)? When I brought up the subject of parental involvement and the notion espoused by some that Black parents do not care she quipped, "it all depends on what you feel is parental involvement" (Hernandez, interview).

Naming vs. Describing

One of the concerns in simply describing phenomena is that although descriptions can be effective, descriptions can also be allusive. Descriptions allow room for the ineffective naming of phenomena. Whereas naming phenomena is more effective and less allusive. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) asserted that over the past 30 years critical-theoretical traditions have abandoned their usage of critical nouns. Santos (2014) argued nouns were replaced with adjectives to subvert the meaning of proper nouns. For example, the author argues that socialism, communism, and revolution were nouns that generated powerful and convincing

arguments (Santos, 2014). Santos (2014) proposed the re-insertion of critical nouns "in generating powerful and convincing critical-theoretical work" (p. 33). Stein (2004) alluded to this as well; she stated, "by making explicit the categories of thought…articulating and challenging the taken-for-granted languages, and routines policies" as strategies of resistance to the culture of policy (p. 137). The critical noun that this inquiry centers upon is White supremacy. White supremacy's impact upon schooling in America has been devastating. Mignolo's (2011) theoretical framework of Westernization and Rewesternization are key discourses and practices of White supremacy that I argue from in this study.

The Betrayal of Schooling

Marie Battiste (2013) argued that accepting the current frameworks and systems, ideologies and practices, found in our educational system and schooling practices were akin to betrayal. The Oxford English Dictionary defined betrayal as "a violation of trust or confidence, an abandonment of something committed to one's charge" (emphasis added) ("Oxford English Dictionary," 2016).

Furthermore, I conceptualize betrayal as something that occurs from ones inner-circle: one having turned her/his back on a confidante, family member, or loved one. The key words in betrayal are trust/violation. Generally, as parents, we send our children to schools expecting and trusting that the schools will assist in providing the necessary tools that will help our children become productive citizens and sound human beings. The list of violations of this trust that can be cited by minoritized communities and or communities of color are lengthy and beyond the scope of this inquiry. Nonetheless, for the sake of this argument, I will mention one violation of this trust: The cultural deficit perspectives that emanate and encompass equity-oriented policies such as turnaround particularly when culturally responsive educators are not in position to ascertain benefit from such policies. Such policies

blame and criminalize policy beneficiaries and have perpetuated constructs that have stigmatized communities of color.

Communities of color are marked and wounded by Culture of Policy discourses that privilege a universal middle-class White standard. Violence is inevitable for those, disinclined or uninterested in striving toward this White standard. Cultural deficits are identified as the rationale for minoritized communities' failure to attain these standards. These cultural deficits then inform a Culture of Policy. This Culture of Policy, Stein (2004) indicated, are the expectation and the norm found spoken in the halls of Congress in the mid-1960s, and are echoed in school halls today. The ideology that drove and helped foment ESEA and Title I policy were displayed during congressional hearings. This ideology was expressed through negative discourses and rhetoric articulated by some members of Congress in regard to the culture and values of policy beneficiaries. These negative discourses and rhetoric are often identified as the negative schooling practices that so many Black and Brown children are faced with in schools today.

Minoritizing the Majority

During our discussion about Erik Brown, Karen Harvey, the longest-tenured Board of Education commissioner, and former vice president of the board began to express nuances and insights into an array of questionable and concerning practices by the educational leadership in the Waterbury School district affecting the urban community and the children in those schools.

> I am a big fan of Erik (Brown) I believe in listening to what the kids want and what the parents want… However, I am one (minority/African American person), and there was a period of time that I was the only Black (person) sitting on the board or only minority sitting on the board; and when we were going through this with Erik, uh over a span of time it may have been, it was

> myself and then a new member came on she was Black (Juanita Hernandez joined the board after turnaround was implemented and after Erik Brown was removed from Walsh), but we (the Black woman on the board) understood, the other members didn't understand, they didn't know, they weren't Black, they are not involved in the community, they don't have an ear to the community, so that doesn't move them at all…and if there's any political connections, i.e., based on what the mayor wants then it's what the mayor wants not what the parents want. And that's very evident. So it's very evident in what happened with Erik. So as a board member? Yea I'm on the board but it's very difficult being a Black (person) on the board because I'm very, very involved in the community and the community has my ear but the other commissioners can care less. (Harvey, interview)

Karen Harvey is someone that is highly regarded and respected in Waterbury. She is highly regarded among the African American community of educators and professionals in the city. Karen has been a voice for voiceless communities such as those where Walsh students are from. Karen is a proven ally in educational matters for the city's most underserved populations. Karen is very knowledgeable not just of the inner workings within the Waterbury School District, but also within the urban communities where most of the Walsh school children and their families are from. Karen has been very outspoken and has incited the ire of the mayor. Karen was once the vice president of the Board of Education and many believed she would be elected president. However, there are many who believe that because of her outspokenness, not only was Karen not elected president of the board she also lost her seat as vice president. This is a sentiment shared with me by many that I talked to that are familiar with the board election and the election processes.

Karen Harvey is an adamant fighter for Black, Brown, and minoritized children in Waterbury and as she indicated her views are primarily the views of the majority

of the Walsh community parents and stakeholders. However, Karen's perspective is contrasted and thus silenced by a White majority of administrators that include the mayor, the superintendent, and 8-9 out of 10 White Board of Education members.

Representation and role models. Karen Harvey's access and insight into educational leadership, policy, and practice in the Waterbury School District cannot be overstated. Karen Harvey does not accept education the way it is. She cannot be considered guilty of betrayal for accepting the mediocre standards of educational policies, and practices imposed upon minoritized, poor, Black, and Brown children. She was very candid and brave during our conversations. I asked her what could be done in the school system that is currently not happening? She answered with two points.

> One: there's a need to increase Black and Hispanic teachers that will stand in front of our students every single day and teach our students. Because over 50% of students are Hispanic 25 roughly are black 20 or less are white (district-wide)… The role models that need to be in front of the kids need to be increased. (Harvey, interview)

Khalifa et al. (2016) identified a salient trait of culturally responsive leadership as the school leader's capacity and willingness to "engage students, families, and communities in culturally appropriate ways" (p. 11). Karen Harvey also mentioned a concern raised by Juanita Hernandez regarding the lopsided number of students of color arrested and suspended compared to their White peers. She reiterated the importance of representation and students seeing educators that look like them. "Our kids need to see more Black male role models… I think that we need to infuse into schools representation that is similar to what they see out here in the world… so that's number one" (Harvey, interview).

Representation as pedagogy. The second point was the school curriculum. Karen Harvey stated that the curriculum needed to "reflect" and be "culturally

sensitive (to) what the kids are experiencing" and that central office (local education agency; such as Board of Education, superintendent and other educational administrators) needed to be more sensitive to those realities (Harvey, interview). Khalifa et al. (2016) cited curriculum scholars who asserted "teachers are primarily not culturally responsive and that they do not have access to culturally responsive teacher training programs" (p. 10). The authors further went on to claim that culturally responsive teacher education preparation is needed "even when teachers are from the same cultural, racial, and socioeconomic background of the students" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 10). Culturally responsive pedagogy can be a matter of representation but it is not necessarily in and of itself enough just to place Black and Brown teachers in front of Black and Brown students.

Imagining a reversal. Further, I asked Karen Harvey: "What is it that is preventing (her two points) from happening? It seems obvious, right? (could we imagine) a bunch of Latinx and African American teachers teaching in Cheshire…" (Cheshire is a wealthy, high SES suburb that borders Waterbury)? To this rhetorical question, Karen responded emphatically. "That's right"! (Indicating the unimaginable). As researchers in education, we should ask, but why not? And what would happen if there were a majority of minoritized teachers teaching all White children in majority White schools in suburbs across America?

Cultural responsive leadership as a decolonizing practice. In chapter 5 I sought to contrast the effects of equity-oriented policies and turnaround specifically in Waterbury with culturally responsive leadership discourses and practices found in Waterbury. This matters because I envision culturally responsive leadership through a lens of decolonization. Educational scholar George Dei contends that due to the colonial constructs imposed upon racialized and minoritized scholars; these scholars "cannot be anything but anticolonial. We must be engaged in the project of decolonization for our own intellectual survival" (2015, p. 346). Hegemonic

epistemologies (Mignolo, 2012) and epistemic violence/epistemicide (Santos, 2014; Spivak, 1988) are ravaging racialized and minoritized cultures and communities as rewesternization (Mignolo, 2011) attempts take root. Rewesternization is responsible for a cultural epistemicide: a recurrence of "unequal exchanges among cultures [that] have always implied the death of the knowledge of the subordinated culture" (Santos, 2014, p. 92).

Epistemicide and the imposition of contemporary schooling. This violence is fundamental to educational policy, leadership, and administration. As well as educational pedagogy and educational research, which espouses and impose a dominant epistemic grammar (Battiste, 2013; Blanchett, 2006; Dei, 2010; Drakeford, 2015; Milner, 2007; Paris, 2012; Patel, 2015; Stein, 2004). Milner (2007) highlighted that the dangers in educational research, seen, unseen, and unforeseen, manifest in the form of "color- and culture-blind research in P-12 educational settings, color- and culture-blind policy and document analyses, and teacher education research… [as well as] in a number of other research contexts" (p. 392). My goal in applying culturally responsive leadership resources in educational environments is a method of resistance to this violence; and toward practices of untangling and decolonizing from these educational systems and processes.

Accounting for nuance and divergence. There is a strategic essentialism commitment to my use of the term culture in culturally responsive leadership. Strategic essentialism is the adoption of temporary alliances when conflicts in identity ensue (Sharp, 2008). This commitment is mindful of the nuances and temporary alliances among people with divergent identities (Sharp, 2008). Furthermore, the Black and Latinx communities in Waterbury are diverse and nuanced themselves. The Latinx and Blacks come from different countries, islands, states in the south, Native tribes, and SES; we have diverging religions and often times different values. However, Latinx and Black communities become allies against

the educational policies and schooling practices affecting and impacting their children and communities. Furthermore, in instances where Whites have interests that aligns with the interests and commitments of decolonizing schooling policies and practices that inhibit Black and Latinx students and their communities, strategic essentialism provides potential for temporary alliances.

I argue that educators should move away from the betrayal of education in minoritized schools toward a practice of education seen as an "act of love" (Battiste, 2013). The biggest hurdle to instituting culturally responsive leadership as a school practice in Waterbury is the tactics emanating from the mayor's office. Furthermore, the culturally unresponsive practices and the lack of diversity among district administrators and teachers are also extremely problematic. These hurdles can, in part, be overcome by new educational strategies coming from City Hall and a commitment to professional development that includes a robust commitment to culturally responsive leadership resources and training.

Chapter 6

Reflections

The Dirty Water moniker originated in the Waterbury's North End neighborhood; where the schools in this inquiry are located. While on the air at WZMX Hot 93.7, a very popular radio station in the region, a Waterbury DJ began referencing Waterbury as The Dirty Water. As a result, the entire state and many other places in the Northeast came to know of Waterbury as The Dirty Water. Local inner-city hip-hop artists coined Waterbury Connecticut's infamous nickname, The Dirty Water. The moniker is a nod to a decade that witnessed two sitting Waterbury mayors, Mayor Joseph Santopietro in 1992 and Mayor Philip Giordano in 2002, imprisoned following investigations during their time in office. These convictions were followed by an investigation and the imprisonment of another famous Waterbury politician: Connecticut's Governor John J. Rowland in 2004. Furthermore, many residents in Waterbury's inner-city had a deep distrust of police. In Waterbury's inner-city neighborhoods, the police had a reputation for police brutality and misconduct. Widespread corruption including convictions and numerous federal investigations of various rank and file city officials; Waterbury's State's Attorney was investigated although eventually exonerated. But there always remained a cloud over the city and many of its officials. The Mass Incarceration rate in Waterbury's Black and Brown communities also contributes to Waterbury's nickname of The Dirty Water.

I was born in Waterbury, Connecticut and spent many years growing up there. I am familiar with the environment. I am familiar with local discourses, the people, and the cultures there, all of which helped shape me. However, this research forced an engagement with myself—my family and our history—minoritized, urban communities and cultures in the city of Waterbury in a way I am not sure I would

have considered if not for this study. Throughout the various stages of this research inquiry, I wrestled with many of the components and expectations of social science research: norms, discourses, and grammar. As a researcher, I struggled with whether or not I was imposing my views upon the community of Waterbury that I wanted to help. I questioned the real impact my research might have besides retelling an unfortunately too common American story of a minoritized community in a city, in a state, in a region of America. How will this one be any different? Were the people in my study informants? Participants? Just what was the proper term and why? Are the Puerto Ricans who make up a large number of students in the Waterbury School District to be termed Latina/o, Latin@, Latinx or Hispanic, even though I have never heard them refer to themselves in these ways? Are the members of the African American community, Blacks, Black Americans, African Americans or The Blacks (as Donald Trump once posited)?

I used the verb form of key terms in this study, such as minoritize and decolonize. These terms are made action words because they have been enacted in the case of minoritized, and must be enacted as in the case of decolonize. People in Waterbury are made minority; they are not minor or inherently incapable as the word is defined. The Oxford English Dictionary (2016) defined minority as smaller, inferior, or subordinate. However, Black and Brown people are not inherently minority; they are designated as such by Westernization—White supremacy's discourses, rhetoric and practices. Therefore, the verb use of the word implicates an action and not an object. And likewise decolonize is the act that needs to occur by those minoritized by White supremacy, its discourses and practices. Decolonize is the act of acknowledging the discourses and acts of imposition: recognizing the acts and discourses of making smaller and subordination and then challenging and undoing them.

Conflicts in School Leadership

In conducting this research, I realized that my personal experiences were not unique but widespread trends in the United States. I was astounded to learn of the depth of internal conflict and strife within educational leadership, and the sources of much of this strife. Such conflict and strife as those pertaining to Eurocentric and White supremacist ideologies driving educational policy and reform, educational research, training and schooling practices in America (Campbell, 1979; M. A. Khalifa et al., 2016; Stein, 2004). As well as the depth of educational leadership's (research, training and practice) involvement with framing minoritized communities in deficit discourses (Duke, 2012, Stein, 2004). As well as the ways over time these frames and discourses reinvented themselves (Gamson et al., 2015; Stein, 2004). As dismal as that sounds, I was also enlightened by the tremendous potential for expansions in Culturally Responsive Leadership research and implementation across the educational landscape (Khalifa et al., 2016; Stein, 2004). This study provided me with a new engagement with the depths of inequity permeating the educational system in the United States. Stein's (2004) analysis of the history of equity-oriented educational policy was pivotal for this study. Stein's (2004) culture of educational policy analysis detailed how policy beneficiaries are framed as culturally deficient and lacking standard American values, and the hegemonic and patriarchal role government takes in correcting these deficits in policy beneficiaries.

Stop The Violence!

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) asserted that over the past 30 years the critical-theoretical traditions lost its use of critical nouns; and asserts that critical nouns were replaced with adjectives that are used to subvert the meaning of proper nouns. For example, the author argues that socialism, communism and revolution were nouns that generated powerful and convincing arguments (Santos, 2014). Furthermore, Santos (2014) proposed the re-insertion of critical nouns "in generating powerful and convincing critical-theoretical work" (p. 33). Stein (2004) alluded to this as well "by making explicit the categories of thought…articulating and challenging the taken-for-granted languages, and routines of policies" as strategies of resistance to the culture of policy (p. 137). With respect to the impact of this historical tradition, I utilize White supremacy as the noun that best represents the explicit and implicit categories and occurrences identified in this inquiry. Much of the lived educational experiences of community members in Waterbury including my own, as part of this life history, was violent. Violence perpetuated by White supremacy as posited by Mignolo's (2011) Westernization premise that I argued from in this inquiry. This violence is very well understood amongst people in Waterbury's minoritized communities. This violence was made manifest in this study in several ways.

One example of violence was the demotion and persecution of Erik Brown, a Black principal beloved by students, parents, and many across Waterbury's minoritized communities. Despite an outcry from across the Waterbury District for more educators and administrators of color, Waterbury's mostly White educational leadership and administration deemed Erik Brown incompetent and disposable. Brown was demoted to vice-principal and sent to another, mostly White, school within the district. Walsh School was comprised of nearly 90 percent Latinx and Black

students. Walsh students, parents, and the broader community were not considered, nor were their perspectives reflected in the decision to remove Erik Brown from Walsh Elementary. In the middle of the 2013 school year under an—at best—shady pretext, Brown was demoted to vice principal and transferred to another school.

Erik Brown appealed the Waterbury School District's demotion and was later vindicated, but not before damage had been done to both Erik Brown's reputation and that of the school district. In the fall of 2015, an arbiter in his case ruled Erik Brown to be immediately reinstated as head principal. However, the administrators and leaders in Waterbury's School District decided against sending Erik Brown back to Walsh Elementary. Instead, Brown became the head principal at the mostly White school where he was sent to serve as vice principal after his demotion (Williamson, 2015). Brown also filed a federal racial discrimination suit against the Waterbury School District. In the spring of 2016, a federal judge found enough merit in Brown's racial discrimination claim against members of Waterbury School District and ordered Brown's case to proceed to trial. As a result, there is, as of 2016, a Brown v. Board of Education racial discrimination lawsuit in The United States District Court, in the District of Connecticut, as a result of a culmination of events narrated in this study (Spicer, 2016; United States District Court & District of Connecticut, 2016).

The mostly White educational leadership and administrators in the Waterbury School District displayed a violent unresponsiveness to community uproar over a perceived harmful educational trajectory affecting their communities and their children. Examples of this unresponsiveness include ignoring an increase in parents' complaints of harsh disciplinary tactics of their school children that included an increasing police presence in their schools and an exorbitant number of suspensions and arrests in the Waterbury School District. This violence manifested in keeping unresponsive procedures and educators in tow, which are largely disconnected from Black and Brown communities in Waterbury and their values. There exists a long

history of complaints against the Waterbury School District's practice of cronyism and its failure to hire Black and Brown educators in a district that consists of over 80 percent Black and Brown students (Waterbury Board or Education Meeting Minutes, 2013; Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). Depending on the year, less than 10 percent of educators in the Waterbury School District look like the overwhelming majority of their students. And the district has had problems maintaining high-ranking administrators and its exceptional Black and Brown teachers (Harvey, interview; Naples, 2014).

Stein's (2004) analysis showed the various ways policy coupled with sociocultural ideologies of White Supremacy was instrumental in shaping this historical moment of schooling practices of urban and minoritized students. "The comparisons to a middle-class norm, spoken in the halls of Congress since the mid-1960s, is echoed in the halls of school" to this day (Stein, 2004, p. 93). These ideologies and policies promote and frame a perception of a deficit culture among minoritized students—Black and Brown policy "beneficiaries"—and their communities. These sociocultural ideologies are evident in the case of the Waterbury School District. This historical legacy of framing minoritized students as deficient and culpable has continued largely unabated. Educational researchers have shown from the initial authorization of ESEA and Title I in 1965 up until the contemporary reauthorizations, which included the turnaround policy that came to Waterbury in 2010-2011, the trouble with this historical and violent legacy articulated as urban educational reform and equity-oriented school policies (Duke, 2012; Gamson et al., 2015; Johnson, 2013; Stein, 2004; Trujillo, 2012; Trujillo & Rene, 2015).

International connections. My international experiences allowed me to evaluate the ways minoritization and racialization were components of larger systems of White supremacy (Khalifa, 2015) emphasized in Stein's (2004) Culture of education policy thesis. I was an educational consultant and an educational

administrator in Cairo, Egypt. As a consultant, I worked with a company that was contracted by private schools in Cairo and across the region to assess educational systems: policies, and procedures. We also analyzed the implementation of these educational administration systems in K-12 schools. As a consultant, I surveyed schools and their policies, interviewed administrators, teachers, and other staff, and made recommendations based on what was learned. We also recruited American and Western-trained teachers and administrators to work in the schools. Essentially, as an American, I was a foreigner hired to bring Westernization (Mignolo, 2011): American or Western style educational administration, tools, and policies to a culture and people that, mostly, rejected them or at the very least were foreign to them. I was contributing to an act of violence. This same violence is associated with what I learned in the United States, which pertained to urban education and reform; specifically, what I learned had occurred in Waterbury.

Culturally specific epistemologies packaged as universal educational models are imposed upon people with different cultures, preferred learning styles, and sensibilities. Specifically, I am referring to cases where these universal educational models have been imposed hegemonically and patriarchally, shown to be violent, ineffective, and rejected by those with variant and divergent epistemologies and cultures. Similarly, this epistemological and educational imposition and cultural undermining were met with intense resistance in Cairo, which is similar to what happened in Waterbury in the schools cited for turnaround, specifically Walsh Elementary School. In Cairo, the level of resistance to the violence was impressive. Battle-lines were drawn and important stakeholders, family members, in some cases husband and wife, were on opposite sides, one on the side of Westernization (Mignolo, 2011) and the other against it. It made for a formidable task as a consultant/administrator.

This experience allows me to empathize with the job of educational administrators, specifically the ones cognizant of the violence that they are asked to help inflict, as well as those who may be unaware but willing to learn about what they do not know. Stein (2004) argued for creative ways to navigate this dilemma and to be engaged in what she called forms of cultural insurgence. Stein (2004) argued for countering, "the dominant equity-oriented policy culture while benefiting from whatever resources such policies might offer" (p. 137). But in Cairo, like in Waterbury, there are those administrators who offer no indication that they are concerned with the violence they help implement, and there is very little indication they were concerned with knowing.

International experiences and theory. Much Educational Administration literature in the United States focuses on context that is very specific to the US. However, in the process of doing this research, I incorporated my international experiences in a manner that warranted considerations for decolonization. My foreign experience provided a hiatus from the onslaught of the racialized experiences of being a Black man in America. While in Cairo I experienced different lenses with which to understand oppression, marginalization, and Westernization—White supremacy. As a foreigner in Cairo, my positionality as a Black American was not in focus. Contemporary Egyptians are markedly people of color and racial lines are often blurred; therefore, American style racialization is less pronounced in Egypt, and it does not appear that policies are racialized in Egypt and certainly not in the ways they are in the US. However, there are some violent racialized discourses found within Egyptian society and culture particularly aimed at the southern Egyptians—namely the Nubians in Egypt—who are markedly Black and amongst the oldest Egyptians on record.

My American nationality, in spite of my color, in most respects afforded built-in privileges. While in Egypt, I analyzed European colonization and westernization's

influence upon Egypt. In the process of conducting this research, it dawned on me that the frames to discuss the racialization—fundamental to the American experience—could also be, with all of its nuances and differences, extended to broader enactments of minoritization and identity formation. As the identities of racialized, indigenized, colonized and the enslaved people's identities are bound by Westernization (Mignolo, 2011)—European conquests—and the colonial wound (Dei, 2010). This resonated with me. These concepts became fundamental to my analysis, which allowed me to draw connections between my experiences in Waterbury, my experiences as an administrator in Egypt, and my experiences as a researcher, in addition to my lived experiences.

Ecological divides. In this study, I also learned, as I outlined in my research, that educational administrators and educational leaders—on the one hand—and members of urban communities—on the other hand—occupied two separate ecological spaces. This realization became deeply pronounced in this study. Thus, this study stressed that culturally responsive leadership training for Black and White educators provides a potential path for addressing the violence identified in this study in part due to this divide.

Racialization is fundamental to American institutions, as pronounced in Stein's (2004) over 60-year analysis of the culture of educational policy, discourses and practices. Racialization, its discourses, and practices, were found in legislative hearings for equity-oriented policies leading up to the enactment of ESEA1965 and were found reflected in schooling practices decades later in California (Stein, 2004). However, those who have been historically victimized by racialized systems and equity-oriented policies have also shown to aid, monitor, and implement those systems, thereby replicating the violence of White supremacy (Khalifah, 2015). Decolonizer and activist Frantz Fanon in 1961 in his engagement and commitment to decolonization warned against replacing Westernization—White supremacy—with

another kind of supremacy that would dominate and replicate the injustices of Westernization (Fanon & Philcox, 2004).

Furthermore, due to America's omnipotent racialized history, I understand better why those of us (Black Americans) who are among the most victimized and wounded by American racialization lead with Derrick Bell's (2005) permanence of racism lens. For some, if not many African Americans, it is not too difficult to see the depth of racism in American institutions as well as America's relationships with Blacks historically. Racialization as an ideology is fundamental to a violent American history—it simultaneously builds America and destroys it. This building/destroying is fundamental to what I learned in this study. The public-school system works very well in many instances. At the same time, large numbers of Black and Brown and minoritized students from impoverished communities score poorly on standardized tests. Many wealthy White community students excel on standardized tests. However, there is very little effort in policy reform and educational training that seeks to address and correct the racialization and discriminatory processes inherent in standardized testing instruments themselves[8] (Fendler, 2014; Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008). Walsh and Crosby were cited as failing-schools and their students at-risk due to low standardized test scores. But some researchers and educators argue that standardized tests have their roots in eugenics (Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008; Gould, 1996), so it is not surprising that majority Black and poor schools would have lower test scores.

The shades of grey in between. Although the educational system operating in America is fundamentally a racialized system, it is also more nuanced and complex than the oversimplified Black/White dynamic. I learned that educational leadership, like so much else in America where power and influence emanate, is complicated by

[8] There is a lot of educational research that is designed to figure out the racial differences in test scores. But that research is framed in a deficit way, it asks what's wrong with Blacks or Black education? It fails to ask what's wrong with the tests.

race. However, the racial complications found in educational leadership are, as Khalifa (2015) suggested: part of a larger context of White supremacy. Khalifa's (2015) study offered "deep implications for our understanding of White supremacy, for it reinforces our understanding that it is systemic and can be reproduced by anyone" (p. 19). Khalifa (2015) expounded upon this in Can Blacks be Racist? Khalifa (2015) found that Black school leaders were guilty of the same exclusionary practices and violence toward Black students: "a reproduction of the district's racism" (p. 1). Khalifa et al. (2016) argued that most educational leadership reformers "focus almost exclusively on instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models to address the cultural needs of students" (p. 8). In future research, I would like to address how these models address the deficit frames as emblematic of the culture of education policy (Stein, 2004) and what their specific cultural assessments and recommendations are; specifically related to minoritized students.

Furthermore, Khalifa (2015) argued although "Black principals are constantly trying to locate their own negotiated places in a hierarchically racialized terrain… [they are still] capable of reproducing White supremacist contexts and practices that are directly oppressive toward students of color" (p. 1). The same system of Westernization—White supremacy—Khalifa (2015) found operating at the district level, Stein (2004) analyzed as a culture of educational policy. Culture of educational policy framed policy beneficiaries as culturally deficient and morally deprived; I reconceptualized this framing through Mignolo's (2011) Westernization lens. Mignolo (2011) defined Westernization as "the expansion of the west" through the control of knowledge, which "disavows other forms of knowing and living" (p. 65-66). Blacks and other minoritized individuals, under the pressure of these systems, are often noted for their assistance in operating these systems, perhaps even to their and their own communities demise.

What I Learned about Research

While conducting this study I learned a great deal about research. I had to confront the epistemologies and politics that drive research protocols and tools such as methodologies and grammar. I, therefore, had to analyze how my engagement with these research protocols, tools, epistemologies, and politics could shape my future as a scholar and researcher. The weight of Roald Campbell's (1979) analysis of the discipline of educational administration and the relevance of that analysis today was also pivotal in allowing me to put into perspective my own personal experiences as a doctoral student and eventual doctoral candidate in Educational Administration (EAD) K-12 program at Michigan State University. Early into my doctorate program, I was unable to articulate what I was experiencing because I had nothing to compare those experiences against. I eventually came to the realization that in order to do the type of research I have done in this study, I would have to incorporate many interdisciplinary and rhetorical tools.

For example, when I was trying to account for the relationships among educational policy and community culture, the life history methodology was effective; it allowed me to address these paradoxes and account for conflicts by engaging with participants' life stories. Paradoxes and conflicts such as educational leadership and policy expectations with marginalized communities and their cultural norms. For example, while policy appears to be equitable, it does not always account for cultural factors and is often times hostile to the best interests of minoritized communities. Turnaround was/is intended to promote equity by firing administrators and teachers where test scores fail to improve (State of Connecticut, 2010; Trujillo, 2012). Is this not violence? I might not have been able to recognize the practices as violent if I had not pursued and analyzed the life stories of people who were affected

by the policies. Life history gave me a perspective from which I could address paradoxes and account for conflict.

Furthermore, I learned that sometimes tests scores are not the culturally responsive measure of school effectiveness. In large part, tests and standards reflect the standards of White middle class cultures (Fendler, 2014; Fendler & Muzaffar, 2008; Stein, 2004). In marginalized cultures, other factors, including responsiveness to the local community, may be held as higher priorities than test scores for some communities (M. A. Khalifa et al., 2016; Reyes & Garcia, 2014). If I had not pursued the life stories of community members, I might have accepted that test scores were the only measure of school effectiveness. The life history approach opened my eyes to different, culturally responsive perspectives on what counts as school effectiveness.

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Research

While at Michigan State University, Dr. Muhammad Khalifa, Educational Administration (EAD) K-12 professor, encouraged me to be an interdisciplinary scholar and to take classes from across the College of Education. Not just in Education Administration. I took interdisciplinary courses offered across various departments within the College of Education and I always found important interconnections and inroads into Educational Administration. I later expanded on this advice given to me by Dr. Khalifa after I met with Dr. Riyad Shahjahan. Dr. Shahjahan is an EAD professor but in the Department of Higher Education. Riyad and I engaged in conversations around the impact of colonization in the American context and beyond. Due to my international experiences in educational administration, crucial connections were made during these conversations. Riyad provided me with a book list. Walter Mignolo's (2012) Local History Global Designs was a book that he recommended, which was fundamental to my analysis in this study.

Decolonization in education. Many of the theories and theoretical lenses used in the analysis in this study are attributed to an array of postcolonial, and decolonizing studies propelled by discussions with Dr. Riyad Shahjahan. Dr. Shahjahan and I did an independent study class on decolonizing theories during the summer (2014), my first year as a graduate student. Dr. Shahjahan provided a reading list and a set of videos that were instrumental to the development of my theoretical framework from which to apply educational reform and practice. In the Fall 2014, I decided to take the interdisciplinary approach a step further. I took a decolonizing course in the humanities building in the English department. Before the class Dr. Shahjahan told me that I was "brave." I asked why and he said I would encounter an entire different style of learning than what I had been accustomed to in the College of Education and the social science building. Dr. Shahjahan's advice proved insightful; I had a difficult time adjusting to what I perceived as clearly different epistemological expectations. It dawned on me quickly that I was in an entirely different ecological educational space than what I was used to in the College of Education. I told Dr. Shahjahan of my frustrations and how insightful he was and he recommended that I remain in the course and that things would become clearer. I finished the course and I am glad I did. Nonetheless, the humanities based decolonizing course provided me with an abundance of literature and nuance of scholarly perspectives and engagements with colonization and decolonization. I became aware of the, oft-times, diverging commitments between the Sub-Continent and South American scholars' engagements with colonization and decolonization.

Humanities oriented research in education. The following semester, Spring 2015, I took a special topics advanced qualitative research course TE 939, in the Department of Curriculum Instruction and Teacher Education (CITE), with Teacher Education professor Dr. Lynn Fendler. The course was Humanities-Oriented Research in Education. This course helped to pull me from the interdisciplinary rabbit

hole that I had gone down. The course introduced me to the concept of the paradigm wars (Gage, 1989; Howe, 2008; Tadajewski, 2009). Loosely, the paradigm wars can be explained as the divide between the humanities and the social sciences as well as quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. The course introduced me to some of the origins and the politics involved in the design of divergent research approaches. Dr. Fendler's course brought me to an epistemological perspective that helped me understand my unarticulated engagement with these paradigm wars early into my graduate school experiences. These interdisciplinary approaches are critical to my research and are fundamental to my study.

Conclusion

This study was a life history case of a minoritized community in Waterbury, Connecticut. The life history methodology comprises life stories. Life stories differ from biographies and narratives, because life history focuses on a compilation of stories and how the storytellers, through life stories, cope or coped in their specific environment or situation. Life history is bound by historical context and within specific time frames. The life history methodology is most effective when the research problem is an epistemological one: When there is an investigation into the ways individuals think (Jones, 1983), and cope (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Gramling & Carr, 2004). "Life history, by its nature, asserts and insists that 'power' should listen to the people it claims to serve" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 8).

As I am from Waterbury, I found life history methodology to be a powerful tool to historicize and center the voices and perspectives of the minoritized community in Waterbury. Furthermore, life history validates my relationship to the community and allows for subjectivities and biases to be placed in full view. The life history methodology is a compilation of life stories wherein subjectivity is a valued goal. This methodological positionality of life history allowed me to insert myself into the research by sharing my story. Writing one's self into the research is valued by life history; "on the grounds that personal, background information will enhance the rigour of their work by making potential biases explicit" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 35). This compilation of stories in this life history design consisted of myself as researcher and the participants under study. Clough (1992) and Goodson and Sikes (2001) have posited, all representations of reality, even statistical representations, are narrative constructs and as a result creative constructs. Life history gave me as the researcher the opportunity to impart my sensibilities as a member of the

community under study and still be fair in my analysis, which was my goal in this study.

The school district in Waterbury, starting in the 2010-2011 school year, had begun an educational transformation. This transformation occurred as the result of the federal policy known as turnaround. Furthermore, this transformation of the Waterbury school district was bolstered by the sway of the mayor. Simultaneously, as turnaround was implemented mayoral control was also instituted. The institution of mayoral control did not occur through a change in legislation. Mayoral control in Waterbury occurred through interpretation of the City's Charter, which since as far back as 1902, granted the mayor ex officio status on the Board of Education. The mayor in Waterbury used the ex officio status to control the Waterbury Board of Education.

The turnaround policy and mayor control, I looked at through the decolonizing analysis of Walter Mignolo's (2011) westernization/rewesternization lens. The precipice of this analysis signifies change or reform essentially as a different side of the same coin. Mignolo (2011) defined westernization as "the expansion of the west" through the control of knowledge, which "disavows other forms of knowing and living" (p. 65-66). I argue that turnaround and mayoral control are indicative of Mignolo's (2011) concept of rewesternization. From the perspective of rewesternization, mayoral-led educational reform—turnaround efforts—are an acknowledgment of westernization's "own internal crisis of mismanagement, miscalculation, and misunderstanding" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 69) of urban schools and within urban communities. As a result, rewesternization is an attempt to repair what westernization's aggression and violence caused by its expansion and imposition; and its control of whose knowledge is validated and the violent undertaking in this regard of which I found occurring in the Waterbury School District as expressed throughout the chapters of this dissertation.

Overall, this study provided me with insights into the ways some equity-oriented policies, perhaps unintentionally, framed policy beneficiaries as culturally deficient. As a result, the need for culturally responsive leadership training is fundamental. Educational administration and leadership can be more effective in its leadership roles of preparing educational leaders with more responsive cultural lenses, trainings, and practices. Culturally responsive leadership models should not be on the margins, rather, they should be at the forefront of the educational leadership reform repertoire. Unfortunately, instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models are almost exclusively the focus in educational leadership training and reform to address the needs of minoritized students (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016). I hope that this report will contribute to the rapid and aggressive pursuit of culturally responsive leadership concepts in educational leadership training programs. I hope that culturally responsive leadership is removed from the margins and thrust into the mainstream. I hope this report will contribute to the pursuit of culturally responsive leadership models with the same rigor and enthusiasm as instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models. Culturally responsive leadership models, trainings, and practices are more valuable to minoritized communities than instructional, transformational, and transactional leadership models. Especially in minoritized school districts and districts that serve students from minoritized communities.

What this study found was a community that understood and valued cultural connections between school administration, leadership, teaching, and effective schooling of its students. The drastic divide between educational leadership and the community it served was fundamental to the displeasure from Black and Brown communities in Waterbury. A pivotal theme that emerged from the perspectives of my participants and from what was found in my document analysis was that, in general, the school district's administration and teaching force that was 85 percent

White could not and did not relate to their students. Many of these teachers and administrators lived outside of Waterbury's inner-city in wealthier suburbs, and in many cases deemed their students incapable and culpable. In this study, parents, educators, elected officials, and community activists- Latinx and Blacks, were all on one accord that this divide was the centerpiece to the problems of schooling in Waterbury. Furthermore, an extensive history of political misconduct emanating from Waterbury's City Hall (thus the moniker: The Dirty Water), the mayor's office, led to mistrust of the true intentions of funds coming into the city as a result of turnaround. Over 60 percent of the city of Waterbury's budget was for education. This study showed a deep mistrust of the mayor's educational strategies and intentions. Furthermore, the minoritized participants and others analyzed as part of my document analysis felt that there were no real intentions to hire and retain Black and Brown administrators and educators, evidenced by the treatment of Erik brown, furthermore many of the best were constantly leaving, others felt unwelcomed and there were no strategies in place to recruit any (Waterbury Board or Education Meeting Minutes, 2013; Waterbury Minority Teachers, 2015). Of Connecticut's other relatively large school districts with similar demographics, high numbers of Black and Brown students, Waterbury had the least number of administrators and educators of color.

One of the main implications for this study is for the promotion of educational leadership to incorporate a robust culturally responsive leadership program. This program should be reflected in educational policies, administration strategies, and curriculum. Educational leadership programs should train educational leaders in culturally responsive leadership protocols. As the United States continues to diversify and become more multicultural, this study depicts that we are already behind schedule in implementation of the culturally responsive leadership model spoken of in this study. Lastly, the culturally responsive leadership models argued for in this

study are mindful of the strategic essentialism of depicting "Black" and Brown" as a monolith. Each category, Black and Brown, is multiplicitous in their ways, cultures and values. Strategic essentialism allows for temporary alliances of diverging identities to converge for the process of creating robust culturally responsive leadership strategies and tools. Furthermore, culturally responsive leadership, as a decolonizing commitment, does not intend to replace Westernization—White supremacy with another form of supremacy thereby replicating the violence and injustice that it has inflicted and imposed.

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