THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Jasmine N. Hawkins

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of Education,
Indiana University
June 2024

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Doctoral Committee

Dionne Danns, Ph.D., Chair

Alycia Elfreich, Ph.D.

Sylvia Martinez, Ph.D.

Quentin Wheeler-Bell, Ph.D.

May 09, 2024

Copyright © 2024

Jasmine N. Hawkins

I dedicate this dissertation to my dear mother, my beloved sister, and my sweet nephew, whose presence graced this journey, though brief. With my mother Rosemary's unwavering belief, I found strength--her whispered and bold encouragements echoing with each step. She bestowed upon me the title "Doctor," long before my path to knowledge had begun. In the quiet hours of 5am, their spirits watched, guiding my hands as words found their place on paper. Though their earthly forms have slipped away, their love and guidance remain steadfast and sure. To my cherished mother, sister, and nephew, this dissertation stands as a token of remembrance. May your light continue to illuminate my path as I carry forth your legacy in spirit and in truth. I love you, Rosemary, Ashley, and Mekhi.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I acknowledge God, who sits at the head of my life. Without His love, grace, and tender mercy, I wouldn't be where I am today. This journey, filled with joy, sorrow, and accomplishments, has been unexpectantly long. Throughout, I turned inwardly, leaning on prayer, meditation, and weekly sessions of hot yoga. These outlets carried me through, kept me sane, and allowed me to stay committed and connected to my purpose.

To the loves of my life, Dionne Amoy and Iman Romelo, you both make everything I do each day worth it. Dionne, soon to be Dr., thank you for believing in me and hyping me up, even when I couldn't understand "why me." You knew I was destined for this journey, and you continue to affirm my greatness for the journey ahead. While some may call my dreams and aspirations crazy, you've always called them possible, reminding me of Romans 8:28. Thank you, Iman, for waking up well before your time, gracing me with your ever-present smile, and typing your two cents onto my dissertation. You are my prayers answered.

I am grateful to friends and family who've sent their encouragement and prayers throughout this journey, expressing how proud, inspired, and even confused you are about the process. Your support and curiosity confirm the need for more Black people on this journey. Deep gratitude to my youngest sister, Bri Bri, my baby, whose joy fills my heart. Your ability to make me feel like superwoman has always inspired me to be my best self. I am deeply grateful to my dear friend Habiba, my Bibz, my person, who consistently stood by me in the most challenging times throughout this journey. Words cannot express what your presence did for me. Our weekend writing sessions were invaluable, propelling us toward the finish line. Our bond is unique and enduring, a cherished connection we'll reflect on in our wheelchair years.

I'd next like to thank my IU and Bloomington community, from Friday group to the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, L.I.F.T, various churches, and the Hot Room where I

practiced hot yoga faithfully. I remember my first time in Friday group, feeling out of place among scholars like Aditi Tandon, Caitlin Howlett, and Quinton Stroud. This group nurtured my intellectual capacity and understanding of myself and my colleagues, whom I admire.

It's not every day that a Black woman in a Ph.D. program at a research-intensive institution gets to carefully select her dissertation committee, tailored to fit her intellectually, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Collectively, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Danns, Dr. Wheeler-Bell, Dr. Martinez, and Dr. Elfreich for supporting me from the inception of my proposal. Your care and confidence in my ability to complete this project have been my anchor.

I am beyond grateful to my committee, chaired by the one and only Dr. Dionne Danns. Your advocacy, mentorship, and unwavering support have been exactly what I need throughout my doctoral journey. Our 8am walks, laughter, and solemn moments are etched in my heart forever. Having an amazing Black woman like you leading and pouring into me, just like my mother would, is a blessing beyond measure. Witnessing your authentic yet professionally on-point demeanor has inspired me beyond bounds. I'll never forget your story about the faculty member who dedicated themselves to their work, only for it to seem in vain after their passing. Know that I'll never miss an opportunity to express my gratitude and shower you with the recognition you deserve. Thank you from the depths of my being. To my big brother, Dr. Q, your brilliance has always amazed me. Thank you for believing in me and reminding me of my potential. I often find myself asking, "How would Dr. Q say this?" or "What would Dr. Q ask" as I engage in all types of conversations and deep thought. Your sheer brilliance inspires me to reach my fullest potential, and I thank you for always reminding me of my pedagogical greatness. Your comparison of me to AOC serves as a constant reminder of my potential, and for those things, I'm grateful. Dr. Elfreich, you're my kindred spirit. Not only have you been a

mentor and supervisor, but you’ve also been a true friend. Your unwavering support of me as a person fills me with gratitude. I believe our crossing paths was divinely orchestrated. I thank you for always being authentically you, for showing up, and for consistently demonstrating how much you trust and care for me. Additionally, I must extend my gratitude to Dr. Janet Decker. Working alongside you has been one of my greatest blessings. I’ve learned and grown so much as an educator under your guidance. Your dedication to your craft is inspiring, and the love and care you’ve shown me and my family are deeply felt.

A special thank you to all the Black teachers who participated in this study. Your commitment and stories have inspired me, and I owe much of my career to you. As Alethia said, “Everybody needs a Black teacher.”

And finally, echoing the sentiment of a West Coast rapper, “I would like to thank me.” While my community, in its diverse forms, has invested in me, it was my own wisdom that led me to harness my resources and wield them with power. In the face of challenges, I stood tall, undeterred, shaping my destiny with resilience and determination. So, here’s to me—embracing my journey, seizing opportunities, and conquering obstacles with unwavering strength. You go, girl.

Jasmine N. Hawkins

THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

This study aims to explore the experiences of Black teachers in New York City within the context of neoliberal urban reforms. It seeks to understand how these teachers articulate their ideas of freedom in the classroom and how neoliberal policies such as gentrification and accountability affect their experiences. By centering the voices and experiences of Black teachers, the study aims to shed light on the complex relationship between race, economics, and liberation, ultimately informing policy and systemic solutions informed by their insights. The literature on Black teachers in both the North and South regions, spanning historical and contemporary contexts, reveals systemic challenges rooted in racial and economic policies. These issues, historically known as slavery and Jim Crow, have evolved into contemporary manifestations under neoliberalism. Neoliberal ideologies exacerbate disparities for Black educators, leading to displacement, job insecurity, and underrepresentation. Prioritizing market-oriented approaches in education exacerbates inequalities and weakens community connections. Gentrification worsens these challenges by displacing long-time residents, including Black teachers, favoring corporate interest over community needs and wants. The study's framework integrates Critical Race Theory (CRT) with an emancipatory perspective, emphasizing legal, subjective, and socio-economic liberation to understand the experiences of Black teachers in New York City. Drawing from CRT's focus on normalizing racism and storytelling, the study aims to illuminate the complexities of racism and liberation. The methodology employs qualitative research techniques, primarily in-depth interviews, to capture the diverse voices within the Black teaching community. Sixteen teachers were interviewed. The findings reveal Black teachers' deep commitment to teaching as a contribution to liberation, emphasizing the

importance of representation in schools for both students and educators. Despite challenges such as affordable housing and accountability, Black teachers aspire to go beyond mere survival, seeking authentic representation, connection, and leadership opportunities within educational institutions. Addressing the challenges faced by Black teachers requires transformative approaches that center their voices and experiences, challenge systemic inequalities perpetuated by neoliberalism, and prioritize equity, justice, and empowerment.

____

Dionne Danns, Ph.D.

____

Alycia Elfreich, Ph.D.

____

Sylvia Martinez, Ph.D.

____

Quentin Wheeler-Bell, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

ACCEPTANCE PAGE .... **II**

COPYRIGHT .... **III**

DEDICATION .... **IV**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .... **V**

ABSTRACT .... **VIII**

CHAPTER 1 .... **1**

INTRODUCTION **1**

CONTEXT & SIGNIFICANCE 7
RESEARCH QUESTIONS 10

CHAPTER 2 .... **11**

LITERATURE REVIEW **11**

BLACK TEACHERS IN THE SOUTH 12
BLACK TEACHERS IN THE NORTH 22
CONTEMPORARY TEACHERS' ISSUES 28
Neoliberalism 29
Gentrification 31
Gatekeeping Tactics 35
Charter Schools 37
Alternative Preparation 40
Neoliberalism in New York City 43
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 46
CONCLUSION 53

CHAPTER 3 .... **55**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS **55**

POSITIONALITY 56
DATA COLLECTION 58
Recruitment Plan 59
Semi Structured Interviews 59
DATA ANALYSIS 60
LIMITATIONS 63

CHAPTER 4 .... **66**

FINDINGS **66**

THEME 1: THE ASPIRATION TO DO MORE THAN SURVIVE 69
Authentic Representation, Connection, & Relatability Matters 70
Value and the Lack of Leadership Opportunities 81
THEME 2: NEOLIBERALISM AS COMPLEXITY IN NEW YORK CITY 86
Preparation 86
Housing 93
Gentrification 99

SUMMARY 106
CHAPTER 5 .... **108**
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION **108**
THE ASPIRATION TO DO MORE THAN SURVIVE 110
NEOLIBERALISM AS COMPLEXITY 120
CONCLUSION 133
POLICY IMPLICATIONS 136
Systemic Transformation 136
FUTURE RESEARCH 139
REFERENCES **141**
APPENDICES **158**
APPENDIX A 158
APPENDIX B 160
APPENDIX C 163
APPENDIX D 164
APPENDIX E 165
APPENDIX F 169
APPENDIX G 171
APPENDIX H 173
CURRICULUM VITAE

List of Tables

Table 1.. 67

Chapter 1

Introduction

There exists a long history of disinvestment into predominately Black communities, schools, and teachers within the United States. Decades of segregation and disinvestment have led to dilapidated neighborhoods and schools and frustrated Black teachers. Given the unjust conditions faced by Black communities, Black teachers saw education as a tool for emancipation; making it their duty to invest their time, knowledge, and skills (Fultz, 2008; Williams, 2005). Scholarly investigations into Black teachers' experiences during segregation, the Jim Crow era, and the post-*Brown v. Board of Education* period have extensively documented their motivations for teaching in predominately Black communities. These motivations are encapsulated by a sense of care, concern, and responsibility toward Black students' academic success, as well as a broader commitment to the enduring prosperity of the African American community (Rogers & White, 2019). It is important to note, in addition to preaching, teaching emerged as one of the limited career paths available to Black communities (Fairclough, 2007). This underscores the significance of education as both a profession and a means of social and economic mobility for Black people.

The success of Black students has historically relied upon the pillars of student learning, the development of cultural competency, and the promotion of sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billing, 1995). These enduring motivations persist among Black teachers in the contemporary era. As exemplified by Pamela Lewis (2016), a Black teacher in New York City, teaching is viewed as a vehicle for uplifting marginalized communities, restoring visibility to those who feel invisible, and instilling the confidence necessary for academic achievement. The decision of Black teachers to pursue teaching is informed by a broader notion of liberation that transcends legal freedoms. However, the persistent trend of disinvestment in Black schools and

communities underscores the ongoing struggle between these liberatory ideals and prevailing neoliberal ideologies governing education.

Neoliberal policies emerged in response to disinvestment in Black urban communities, reshaping both these communities and their schools while perpetuating existing power struggles. Researcher Pauline Lipman (2011) has consistently highlighted how urban governance historically served as a mechanism for social control, aimed at managing labor organizing, social movements, racial segregation, and conflict. Neoliberal policies serve a similar function, aligning neighborhood revitalization efforts with capitalist objectives and exacerbating challenges faced by Black families (Buras, 2015; Lipman, 2011). Predominately Black schools often face closure, consolidation, or conversion into privately operated charter schools, leading to significant shifts in administration, teaching methods, and governance (Buras, 2015; Lipman, 2011). These changes are typically implemented without meaningful input from community stakeholders (Buras, 2015; Lipman, 2011), placing Black teachers in a challenging position. Not only are they expected to support students impacted by community transformations, but they must also adhere to imposed school policies and relinquish classroom autonomy. Constrained by economic and political forces, these shifts contribute to a cultural turmoil felt by Black teachers (Buras, 2015; Dumas, 2011; Lipman, 2011).

As soon as I graduated college, “the real world” proved to be different than what I was prepared for. I had questions my teacher education program never addressed. What were the major differences between working at a charter school, public school, or private school? How much autonomy would I have in the classroom? What should I do when I do not agree with a school’s approach to teaching, learning, and managing behaviors? Why does the prevailing ethos of schools appear to favor teachers who arrive well before the start time and remain beyond the scheduled end of the school day? Why am I dedicating extensive time to prep and planning

during periods when I should be off without receiving adequate compensation? Why do I not agree with these definitions of professionalism? Why is New York City so expensive for a single woman making $60,000? Given these questions, I bounced around New York City charter schools looking for a school home that paid the most money.

I knew if I stayed with charter schools, I would be compensated at a slightly higher rate than public schools. My first teaching job was at Harlem Children Zone. Though excited to be working for a publicly known school, the school culture felt like a well-resourced prison run by Black professionals. Like other charter schools I worked at, I saw teachers who had quit mid-year, white teachers who struggled to connect with students and spoke ill of them, principals who were disconnected from students and their realities, and students suspended for minor infractions. I soon learned how charter schools mainly cared about testing results, holding teachers accountable, and "well-disciplined students." When I found my final professional home at a public school in the South Bronx, the issues I saw continued. Public schools were underfunded, understaffed, and seemingly not concerned with the tangible public. Libraries were barely filled, books were ripped apart, teachers used personal funds to provide for their classroom and students' needs classes were held in spaces with no windows, and English Language Learners were not given adequate support. The essence of all these messages screamed loudly at me no matter what school I was in. No one cares about the schools where Black teachers largely work.

While teaching, I was living in New York City with my grandmother in her Section 8 apartment. I was not only trying to wrap my mind around the reality of schools but also the reality of Black neighborhoods and the ability to live in New York City. I was constantly haunted by the question of where I would comfortably reside. Comfortability meant being able to moderately eat out each month, take vacations during school breaks, lease a luxury car every

three years, maintain New York Knicks season ticket holder status and keep up with the latest Jordan sneakers. It also meant being able to help take care of my family, have fun on the weekends with friends, contribute to student loan payments, save for a rainy day, and eventually own a home. Though I was lucky to have support as I saved money, I still worried I would not be able to afford to live securely on my own.

I was interested in neighborhoods that were not too far from work and had diverse populations. Harlem was ideal for me because it afforded me easy access to everyone and every place in New York City. My choices were between well-established middle-class neighborhoods, gentrified neighborhoods, semi-gentrified neighborhoods, or uninvested poorer neighborhoods. Each choice however came with a sacrifice: either I paid high rent or accept living in unjust conditions. I quickly recognized my idea of comfort was unattainable without help. Additionally, I realized my idea of comfort did not include the necessities of rent, electricity, a cable & Wi-Fi package, a phone bill, renters' insurance, and groceries. These necessities alone would have exhausted all my funds. I continued living with a family member because it was the only way to survive.

With gentrification, the reality of urban neighborhoods and schools have evolved to meet the economic demands of corporate America (Rogers & White, 2019). Charter and public schools have embraced values of academic achievement and competition (Rogers & White, 2019). Given this reality, Black teachers face the closing and conversion of their schools, the shift in staffing and administration, the new wave of rebuilding and restructuring of public schools into privately run charter schools, the promotion of "choice", and the inability to influence curriculum, policy, and the surrounding community (Buras 2015; Lipman 2011). These changes are in response to a national shift in educational goals. Neoliberal policies that align with the economic demands of the global economy end up destroying urban communities,

displacing Black teachers, and forcing them to find new ways of reclaiming educational spaces (Buras, 2016; Lipman, 2011; Rogers & White, 2019).

Space and place became the central themes of all my struggles. In terms of work, I pondered on what school would allow me to bring my authentic style of teaching, learning, and being into the classroom? I discovered that students placed value on discussions about the top basketball player and team, listening to music during class, and observing the trendy footwear their teacher regularly wore to work. I allowed students to wear hoodies, chew gum and use the bathroom without explicit permission. It was important my students saw someone they could relate to and have the confidence to imagine their future selves. What resulted from these practices was mutual respect between myself and my students and disdain, doubt, and lack of support amongst my supervisors. At one charter school the principal commented, "Ms. Hawkins, the students love and respect you, but you are *too* cool". Another principal communicated how she would "cringe" when passing my classroom because the noise level did not indicate learning. This principal would randomly walk in and ask students, "Do you like Ms. Hawkins"? After the fact, students would be eager to share this with me, telling me how they explained how much they loved me.

Given the environment experienced, I feared when principals came into my room to conduct an observation. I was relegated to traditional ways of teaching, which led to disastrous lessons. For two consecutive years, a public-school principal rated my teaching ineffective. During the second year my assistant principal was too fearful to defend the highly effective teaching she had witnessed and documented. Even though teachers, deans, and staff knew of and supported the work I was doing in my classroom, no one defended me out loud. I was always advised to "just do what you are told", so my career would survive.

I did not possess the language necessary to articulate what I was feeling, seeing, and questioning. I felt more shackled after college than I ever felt. First, schools were not bringing about imagined freedom possible through education. Second, basic living in New York City came at a high cost. How could I convince my students to go to college? How could I warn, educate, and equip students with the tools essential to understand the complexities of their world and the world around them? Because I could not figure out the answers to all these questions, I decided to apply to doctoral programs. Somehow, I believed more schooling would grant me the answers and information I needed.

By the time my principal came around, it was too late; I had already accepted my offer to Indiana University. However, her perspective of me soon changed during a surprise visit from the superintendent. My class was selected as one of the classes the superintendent wanted to observe. Because I knew I was leaving, I instructed my students not to act any differently than a regular day. As the superintendent entered the classroom, my students and I were having fun; laughing, learning, and teaching one another. The superintendent was so impressed with the culture of the classroom, the work being done and the ways in which students articulated their learning, she stopped the lesson to share the complete joy she was experiencing. My principal began texting her school leaders, “Ms. Hawkins is killing it”. It was at that moment, people responded to her with the air of “we already knew this”. Days later, everyone in my school was devastated to know I would not be returning.

I chose not to return in exchange for the pursuit of knowledge and the discursive ability to express my experiences. It was those experiences which have inspired the creation of this project. I was of the belief that Black teachers were uniquely committed to their students and carried a self-defined idea of liberation. In this study, my focus will be on the experiences of Black teachers in New York City amidst neoliberal urban reforms. I intend to capture how

teachers articulate and express their ideas of freedom in the classroom. I also seek to understand how neoliberal policies like gentrification, choice, competition, charter schools, and accountability affect Black teachers teaching experiences while becoming socially engrained in society's common sense.

Context & Significance

The expansion of charter schools, the rise of various teacher preparation programs, the competitive nature of standardized testing, and the adoption of managerial style leadership are among the factors contributing to the challenges faced by Black teachers, often leading to attrition (Buras, 2015; DiMartino & Jessen, 2018; Rogers &White, 2019; Sanders et al., 2018). Corporate styled leaders in charter schools expect high achieving results from teachers as a return on their material investment (Rogers & White, 2019), often neglecting the larger social implications to student achievement (Rothstein, 2004). This has led to complaints from Black teachers about the lack of autonomy and decision-making regarding pedagogy and curriculum, citing bullying tactics used to get teachers to do what the charter managers want (Rogers & White, 2019).

In Chicago, Black teachers have shown their political involvement against issues dealing with desegregation, the devaluing of Black teachers, and community control of schools and curriculum (Danns, 2014; Todd-Breland, 2018). Mayor Daley and Arne Duncan sought to prevent white flight and gain social control in Chicago by encouraging market-based solutions for urban revitalization and failing schools (Lipman, 2011). Corporate elites like Terry Mezany, believed high-quality schools within the public education system play a crucial role in the international competition to attract highly skilled professionals which entice investors to potential areas for gentrification (Lipman, 2011). This chain reaction ultimately promotes the gentrification of neighborhoods to prospective middle-class residents (Lipman, 2011). With little

input and no influence, teachers, students, and parents experienced rapid school closures, development of "turnaround" schools, and the creation of charter and military schools as replacement (Lipman, 2011). As gentrification began to take hold in Chicago, Black teachers rallied against neoliberal agendas set by the Chicago Public School district and corporate elites (Lipman, 2017). With the spread of a neoliberal agenda, Black teachers were fired, and white untrained teachers were used as replacements (Lipman, 2011).

The continued introduction of neoliberal policies in places like New York and Chicago, has transformed once dilapidated communities into "hot" places to live and invest. Trendy words like "re-invest," "revitalize," "choice," and "reform" became code language for inviting middle- and upper-class families into newly economic and socially friendly neighborhoods (Lipman, 2011, 2017). This language then becomes embedded in common sense, influencing how policy solutions are assessed (Harvey, 2005). Conversations about achievement gaps are co-opted such that people believe public schools are ineffective and neighborhoods are thought to be better when key features are included, and communities are unrecognizable. Janelle Scott and Jennifer Holme (2016) explained how these methods of reform are linked to wider social, political, and economic shifts, notably including globalization, gentrification, spatial segregation, and the division of the job market, which have become more prevalent in urban environments, particularly over the last 20 years.

The history of Black teachers has been significantly shaped by a system characterized by racial domination and oppression. This systemic issue manifests itself in urban northern communities through both implicit and explicit means. Consequently, this system has eroded the democratic rights of Black teachers and the communities they serve and reside in. Racial domination and the lack of democratic participation or the authentication of citizenship is a phenomenon largely seen in communities populated by Black citizens (Buras, 2011; Desmond &

Emirbayer, 2010). This phenomenon highlights a "focus on power and conflict, particularly the role of capital and race in the spatial structuring of the city and urban life" (Lipman, 2011, p.3). Power and control over urban spaces have led to persistent acts of resistance towards perceived barriers of liberation and justice for teachers (Miller Sr, 2018; Santoro, 2018; Thompson & Pease-Alvarez, 2018; Weeda, 2018).

Examining the history of Black teachers, both in a general context and with a focus on northern urban communities, prompts us to consider whether circumstances have evolved for Black teachers following the *Brown v. Board* decision. For decades leading to the *Brown* decision, Blacks perceived education as a necessary right and tool to further agendas related to emancipation. During the Civil Rights Era, the definition of emancipation largely centered on the need for equal protection under the law. Currently, legal emancipation is still a goal. But it is important for this study to explore how Black teachers' perceptions of liberation have evolved.

In the effort to attain justice in the United States, the Black teacher's perspective is often neglected, untold, and unaccounted for. Much of the research on Black teachers centers on Jim Crow and the after-effects of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in the South. Research on the North, which takes up similar topics, does so with minimal attention paid to Black teachers (Rogers & White, 2019). Contemporary discussions surrounding neoliberalism acknowledge some impacts on Black teachers' experiences, yet there is a noticeable absence of research exclusively dedicated to comprehending the specific impacts of neoliberalism on the Black teacher population. The significance of this study lies in centering the voices, experiences, and histories of Black teachers. It aims to illustrate how Black educators continue to view education as a vital tool in challenging policies that contradict their ideals of liberation. While Black teachers have articulated various motivations for entering the profession, I posit that these motivations are deeply intertwined with the pursuit of liberation. This study will examine the

impact of neoliberal policies on Black K-12 public school teachers in New York City, shedding light on the intricate yet essential relationship between race, education, and liberation. By exploring how neoliberal policies affect Black teachers, this study seeks to establish a framework for understanding their experiences in the 21st century. Ultimately, the objective is to utilize this framework to contemplate policy and systemic solutions informed by the insights of Black teachers.

Research Questions

- What is the Black teacher experience in New York City in the 21st century?
- What are the historical, social, economic, and political impacts on the Black teacher experience in New York City?
- How does the evolving political economy in New York City impact Black teachers' motivation to teach in urban communities?
- How have Black teachers imagined liberation?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to center the voices of Black teachers working in a neoliberal New York City during the 21st century. This study intends to create a model that can be used to research Black teachers in other urban Northern areas within the United States. Though this study focuses exclusively on Black teachers in New York City, it is important to investigate bodies of literature that address the Black teacher experience in the United States at large. This broad survey of the literature helps to contextualize the current conditions and dispositions of Black teachers. This literature review will foreground policy trends that impact Black teachers from slavery to neoliberalism. Liberation is a recurring theme that will surface throughout this review. While the pursuit of liberation has long been a goal for many Black communities across the United States, there are varying conceptions and interpretations of its meaning. This literature review will explore these nuances, particularly in relation to Black teachers in the South, North, and contemporary 21st-century contexts.

In existing literature, considerable attention has been devoted to understanding the experiences of Black teachers, particularly in the southern United States. This research has extensively documented their roles and challenges amidst significant historical epochs such as slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Movement. However, the experiences of Black teachers in urban North regions have received notably less scholarly attention and are often discussed in relation to broader research agendas or through implicit understandings of their challenging circumstances (Rogers & White, 2019). Recognizing this gap, this review aims to analyze existing data on Black teachers to highlight their historical, social, and political experiences within the United States. Through this analysis, I

seek to explore how visions of liberation have been enacted, influenced, carried on, and transformed over time.

To structure this review, I will first review literature pertaining to the time periods of slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and *Brown v. Board of Education* in the southern context. In addressing the northern perspective, I will begin by summarizing the conditions experienced by Black teachers prior to the *Brown v. Board* decision. Subsequently, I will dive into post-*Brown* teaching conditions and experiences in the North, capturing the salient themes that emerge. Additionally, I will explore detailed literature illuminating the involvement of Black teachers in the struggle for community control. Finally, the concluding section of the literature review will scrutinize major neoliberal policies impacting urban environments, shedding light on their implications for Black teachers and underscoring the broader socio-political dynamics shaping their experiences.

Black Teachers in the South

In *Self-taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, Andrea Williams (2005) captured the life, struggles and pursuits made by unofficial Black teachers during slavery. She documented how Black people were able to obtain literacy and use this coveted skill as a political act to teach toward emancipation. Even with rudimentary skills, knowledge, and a lack of confidence in their ability to teach, Black teachers felt that controlling their narratives was their duty (Williams, 2005). Williams's (2005) contribution to the literature on Black teachers during slavery is substantial as it allows for one to make inferences about similar conditions of Black teachers in the urban North. This piece of literature also contributes to the comprehension of the first teachers of the freed people and how their early values shaped education in the South. Williams (2005) argued how the values of literacy, school establishment, support for teaching and resisting structures of power reiterated by unofficial Black teachers have shaped the scope

and sequence of education in the South. These values of emancipation largely framed the visions of Black teachers during Reconstruction.

The Reconstruction Era aimed to focus on “reorganizing the Southern states after the Civil War, providing means for readmitting African Americans into the union, and defining the means by which whites and African Americans can live together in a post-slavery society” ("The African American odyssey: A quest for full citizenship"). Established in 1865, one major piece of legislation produced during Reconstruction was the Freedmen’s Bureau. The goal of the Freedmen’s Bureau was to facilitate Reconstruction for freedmen in the South (Fultz, 2008), keeping in line with the larger goals post-slavery. One of its significant roles was to establish schools and employ Black teachers, providing education to formerly enslaved people (Anderson, 1988). Three years after the Freedmen’s Bureau was established Black teachers were officially recognized and accounted for (Fultz, 2008). This facilitated the surpassing of Black teachers to white teachers within 15 states (Williams, 2005). The Freedmen’s Bureau reported that Black teachers grew “from around one-third of the teaching force in January 1876 to slightly more than one-half” (Fultz, 2008, p.75). This initiative was crucial in laying the groundwork for Black education in the South, where public education systems were virtually non-existent for Black children before the Civil War (Anderson, 1988).

Freedmen teachers came from diverse racial, religious, and social backgrounds (American Antiquarian, n.d.). Many freedmen’s teachers came from the North (American Antiquarian, n.d.; Anderson, 1988). Northern freedmen’s motivation for educating in the South came from a commitment to the possibility for either religious or social reform (American Antiquarian, n.d.; Butchart, 1988). Black teachers from the North were the preference of Black communities in the South and tended to outnumber white teachers (Butchart, 1988; Fultz, 2008). The ideologies of Black freedmen teachers were articulated as self-reliance, self-determination,

control, and sustainability of schools (Fultz, 2008). Black teachers from the North were committed to “the intellectual emancipation” of Blacks in the South (Fultz, 2008, p.77). This articulation of emancipation served to embellish Southern Black teachers’ conceptions of emancipation.

As the Reconstruction Era and relief efforts of the Freedmen’s Bureau led to various outcomes and rollbacks, researchers have captured Black teachers’ wider role and involvement within Black communities (Fairclough, 2001). Black teachers formed trustworthy relationships with community members, local ministers, and various leaders (Fairclough, 2001, 2007). Black teachers aided parents by carrying out “tasks that required literacy: teaching Sunday school, filling out orders to Sears and Roebuck, writing letters, and figuring up weekly wages” (Fairclough, 2001, p.6-7). The primary factor behind the prominence of Black teachers as leaders within the Black community was their embodiment of the idea that education represented liberation (Fairclough, 2001). These efforts of community building and outreach were central to the goals of emancipation, especially as white resistance grew tenaciously.

One major outcome of the Reconstruction era was the founding of Howard University in 1867. Established in Washington, D.C., Howard became one of the leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). It played a pivotal role in training Black teachers, who were essential for educating the next generation of Black students (Hine et al., 2009). Howard’s impact extended beyond education into various fields, including law and medicine, symbolizing progress and empowerment for the Black community (Hine et al., 2009). Subsequently, the late 19th century saw the founding of many other HBCUs, such as Tuskegee Institute in 1881 by Booker T. Washington and Spelman College in 1881 by Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles (Gasman & Hilton, 2012). These institutions became critical in providing higher education and teacher training for Black Americans (Gasman & Hilton, 2012). They also played a vital role in

developing a professional Black teaching force and promoting education equity (Gasman & Hilton, 2012).

With Reconstruction ending, Black teachers in communities saw an emergence of philosophical differences and white resistance. The type of school Black teachers taught in (public or private) impacted their philosophy on social and economic issues (Anderson, 1988). Given emancipation as the intended goal, teachers varied in thought about the practical means of achieving freedom. James D. Anderson (1988) depicted how the difference in ideology mainly mirrored the political debates between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. These debates influenced white Northern philanthropy to vocational schools and select private schools, all while exacerbating white Southern resistance to Black education at large (Anderson, 1988). White resistance to ending racial inferiority, oppression, and advancement led to nearly a century of governance under the guise of Jim Crow. In *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South*, Adam Fairclough (2007) noted how "the politicization of Black schools, first by the intervention of white Northern teachers and then by the direct involvement of Black teachers in Republican Party politics, embittered southern whites" (p.57). Southern whites' hostility towards Black schools and Black education led them to limit educational funding such that Black teachers were limited in quantity, training experience, resources and pay (Fairclough, 2007).

In 1904, the founding of the National Association of Colored Teachers (NACT) marked a significant milestone in the history of Black education in the United States. The NACT, which later became the American Teachers Association (ATA) in 1937, was established to support Black educators and advocate for their rights (Fairclough, 2007; Siddle Walker, 2000). This organization provided a crucial platform for Black teachers to collaborate, share resources, and combat the discrimination they faced within the educational system (Siddle Walker, 2000). The

NACT's formation was a direct response to the systemic inequalities and segregation that Black teachers and students encountered, creating a unified voice to champion their interests and professional development (Fairclough, 2007).

Through its efforts, the NACT promoted the idea that schools should serve as community hubs, providing not only academic instruction but also fostering cultural pride and social consciousness among Black students (Siddle Walker, 2000). The NACT's vision extended beyond the traditional curriculum, advocating for educational practices that were culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of Black communities (Siddle Walker, 2013;2018). Moreover, the NACT was instrumental in organizing annual conventions and regional meetings where educators could exchange ideas and strategies for effective teaching and community engagement (Siddle Walker, 2000; 2013; 2018). These gatherings were not only professional development opportunities but also forums for discussing broader social and political issues affecting Black Americans (Siddle Walker, 1996). By fostering a sense of solidarity and shared purpose, the NACT helped to cultivate a generation of educators who were dedicated to both academic excellence and social justice (Foster, 1997).

In addition to its advocacy work, the NACT also engaged in legal battles to challenge discriminatory practices and policies within the education system. The organization worked to secure equal pay for Black teachers, access to better resources, and fair treatment in hiring and promotion practices (Siddle Walker, 2000). These efforts were crucial in improving the working conditions for Black educators and ensuring that they could provide high quality education to their students (Fultz, 1995). The NACT laid the groundwork for future generations of educators and students to achieve greater equity and success within the American education system (Fairclough, 2007; Siddle Walker, 2013; 2018).

Legal researchers Mark V. Tushnet (1994) and John A. Kirk (2009) reported the legal efforts by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NACCP) to act against school districts for failing to pay Black teachers equal salaries. In *Black Teachers' Salaries and the Federal Courts Before Brown v. Board of Education: One Beginning for Equity*, Bruce Beezer (1986) documented the average salary in 1940 for white and Black teachers to be $910 and $510, respectively. According to Beezer, Black teachers averaged about 80% lower in pay compared to their white counterparts. Some salaries for Black teachers were determined by the level of attainment in education, years of experience, and grade level taught. School authorities would often capitalize on Black teachers' willingness to work for less as these teachers lacked variety in alternative employment options (Beezer, 1986).

Between 1939 and 1947, the NAACP won 27 of 31 teachers' salary equalization cases that it fought (Ramsey, 2008). Given this reality, it was customary for Black teachers to "create their own private voluntary networks for continuing education" (Baker, 2006, p.3). As these salary equalization cases were won, white school officials' actions and reactions were conflicted. On the one hand, the literature shows how state officials were slowly convinced to transform policies on educational equality more broadly (Fairclough, 2006; Tushnet, 1994), and other districts were not so easily moved.

In *The NAACP Campaign For Teachers' Salary Equalization: African American Women Educators and the Early Civil Rights Struggle,* Kirk (2009) revealed the tactics school boards used to intimidate Black teachers from pursuing litigation cases. As some teachers' jobs were directly threatened, some school districts used delaying strategies to prolong court hearings. Some districts offered out of court settlements on the condition that teachers drop their lawsuits (Tushnet, 1994). In fear of losing their jobs or losing the case, some teachers decided to drop their case (Kirk, 2009). Many Black teachers continued to serve their communities with less pay

than white teachers, all while certification discrimination emerged as a new method of white resistance (Kluger, 2004).

School boards worked to create stricter merit-based systems by utilizing standardized testing to determine teacher pay (Beezer, 1986; Baker, 2006). School districts began determining salary schedules based on scores attained on standardized testing such as the National Teachers Examination (NTE) (Baker, 2006; Fairclough, 2007). The NTE was viewed as an objective means to determining teacher salaries (Green et al., 2008). The real purpose of this change was to achieve racial discrimination in a legally defensible manner (Green et al., 2008). Once school boards received notice that the average scores of Black teachers were at the lower fifth percentile compared to white teachers, Southern school leaders confidently adopted the NTE as the foundation of a merit-based system (Green et al., 2008). The literature has made obvious that by judging white and Black teachers with the same test, white school officials would be able to ensure that most Black teachers earn lower salaries than whites, thus maintaining racial inequalities (Beezer, 1986; Baker, 2006; Kirk, 2009; Tushnet, 1994). This political act of resistance has economic implications for Black teachers and their families as well as implications for the Black community. How these implications manifest today as it relates to Black teachers remains unexplored.

Through legalized oppression, lack of resources, and unequal pay, Black teachers still excelled at times better than their white counterparts. In Vanessa Siddle Walker's (2001) research on Black teachers in the South, she focused on how Black teachers saw themselves as skilled professionals who adopted a set of principles regarding the education of African American children that aligned with their professional discourse and their comprehension of the African American community. One of these ideas is central to Black teachers' pedagogic strategies centered on care work. It must be underscored how research has undermined the

significant contributions Black teacher care work has had on the success of Black students (Foster, 1990; Siddle Walker, 1993). Siddle Walker (1996) vividly portrayed the essence of interpersonal care and a deep commitment to the success of Black students and communities in *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South*. In the book, Siddle Walker (1996) emphasizes themes such as resilience, community solidarity, educational achievement, and the impact of segregation on African American students and educators.

Siddle Walker (1996) gave a descriptive examination of how the successful institutional structure at Caswell County Training School (CCTS) in North Carolina was maintained. This research tracked the collaborative efforts of principals, teachers, and community members as they worked together to ensure every child reached their highest potential (Siddle Walker, 1996). Teachers at CCTS rarely experienced economic disadvantages as it pertained to pay because they were expected to have all possible credentials to officially teach (Siddle Walker, 1996). Teachers who were employed by CCTS were either North Carolina natives or part of the growing number of teachers who attended CCTS as former students. Black teachers were described to be selfless, motivators, advocators, caring, and concerned (Siddle Walker, 1993). The teachers at CCTS are perfect examples of why many Black communities preferred their segregated schools as opposed to integrated or all-white schools (Siddle Walker, 1993; Anderson, 1988). This research highlights the need to capture more stories about Back teachers such that disparaging presumptions about Black teachers, their pedagogic practices, and intangible results can be debunked. This research is even more important as the decision and commentary delivered around *Brown v. Board* influenced societies view of Black teachers and schools.

The Supreme Court's mandate to desegregate public schools came as a victory toward legal emancipation but reverberated as a consequence for the Black teaching profession. After

the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, schools were mandated to implement desegregation methods. In response, state legislatures and school boards in the South began a campaign of "economic reprisal and intimidation against African American educators" (Haney, 1978, p.90). An oral history study conducted by Martha Lash and Monica Ratcliffe (2014), concluded how immediately upon *Brown's* recommendation to desegregate public schools, Black teachers faced many challenges, such as: "the closing of many all-Black schools, new testing and certification requirements, the firing of Black teachers and rehiring of white teachers, and the failure to replace Black teachers who retired" (p. 329). Most school districts that desegregated schools, did so such that the majority of faculty remained white (Fairclough, 2007). White schools were motivated to implement these types of desegregation plans to indirectly emphasize the inferiority of Black teachers. These plans led to the adverse treatment of Black teachers in integrated schools by white teachers, administration, and white families. Because of this practice, many Black teachers compared themselves to white teachers, distressed about their teaching qualifications and abilities (Fairclough, 2007). Schools' failure to retain Black teachers further impacted their capacity to grow and receive professional and educational development (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). Black teachers' livelihoods, pride, and intellectual competence were at stake (Foster, 1997).

Integration was popularly communicated as the goal within Black communities but not all Black teachers adopted this attitude. Black teachers who supported segregated schools did not always join in the battle against school segregation (Fairclough, 2001). These teachers were labeled as exhibiting "social and political conservatism" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 45). This viewpoint has been challenged, suggesting that if Black teachers encouraged Black individuals to accept white supremacy and the prevailing institutional design, then the body of literature linking Black education to Black equality would have to be discounted (Fairclough, 2001; Siddle

Walker, 1996, 2018). Research on Black schools embodied how Black teachers loved their segregated schools and poured all their time and resources into guaranteeing their schools were the best for Black children and communities (Siddle Walker's, 1996, 2018). However, Black teachers and educational institutions within Black communities supported and were pivotal to the civil rights movements and protests (Fairclough, 2007, p.46). It is important to understand legal emancipatory efforts were mutually agreed upon by Black teachers. Emancipation, which transcended the law and focused on the livelihood of Black people, differed amongst Black teachers.

U.S. schools' failure to retain Black teachers further impacted the professional and educational development and landscape of Black teachers. In the 1950s, 50% of all Black professionals were teachers (Foster, 1990). More specifically, in 1954, 82,000 Black teachers were responsible for the education of two million African American public school students (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Within a decade, over 38,000 Black teachers and administrators lost their jobs in 17 southern and border states (Holmes & Hudson, 1994). Between 1971 and 1986, Black teachers in the U.S. decreased from 7.1% to 6.9% (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). Between 1975 and 1985, the number of Blacks majoring in education declined by 66% (Tilman, 2004). From 1984 to 1989, 21,515 Black teachers lost their jobs (Holmes & Hudson, 1994). Holmes and Hudson (1994) reported that in 1991 about 232,000 Black teachers constituted 8% of the teacher force. In the 2011-2012 United States Department of Education report on diversity, only 7% of its public school teaching force was Black (Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, 2016). Lash and Ratcliffe (2014) blamed the continued decline of Black teachers largely on integration (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). In *Missing Teachers, Impaired Communities: The Unanticipated Consequences of* Brown v. Board of Education *on the African American Teaching Force at the Precollegiate Level,* Holmes and Hudson (1994) argue how post-Brown,

the number of Black teachers in public school classrooms have not increased. Contextualizing Black teacher's experiences in the South, North, and in relation to contemporary policy will help to understand the decrease of Black educators.

While emancipation in the South always prioritized legal freedoms under the law, other forms of emancipation began to take root as well. Legally, during slavery, education for Blacks was prohibited. Black teachers had to teach and learn in hiding. During the Jim Crow Era until civil rights legislation was passed (1964), separate but equal remained the standard of law (despite *Brown v. Board*). This meant teachers could not be hired in any school, could be paid less than white teachers, deemed ineligible to teach, and be fired without cause. There was a collective effort to be emancipated from these conditions. But, inspired by the early resistance efforts of teachers during slavery, there also was an effort to reach independent forms of emancipation. The need to gain literacy in order to organize communities, gain political control, and change economic conditions was paramount to Black teachers' teaching practices. Education was seen as the primary vehicle to achieve these emancipatory goals. These transcending forms of advocating for emancipation was largely contributed to the conditions faced by teachers in the North.

Black Teachers in the North

The realities of Black teachers in the North were in some ways similar to the realities of Black teachers in the South. Black teachers were largely underpaid, placed in under-resourced schools, deemed inferior, and lacked control over schools in their communities. What distinguished the execution of segregation and desegregation practices from the North and South was cultural and political practices. This section will highlight those discriminatory cultural and political practices which impacted Black teachers' experiences. This section will begin by briefly looking at the North before slavery followed by the effects of the Great Migration, the North's

reactions and responses to the cultural climate of the South and *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The end of this section will underscore Black teacher's involvement in community control of Black schools. Through the fight for community control, Black teachers' conceptions of emancipation were formulated and expressed.

The campaign against school segregation in the North began as early as 1849, when a Black father sued the city of Boston alleging the city was, "perpetuating a system of unequal segregated schools" (Danns & Span, 2008, p. 267). The court ruled against this Black father declaring that using race to segregate schools is legal so long as equitable conditions are provided (Danns & Span, 2008). This decision reflected the ideals of segregation in the North. Anti-segregation legislation aiming at racial equality did not reflect a broad commitment among Northern whites (Douglas, 2005). Blacks had to deal with the reality that while accessing education was somewhat a norm, accessing equal education was not (Clotfelter, 2004; Douglas, 2005; Podair, 2002; Taylor, 1997). As schools developed in the North, segregation led to inequitable resources in Black schools and difficult teaching conditions for Black teachers (Douglas, 2005). These inequitable conditions were culturally and politically metastasized as *Brown v. Board* ended legal segregation.

During the early to mid-20th century, spanning approximately from 1916 to 1970, the Great Migration emerged as a monumental demographic phenomenon in American history. The mass movement witnessed millions of African Americans departing from rural South to seek better prospects in Northern urban centers (Wilkerson, 2010). Motivated by desire to escape the pervasive grip of segregation, racial violence, and economic marginaization characteristic of the South (Lemann, 1991), African Americans embarked on a journey towards Northern cities such as Chicago, New York, Detroit, and Philadelphia. This migration wave brought about a significant transformation in the demographic landscape of Northern urban areas, profoundly

impacting various societal domains, in cluding education (Wilkerson, 2010). As African American populations swelled in Northern citiies, they encountered strained urban school systems ill-prepard to accomdate the sudden influx of students (Lemann, 1991). This influx, occurring between 1916 and 1970, strained the already limited infrastructure and resources of these schools, further exacerbating pre-exisiting segregation and resource disparities.

By 1954, with de jure segregation no longer permissibly by the courts, public schools in the urban North became characterized by pronounced de facto segregation (Clotfelter, 2004, p.7). This characterization was largely due to the highly fragmented jurisdictional landscape in most urban areas (Clotfelter, 2004, p.7). Recently, scholars have stopped making the distinction between de dure and de facto segregation. But when studying Northern desegregation, one must make the distinction between legalized and practiced forms of segregation clear. Adina Back (2003) exposed the difficulties of desegregation in the North as being tied to denial, power, control, and spatial configuration patterns. Elected state and city officials denied the existence of segregation by comparing their practices to the Southern rule of law and traditions. Northerners believed segregation was a byproduct of class and social class habits. This mentality created major barriers for Black teachers as they were likely to be in poorer performing schools, limiting their access to better resources, better performing schools and the opportunity to integrate with other students and faculty (Back, 2003; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Even when organizations like the NAACP won lawsuits addressing funding and resource disparities, funds to finance school improvement were conveniently not available (Formisano, 1991).

In cities like Boston, desegregation became a battle of self-interest, well-being, common sense, common decency, and uncommon demands (Formisano, 1991). These battles were reflective of the emancipatory ideals of Black teachers. In *Boston against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s*, Ronald P. Formisano captured the voices of anti-bussers

who expressed fear, anguish, anger, and uncertainty as they bared the brunt of closed schools. He encapsulated anti-bussers frustrations as government failure to fully integrate outside of poor urban populations; leaving white middle-class suburbs to continue de facto segregation patterns. Because of this failure, by the 1990s, cities had "lost 1.6 to 3 million white residents" and "suburbs gained 1.9 to 3.2 million white residents" (Formisano, 1991, pg. 241). The frustrations of anti-bussers in Boston, both Black and white, represented the voices of those across other urban areas. These voices of vexation coupled with de facto segregation, have a direct impact on the Black teacher experience. Given the heavy concentration of poverty, Black teachers were relegated to teach in poor underfunded Black schools while receiving low paying wages (Fairclough, 2007; Dougherty, 2004; Kirk, 2009). The intense resistance to desegregation influenced the disparate outcomes of racial mixing in the North compared to other regions.

Interracial contact across the United States did increase over the half century since the *Brown* decision, but when looking specifically at the North, segregation did not similarly decline (Clotfelter, 2004). In *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation*, Charles T. Clotfelter (2004) concluded that desegregation in the North was diminished based on four factors: (a) white aversion to interracial contact, (b) the multiplicity of means which whites could sidestep the effects of policy (private schooling/magnet schools), (c) the willingness of state and local governments to accommodate white resistance (gerrymandering), and (d) faltering resolve of the prime movers of the policy (Clotfelter, 2004, p.8). Douglas (2005) linked these responses as a direct result of political and cultural influences though some segregation practices were due to legal issues.

Despite legal victories being important to the progression of equality, change must be coupled with cultural and political support (Douglas, 2005; Taylor, 1997). White politicians would take advantage of Black needs by falsely promising the implementation of favorable

desegregation policies in exchange for electoral support (Douglas, 2005). They ferociously championed school desegregation without residential desegregation. Even when a handful of Northern districts continued sanction segregation (Taylor, 1997), white politicians neglected to influence policy and practice addressing residential segregation; one of the leading causes to urban school segregation (Douglas, 2005). The political and cultural support necessary to make desegregation a reality largely failed in most urban districts (Douglass, 2005). This left cities like Cleveland and Minneapolis racially segregated (Douglas, 2005). Politicians' failures to make desegregation a reality in the North led to protests and calls for community control in racially isolated and poor neighborhoods.

Black teachers were heavily involved in community protests and strikes as it pertained to educational and community matters (Danns, 2014; Fairclough, 2007; Podair, 2002; Todd-Breland, 2018). These protests and demands stemmed from a culture that perpetuated white dominant values of schooling and inferior practices of supporting educational opportunities (Douglas, 2005; Podair, 2002; Todd-Breland, 2018). According to Podair (2002), Black teachers in New York City held three similarly situated beliefs:

1. "Black and white teachers differed in how they defined equality and racism.
2. Black and white teachers differed in teaching pedagogies. Black teachers favored teaching Black history in a "…radicalized version of pluralism" (p.7)
3. Black teachers critiqued "the culture and values associated with the middle class in New York, notably individualism, competition, and materialism" (p.7).

The Black, white difference in perception, along with the realities of Black urban communities, inspired the articulation and advocacy of emancipation in the North. Community control would mean access to teaching and administrative positions for Black teachers, redefined representation of the middle class, representation in teachers' unions, and relevant pedagogy and curriculum

(Danns, 2003; Dougherty, 2004; Podair, 2002; Taylor, 1997; Todd-Breland, 2018). Community control of schools was likely to guarantee Black teachers a career, control of their classrooms and democratic participation in their communities (Rickford, 2016).

Alongside community members, Black and white teachers fought for "their visions of a fair and just city and what their different languages meant for the politics and culture of the city in the 1970s and beyond" (Podair, 2002, p.8). In NYC, the push for community control was premised on the argument that since white dominated educational bureaucracies failed to teach Black children effectively, Black communities should be given the opportunity to design and govern their schools. In *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis,* Podair (2002) extracted five central questions Black teachers used to challenge educational institutions in place:

1. What did "racism" mean?
2. What was "quality"?
3. What cultural values would prevail in a "pluralistic" city?
4. What did it mean to be "middle-class"?
5. What principles would govern the distribution of resources in a "fair", "just" city?

Black educators took issue with how the answers to these questions were largely associated with the white middle-class culture of individualism, competition, and materialism. Black educators sought to replace this culture with alternative principles based on traditional Black values of mutuality, cooperation, and community (Podair, 2002). How racial groups interpreted the answers to these questions has impacted New York's social and class relations, electoral alignments, fiscal policies, labor negotiations, and political culture (Podair, 2002; Lewis, 2013). These lasting impacts have yet to be explored as they relate to Black teachers.

In Chicago, Black teachers were adamant about advocating not only for their poor working conditions but also for their student's poor learning conditions (Danns, 2014; Todd-Breland, 2018). They understood the impact both conditions had on one another (Todd-Breland, 2018). As Chicago Public Schools saw an increase in the employment of Black teachers in Black schools, these teachers served as a stable and consistent representation of the Black middle-class (Danns, 2014; Todd-Breland, 2019). Black teachers fought to create an alternative teacher's union because of continued marginalization and increased representation (Todd-Breland, 2018). The continuous advocacy of Black teachers and their push for self-determinist politics and ideals helped to transform Black politics in Chicago (Todd-Breland, 2018; Danns, 2003). This push also transcended liberatory practices, advocacy, and research similar urban areas.

The contestation of legal freedom in the North was an important emancipatory battle. However, Black teachers' efforts towards emancipation centered community control. Community control would allow Black teachers to explore and re-define self-liberation, community-liberation, and socio-economic liberation. Blacks wanted control in normalizing Black values as part of the American middle-class (Podair, 2002). Liberation that extended the legal realm would allow for the control of schools and community through curriculum, pedagogic practices, school ethos, and representation. These vocalized liberatory pursuits have influenced contemporary ways of resisting, teaching, and influencing.

Contemporary Teachers' Issues

The review of the literature concludes with an exploration of contemporary issues impacting Black teachers in the North. Many contemporary issues are rooted in policy shifts toward open-market principles. These shifts were largely initiated in the 1980s and 1990s. This section will focus on the product of the open-market shift. I start by giving a brief definition of neoliberalism, as I have categorized contemporary policy as a function of neoliberalism.

Following this, each subsequent subsection will be representative of popular neoliberal policies that explicitly and implicitly impact Black teachers.

Neoliberalism

Issues of poverty in Black communities directly result from intentional disinvestment (Allison, 2006; Buras, 2015; Lipman, 2011). The claim of ending poverty often leads to the displacement and dispossession of Black and Brown families from their communities (Allison, 2006). Trendy words like, “re-invest”, “revitalize”, “choice” and “reform” have become code for middle- and upper-class families to live and invest in economic and socially friendly neighborhoods (Lipman, 2011). Janelle Scott and Jennifer Holme (2016) explained how these methods of reform are “connected to broader social, political, ideological, and economic trends, particularly the globalization, gentrification, spatial segregation, and job market bifurcation that have increasingly characterized urban areas, especially in the past two decades” (p.253). As market fundamentalism places emphasis on the use of markets to produce and stabilize economic and social change (Somers, 2008), contemporaries refer to these principles as neoliberalism.

In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey (2005) best described neoliberalism as, “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (p.2). In countries that have adopted a neoliberal model it is the state’s apparatus which produces a system based on entrepreneurial freedoms, choice and protection of private properties and interest (Harvey, 2005). To ensure the characteristics of this institutional framework, the state organizes “military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). Neoliberals value the principles of freedom often disguised as individual choice and market reform (Apple, 2006).

In addition to Harvey's (2005) analysis, scholars such as Naomi Klein (2007) in *The Shock Doctrine* have explored how neoliberalism has been advanced through tactics such as economic shocks and crises, which create opportunities for the implementation of neoliberal reforms. Klein (2007) argues that neoliberal policies are often imposed during times of crisis, exploiting vulnerabilities and consolidating power for corporate interests. Neoliberal reform, which prioritizes market-oriented approaches such as school choice, standardized testing, and privatization of education seeks to redefine education as a commodity and promote competition among schools, exacerbating inequalities in access to quality education (Apple, 2006).

James D. Anderson (1988) thoroughly detailed how Black people's lack of economic and political power allowed white elites to control the structure and content of Black schooling, a persistent issue today. Political leaders Milton Friedman (1955) and Ronald Reagan championed limiting federal government and increasing competition and opportunity. This push appealed to parent's right to choose schooling for their children and to a teacher's ability to seek alternative methods of certification and teaching placements (Friedman, 1955). Their advocacy of neoliberalism allowed entrepreneurs, business leaders, corporate philanthropists, and politicians to introduce choice policies such as: vouchers, charter schools and alternative teacher preparation programs (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Buras, 2016; Giridharadas, 2018). As the implementation of these policies have been argued to have positive impacts on various communities, these policies have served to have an imbalanced impact on Black teachers (Buras; 2016; Lipman, 2011).

As a resounding effect of neoliberal policy, retention has become an issue for Black teachers. Research focused on teacher retention has shown how Black teachers have both entered and exited teaching at higher rates than white teachers (White, 2016). Minority teachers were more likely to migrate from one school to another or leave teaching altogether (White, 2016). In Northern urban communities, there has been a consistent decline in Black teachers compared to

other races (White, 2016). In *Closing the Racial/Ethnic Gap Between Students of Color and Their Teachers: An Elusive Goal,* Villegas et al., (2012), noted that Black teachers have the slowest growth and retention among all race and ethnic groups. This decrease symbolizes the "continued institutional impacts that weaken the civic and political capacities of communities of color where Black teachers have historically played an important role" (White, 2016, p.13). The decline in Black teachers leads to the decline in Black teacher mentorship, a component that is key to the success and retention of Black teachers in urban schools (Goodwin et al., 2015).

Neoliberal policies serve as a form of social and cultural control that leaves little to no room for Black teachers' influence in the classroom and respective community (Dumas, 2011). Lipman (2011) argued that "social control has always been a function of urban government to control labor organizing, social movements, and urban rebellions, and to enforce racial segregation, defend private property, and diffuse social conflict and resistance" (p.25). Black teachers have been at the front lines rallying against neoliberal agendas set by public school districts and corporate elites (Lipman, 2017). In Chicago, corporate elites have held the belief that having "good schools and options within the public school system" is crucial for competing globally to draw highly skilled professionals (Lipman, 2011, p. 93). Global competition and market-based education reform all lead to high stakes testing, accountability regimes (Rushek, 2017), and a disappearance of democratic participation (Buras, 2011; Somers, 2011). This all continues to result in the undermining of Black teachers' contributions, struggles, and overall experiences.

Gentrification

Gentrification, stemming from initiative to revitalize urban areas, involves the strategies utilization of power and economic resources to promote the integration of profitable attributes into a neighborhood or city (Lipman, 2011). These profitable attributes typically encompass a

blend of conservative and moderate values such as: environmental sustainability, safety, diverse amenities, and quality schools (Lipman, 2011; Posey-Maddox, 2014). In the *New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City,* Pauline Lipman (2011) displayed how the unequal progression of real estate development within urban areas epitomizes the core of neoliberal urbanism, symbolizing a broader transition towards a political economy driven by individual and market forces. Gentrification, publicly supported endeavors serving private interests, and the eradication of affordable housing all contribute to this phenomenon (Lipman, 2011). Additionally, actions like shutting down schools in gentrifying neighborhoods while establishing mixed-income schools to cater to the preferences of incoming middle-class residents further exemplify this precarious balance (Lipman, 2011). Ultimately, gentrification creates an environment which allows for neoliberal policies to thrive and thus intensify social, political, and economic issues faced by the Black community and Black teachers more specifically (Lipman, 2011).

While the literature on the impacts of gentrification highlights both positive and negative consequences of gentrification, in Northern urban cities, Black communities continue to experience significant segregation from their white counterparts, irrespective of their income levels (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010). In Northern spaces, gentrification often leads to economic revitalization, improved infrastructure, and increased property values (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010; Moskowitz). However, it also results in the displacement of long-time residents, loss of cultural identity, and exacerbation of social inequality. Moreover, gentrification can contribute to the homogenization of neighborhoods, eroding their diversity and character (Zukin, 1995). Overall, while gentrification may bring benefits to certain segments of the population, its negative impacts on marginalized communities underscore the need for equitable urban development policies.

In response to white flight and with the hopes of regaining social control over urban spaces, city officials encouraged market-based solutions for urban revitalization (Lipman, 2011). In *When Middle-Class Parents Choose Urban Schools: Class, Race & the Challenge of Equity in Public Education* Linn Posey-Maddox (2014) revealed the parallels between gentrification and the disparate impacts on Black families. Posey-Maddox (2014) highlighted how gentrification inevitably led to schools becoming less accessible to low-income and working-class families. The mere change in demographics contributes to the difficulty Black teachers have with being hired for jobs they are qualified for (D'Amico et al., 2017). The actions of individual citizens shed light on the broader political, economic, and social realities in which citizens operate (Posey-Maddox, 2014). This further connects to the realities in which Black teachers must navigate to sustain urban teaching and living.

Take, for instance, New York City, where urban planner Robert Moses displaced hundreds of thousands of residents from their homes, demolishing entire neighborhoods in the process (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010). Instead of replacing these demolished homes with affordable housing options, they opted for high-rise luxury developments tailored to wealthier demographics (Desmond & Emirbayer, 210). In light of public claims of revitalizing urban areas and improving the lives of impoverished residents, the driving force behind such projects was often the prospect of reaping substantial profits from upscale real estate ventures (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010). As Desmond and Emirbayer (2010) contend, economic disparities fail to account for the persistent racial segregation witnessed in society. The economic landscape is deeply connected to societal dynamics, influenced by historical, cultural, and power structures, indicating that market activities cannot be solely attributed to economic forces but are rather embedded within broader social contexts (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Racism, deeply rooted in our society's fabric, necessitates a thorough examination of its intersection with economic

systems and its resultant impact, alongside concerted efforts to address systemic injustices (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010).

In *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, Zukin (2011) offered a comprehensive analysis of gentrification in New York City, spanning from the 1970s to the contemporary urban landscape. One of Zukin's (2011) key contributions lies in the analysis of the role of culture in the gentrification process. She examined how cultural practices, such as art galleries, cafes, and boutique shops, become symbols of gentrification and catalyst for neighborhood transformation. Zukin (2011) highlighted the ways in which cultural capital is exploited to attract affluent residents and investors, leading to the displacement of longstanding communities and the erasure of local identities. Zukin (2011) also interrogated the influence of capital on New York City's urban landscape, documenting the abundance of luxury developments, corporate offices, and high-end retail establishments. She exposed how real estate and investment-driven development reshape the city's culture and environment exacerbating inequality and commodifying urban spaces.

Lastly, Zukin (2011) emphasized the pivotal role of policy in shaping the trajectory of gentrification in New York City. She examined the impact of zoning regulations, tax incentives, and urban planning initiatives on neighborhood change, revealing how public policies often prioritize market interests over community needs (Zukin, 2011). For instance, Zukin (2011) examined how zoning regulations, tax incentives, and urban planning initiatives have fueled neighborhood change, often favoring market interests over the needs of local communities. These policies all work to attract investment and promote economic (Moskowitz, 2017; Zukin, 2011). Zukin's (2011) analysis underscored the need for more equitable and inclusive approaches to urban development that prioritizes the interests of marginalized residents and foster sustainable communities.

Gentrification, driven by efforts to revitalize urban areas, involves the strategic use of power and economic resources to integrate profitable attributes into neighborhoods (Lipman, 2011). These attributes, encompassing a mix of conservative and moderate values such as environments sustainability and safety, contribute to the transformation of urban landscapes (Posey-Maddox, 2014). However, unequal progression of real estate development, supported by public policies favoring market interest, often exacerbates social inequality and leads to the displacement of marginalized communities (Desmond &Emirbayer, 2010 & Zukin, 2011). Addressing the negative impacts of gentrification requires more equitable urban development policies that prioritize community needs over market interest (Moskowitz, 2017 & Zukin, 2011).

Gatekeeping Tactics

During and after Black teachers' salary equalization battles, education stakeholders employed gatekeeping tactics to make it difficult for Black teachers to reach professional, financial, and social equality (Beezer, 1986; Kirk, 2009; Tushnet, 1994). Merit became the criteria for which school districts would base their evaluations on. Elected officials cited the importance of educational background, length of experience and score received on a National Education Board examination (Beezer, 1986; Baker, 2006; Kirk, 2009). The goal of this merit-based system was to expose the weaknesses and lack of qualifications Black teachers possess without having to probe further into why Black teachers lacked the professional and academic preparation to enter the classroom (Kirk, 2009). In places like Chicago, school officials believed without high certification standards teacher quality would depreciate (Danns, 2014). A similar merit-based structure is still maintained today.

Recent developments in teacher certification requirements have perpetuated disparities in the representation of minority teachers within the education system. Despite efforts to diversify the teaching workforce, standardized testing requirements continue to serve as significant

barriers for aspiring educators of color (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Between 2002 and 2012, praxis exams and national teaching exams became crucial to teacher selection in urban districts (Rogers & White, 2019). Rogers and White (2019) highlighted the disproportionate passing rates between racial groups on teacher certification exams, which have been exacerbated by the increasing emphasis placed on these exams in urban districts. According to Petchauer (2012), "'basic teacher' licensure exams such as Praxis are the first gatekeepers to the teaching profession" (p.252). These gatekeeping tactics neglect populations of Black students leading to a near half percentage of aspiring Black teachers to fail their exams on a first attempt (Petchauer, 2012). Given this plight, the "historical use of standardized testing instruments continue to depict people of color as less intelligent" (Au, 2009; Sacks, 1999). Additionally, efforts to address to disparities in teacher certification exams and promote diversity in the teaching workforce have gained traction in recent years (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Moreover, the implementation of rigorous admission standards in teacher education programs has raised concerns about equity and inclusivity in teacher preparation (Ladson-Billings, 2017). Teacher education programs are under constant revision forced to admissions on "rigorous" standards (Tillman, 2004). Researchers Gasman et al., (2017), have blamed selective teacher education programs for silencing "contentious issues around racism and equity" and "reducing quality teachers to machines built to improve test scores" (p. 86). By prioritizing test scores and academic credentials over other forms of knowledge and experience, these admission standards may inadvertently exclude diverse perspectives and perpetuate homogeneity within the teaching profession (Villegas et al., 2002). Minority students have the potential to do well but often lack access to various supportive resources that assist with teacher certification exams (Gasman et al., 2017). These exclusions are often a result of financial limitations and/or insufficient post-secondary preparation (Gasman et al., 2017).

Efforts to address disparities in teacher certification exams and promote diversity in the teaching workforce have gained traction in recent years. Advocacy organizations, policymakers, and education stakeholders have increasingly recognized the need to dismantle barriers to entry for aspiring educators from underrepresented backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Initiatives such as mentorship programs, test preparation assistance, and financial support for exam fees aim to level the playing field and provide equitable opportunities for aspiring teachers of color (Petchauer, 2012). Furthermore, ongoing research underscores the importance of representation of minority teachers in the education pipeline (Nieto, 2009; Banks & Banks, 2010).

Charter Schools

The principle of neoliberalism suggests that introducing schools to private methods of governance alleviates bureaucratic control through political processes while allowing for society's influence on the production and accountability of marketplaces (Chub & Moe, 1990). Harlem has been historically known to be synonymous with the Harlem Renaissance, Black literature, music, art, Pan-African nationalism, autonomous development, protest, and poverty (Erickson & Morrell, 2019). In the 21st century, Harlem became heavily impacted by politics that urged "re-investment" and re-birth" (Marable, 2002; Duneier, 2016). The influence of private investment became stronger, housing became less affordable and the public lost control over homes (Bernt, 2011). Simultaneously, a large concentration of charter schools continued to rise in Harlem (Sanders et al., 2018). Though teachers were enticed with choice, teachers were threatened with accountability, conformity, and job loss (Sanders et al., 2018). The notion of freedom, choice, and autonomy as it pertained to education was seen to be "constructed out of longstanding practices of cultural socialization often rooted deep in regional or national traditions" (Harvey, 2005, p. 39). The wave of charters in New York City gave schools more autonomy concerning governance and instruction than it did for teachers (Lewis, 2013).

The introduction of charter schools, particularly in cities like New York, drastically contributed to the growth and decline of Black teachers (Rogers & White, 2019). In 2012, New York City charter schools showed a representation gap between Black students and Black teachers that was four times higher than the district (Rogers & White, 2019). This representation gap is partially influenced by the negative and positive experiences of Black teachers in these schools. Like Chicago, during the early phases of charter school implementation, charter schools in Harlem were independently run and driven by community commitments (Sanders et al., 2018). Black teachers found success in these community-based charter schools as they were able to connect back to old traditions of teaching by using 1) culturally relevant pedagogy, 2) project-based learning, and 3) resources in parks and museums (Rogers & White, 2019). There were also Black educators who generally preferred any type of charter school because of the number of resources that reached their classrooms in comparison to traditional public schools (Rogers & White, 2019).

While New York City has the highest student enrollment in charter schools, 24% of students in East Harlem attend a charter school, while nearly half of students in central Harlem attend a charter school (NYC Charter Schools, n.d.). This is important as Black teachers have been consistently seen to teach in high poverty schools such as those in Harlem. In Harlem, Black teachers' negative interactions and experiences with charter management served as a detractor from the charter system (Rogers & White, 2019). Shawn Lewis, a Black teacher in a Harlem charter school struggled with charter school management because of the heavy emphasis on results (Rogers & White, 2019). Corporate styled leaders in charter schools expected high achieving results from teachers as a return on their material investment (Rogers & White, 2019), often neglecting the larger social implications for student achievement (Rothstein, 2004). Other Black teachers in charter schools complained about the lack of autonomy and decision-making

regarding pedagogy and curriculum, citing bullying tactics used to get teachers to do what the charter managers wanted (Rogers & White, 2019).

New Orleans' economic elite used the devastation of a hurricane to revitalize an urban community through neoliberal influence, while simultaneously pushing out Black teachers (Buras, 2011). While 85% of impoverished students were schooled in the New Orleans school district, students and schools were beginning to improve and meet the annual growth plan determined by the State Department of Education (Stovall, 2018). This meant that the 71% of teachers in New Orleans who were Black (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018), were responsible for these positive gains in the school. But as Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on this community, city officials used this desolation to expand upon economic opportunities. What David Harvey (2006) calls accumulation dispossession, the job security Black teachers once had was taken and circulated as capital opportunity for another group (Lipman, 2011). In December 2005, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) fired 7,500 school employees who had been on "disaster leave without pay" (Sanders et al., 2018, p.15). The firing of these teachers, impacting the majority who were Black, did not receive entitled due process and did not receive consideration for their substantial impact on the New Orleans community (Buras, 2015). Despite its arguably low wages, being a public school educator offered livable wage careers for Black educators (Buras, 2011; Buras, 2016; Lipman, 2011). This dismissal served as a huge blow to the Black American middle class in New Orleans (Sanders et al., 2018) as Black teachers represented a large portion of the Black middle class (Buras, 2011; Formisano, 1991; Todd-Breland, 2019).

Market-based education solutions employed in New Orleans consequently locked Black veteran teachers out of job opportunities. Black veteran teachers made it clear of their availability and readiness to teach, and supporters advocated for Black teachers at the top of the hiring pool (Buras, 2015). Stakeholders instead advertised the shortage of teachers, resulting in

contracting with organizations like Teacher for America (TFA) (Buras, 2015). State education officials gave funds to the Recovery School District in New Orleans, which then used these funds to recruit untrained, out-of-state teachers (mostly through Teach for America) to replace certified and trained veteran Black teachers (Sanders et al., 2018). Kristen Buras (2016) attributed the treatment of Black teachers in New Orleans to a "a racially inspired project of dispossession, including displacement of indigenous Black teachers, abrogation of their property rights, and disregard for the place-based knowledge, cultural contributions, and racial justice activism that informed their work for more than a century" (p.155). The actions seen in New Orleans only further subscribe to the difficulties of Black teachers obtaining wealth through the profession of teaching.

Educational entrepreneurs like the Gates Foundation, took partial financial responsibility to fund turnaround schools (charter schools). These actions resulted in neighborhood Black teachers being fired and disconnected from their communities (Lipman, 2011). Furthermore, Black teachers were replaced by non-influential, untrained teachers (Buras, 2016; Lipman, 2011). It is the influence of economic and political power wielded by organizations like the Gates Foundation which help to shape policy choices like Race to the Top (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018). Using education as a proxy, neoliberal officials and investors are interested in shifting the culture and infrastructure of urban cities like Chicago, thus impacting, overpowering, and defeating the prominent community of politically involved Black teachers (Lipman, 2011). From 2000 to 2014, Chicago Public Schools lost 4,385 teachers, a reflection of an approximate 50% decline in the Black teaching force (Lipman, 2017).

Alternative Preparation

Alternative teacher preparation programs in the United States have emerged as a response to the perceived shortcomings of traditional teacher education pathways. Alternative preparation

organizations provide an expedited pathway for individuals seeking teaching licensure in K-12 classrooms (Jang & Horn, 2017). Alternative teacher preparation programs have been widely used to address teacher shortages, recruitment and retention of teachers, and the criticized failures of university-based teaching programs (Whitford et al., 2019). These alternative programs are specifically designed to target the needs of urban and rural populations, where teacher recruitment is most difficult (Research Spotlight on Alternative Routes). Whitford et al., (2019) has spotlighted how alternative preparation programs have significantly benefited teachers of color by providing an alternative pathway which side-steps the traditional university-based way of entering the teaching profession. These authors reported how "alternative programs enrolled a more diverse pool of individuals (e.g., 18% of individuals enrolled in non-IHEs were Black, and 18% were Hispanic/Latinx)" (Whitford, et al., 2019, p.216). This enrollment is largely made up of those who were deemed highly qualified and able to successfully complete rigorous training that places emphasis on student achievement (Whitford et al., 2019). Whitford et al., (2019) particularly noted that, programs like Teach for America use intensive accountability metrics to measure the teaching effectiveness of its teachers and secure philanthropic and federal funding. While these programs aim to address teacher shortages and diversity in the teaching workforce, research indicates mixed outcomes for Black teachers and teachers of color (Garcia et al., 2019; Sutcher et al., 2017).

Whitford et al., (2019) stressed how, "attrition rates among alternative preparation teachers were double the rate of traditional preparation teachers" (p. 216). These programs often lack adequate support and mentorship for novice teachers, which can disproportionately impact teachers from marginalized backgrounds, including Black educators (Sutcher et al., 2017). Additionally, Guarino et al. (2006) suggested that alternative certification routes may produce teachers with lower retention rates and less pedagogical preparation, further exacerbating

disparities in educational outcomes for students of color. Teacher for America, the most renowned teacher preparation program, ranks among the least retentive, according to Whitford et al. (2019). Their study illustrates that by the fourth year of teaching, over half of alternative preparation teachers overall and 85% of Teach for America teachers exit the profession, contrasting with 37% of traditionally trained teachers (Whitford et al., 2019)

TFA is an alternative teacher preparation model designed to recruit high-achieving graduates to work in high-need schools (Teach for America, n.d.). TFA leaders are committed to policies of accountability through (a) school closures, (b) teacher layoffs and, (c) urban expansion of charter schools (White, 2016). After two years of placement in a high need school, TFA hopes for its teachers to be drawn to serving vulnerable communities through teaching, leadership, or policy (Heineke et al., 2013). Critiques about Teach for America largely focus on their recruitment and retention model. For starters, TFA's focus on high-achieving graduates, from competitive universities (Heineke, et. al, 2013), neglect a large population of potential Black teachers (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018). High-achieving graduates from select schools, also tend to be less likely to remain teaching in impoverished communities (Dworkin, 1980). This further exacerbates the problem with teacher retention. In *Teach for America's Paradoxical Diversity Initiative: Race, Policy, and Black Teacher Displacement in Urban Public Schools*, Terrenda White (2016) revealed the contradiction between TFA's support for diversity while supporting policies that contribute to the decline of Black teachers. White argued how the increased presence of charter schools in urban areas has become an employment barrier for Black teachers. Typically, young, white, inexperienced teachers are hired or used as replacements in charter schools (Buras, 2016; Lipman, 2011; White, 2016). White (2016) connected the low rates of Black teacher hires to the expansion of TFA in urban spaces, citing "high rates of Black teacher decline" (p.3).

Neoliberalism in New York City

Neoliberalism has profoundly shaped the fabric of New York City, primarily through policies emphasizing market-driven solutions and increased private sector involvement in public services (Smith, 2002). This ideology has led to widespread gentrification, notably impacting long-standing residents, predominantly from Black and brown communities, and resulting in escalating property values and rents, rendering housing unaffordable for many low-income families (Smith, 2002). Economically, the city reflects a concentration of wealth and power among corporations and the financial sector, exacerbating income inequality with affluent neighborhoods experiencing gentrification while low-income communities face displacement (Sassen, 2001; Harvey, 2012).

Gentrification, fueled by neoliberal policies, has reverberated deeply within New York City's public school system. Affluent newcomers to gentrified areas often advocate for resources and improvements in local schools, inadvertently marginalizing existing students, particularly those of color (Freidus, 2019; Posey-Maddox, 2014). The influx of wealthier residents can improve funding for schools but often coincides with the displacement of long-term, lower-income families who can no longer afford to reside in the area (Zukin, 2010). Socially, neoliberal policies have commercialized public space and services, emphasizing consumption and market-driven solutions, thereby marginalizing vulnerable populations like the homeless and undocumented immigrants (Mitchell, 2003; Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

In recent years, charter schools and alternative teacher preparation programs have gained significant traction in New York City, reshaping the landscape of education in the metropolis. Charter schools, publicly funded but independently operated institutions, have proliferated, offering parents and students alternatives to traditional public schools. This expansion has been fueled by policies promoting school choice and market-driven solutions to education, aligning

with the broader neoliberal agenda in the city (Booker et al., 2014). Moreover, the rise of alternative teacher preparation programs, such as Teach For America (TFA) and the New York City Teaching Fellows (NYCTF), has provided avenues for individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter the teaching profession without traditional education degrees (Boyd et al., 2007). These programs often prioritize recruitment from prestigious universities and emphasize short-term commitments, contributing to a transient teaching workforce in NYC (Boyd et al., 2007).

The proliferation of charter schools and alternative teacher preparation programs in NYC has had profound impacts on the education landscape, with both positive and negative consequences. Proponents argue that charter schools offer innovative approaches to education, providing options for families in underserved communities and fostering competition that incentivizes improvement in traditional public schools (Bifulco & Ladd, 2006). Similarly, alternative teacher preparation programs have been praised for diversifying the teaching workforce and bringing fresh perspectives to the classroom (Boyd et al., 2007). However, critics raise concerns about the equity implications of charter school expansion, as these institutions often enroll fewer English language learners and students with disabilities compared to traditional public schools, leading to concerns of segregation and unequal access to resources (Booker et al., 2014). Additionally, the reliance on alternative teacher preparation programs has been criticized for contributing to high turnover rates among educators, undermining continuity and stability in schools, particularly in high-needs communities (Boyd et al., 2007).

In *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, the impacts of gentrification on urban landscapes, particularly in New York City, are comprehensively explored. Zukin (2010) highlighted how gentrification reshaped neighborhoods, often displacing long-standing residents and eroding urban identity, underscoring the need for more inclusive

approaches to urban development. Black and brown communities have borne the brunt of these neoliberal transformations, facing displacement and disruption of community networks and cultural cohesion (Newman & Wyly, 2006). Research indicates increased stress and instability among these communities as they are forced to relocate to less expensive, often less accessible areas (Newman & Wyly, 2006). Simultaneously, neoliberalism and gentrification have favored certain groups, including developers, real estate investors, and higher-income newcomers, with neighborhood revitalization attracting new businesses and improving infrastructure, albeit unevenly distributed (Zukin, 2010).

Research underscores the multifaceted impacts of neoliberalism in NYC, revealing exacerbated social inequalities amidst economic growth and urban renewal. The displacement of Black and brown communities, coupled with educational disparities in gentrifying neighborhoods, underscores the necessity for policies balancing growth with equity and inclusivity. Addressing these challenges requires a reevaluation of neoliberal urban development approaches, emphasizing the protection of vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of gentrification.

Newman and Wyly (2006) provided insight into the resistance strategies employed by marginalized communities facing displacement due to gentrification processes. Through case studies, the authors emphasize community cohesion and grassroots organizing in resisting displacement, advocating for more inclusive urban planning strategies prioritizing the interests of existing residents over profit-driven development. In some instances, residents successfully mobilized to resist displacement and preserve their communities. For example, grassroots organizations and tenant associations were formed to advocate for policies that protect affordable housing and prevent evictions (Newman and Wyly, 2006). Through collective action, some

residents were able to negotiate with landlords, local authorities, and developers to maintain affordable rents and prevent the demolition of existing housing stock.

However, there are also cases where residents' efforts to mobilize were met with limited success or outright failure. Despite protests and legal battles, some neighborhoods succumbed to the pressures of gentrification, leading to the displacement of long-standing residents and the loss of community cohesion (Newman and Wyly, 2006). In these instances, the lack of political power or resources among marginalized communities has hindered their ability to effectively resist the forces of gentrification. Additionally, there are instances where mobilization efforts have yielded mixed results. While residents may successfully preserve affordable housing in some cases, they may still face challenges in accessing other essential services, such as healthcare, education, and public transportation (Newman and Wyly, 2006). Furthermore, the long-term sustainability of these efforts may be uncertain, as gentrification continues to exert pressure on neighborhoods over time (Newman and Wyly, 2006).

The intertwining forces of neoliberalism and gentrification have left an indelible mark on the landscape of New York City. While these policies have spurred economic growth and urban revitalization, they have also exacerbated social inequalities, disproportionately impacting marginalized communities. The displacement of Black and brown residents, coupled with educational disparities and the commodification of public spaces, underscores the urgent need for more equitable and inclusive urban development strategies.

Theoretical Framework

Brown v. Board of Education, a unanimous Supreme Court decision in 1954, is often regarded as a pivotal moment in U.S. history, reshaping societal views on race relations. Derrick Bell, a legal scholar, and pioneer of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement sought it

necessary to understand how such a decision could be unanimous in a country where racial tensions were high, and the vast white majority did not support ideas around desegregation. As critical race theorists have shed light on the complexities surrounding institutional change, racism, and legal systems, Bell (1980) suggested that broader interest of the United States influenced the decision-making process. The United States also faced global pressures compelling immediate action to be made (Bell, 1980 & Crenshaw, 1991). To validate its international stature as a beacon of democracy, the U.S. had to demonstrate a commitment to equality (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Ultimately, the convergence of U.S. interests with those of civil rights leaders facilitated constitutional support for Black Americans (Bell, 1980 & Ladson-Billings, 2004). These inquires have spurred the emergence of the CRT movement, delving deeper into these common practices and occurrences. Within this movement, critical race theorists have uncovered the opacity and complexity inherent in the relationship between institutional transformation, racism, and legal frameworks.

With the analytical examination of *Brown v. Board of Education* as the precursor, CRT has become pivotal in examining the complexities of race, law, and power relations in American society. Critical race scholars have evaluated various issues surrounding policy, legal interventions, de facto practices and the ongoing assault on citizenship and democracy (Bell, 1980; Taylor, 2016). CRT focuses on transforming the convoluted "relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p.3). CRT, characterized as a movement of activists and scholars, emphasizes the inclusion of diverse voices, experiences, intersectionality, historical context, and in-depth analysis in the study of race, law, and practice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012 & Ladson-Billings, 1998). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), CRT is founded upon four basic tenets, although not all scholars subscribe to each of them uniformly: a) normalization of racism, b) interest convergence, c) the conception of race as a social construct,

and d) the importance of storytelling. As CRT has evolved, Delgado and Stefancic (2012) have also distinguished between its basic tenets and major themes. The four major themes identified by Delgado and Stefancic (2012) which are characterized as critical race jurisprudence are a) critique of liberalism, b) interest convergence, c) revisionist history, and d) structural determinism. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) underscored that while critical race scholars may employ diverse methodologies and beliefs, they are, "unified by two common interests, --to understand how a "regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of color have been created and maintained in America" (p.xiii) and "to change the bond that exists between law and racial power" (p.20). The shared objective is aimed at transforming societal structures to liberate minority communities from oppressive conditions.

Racism as normal is a foundational theme within Critical Race Theory (CRT), illuminating how race and racism permeate everyday life to such an extent that they become ingrained in societal norms and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012 & Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010). This perspective challenges the notion of "whiteness as neutral" and exposes the fallacy of color-blindness, emphasizing the need to recognize and address systemic inequalities rooted in white supremacy (Bell, 1992 & Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). By acknowledging racism as normal, CRT underscores the fundamental role of race in shaping power dynamics and societal structures, offering a critical lens through which to analyze issues of inequality and oppression. The normalization of racism underscores the significance of racial dynamics in shaping and defining the operational framework of the United States (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In comprehending the broader functioning of the U.S., this study effectively utilizes this theme to analyze the racialized experiences of Black teachers in New York City.

Interest convergence highlights the complexities of racial dynamics within societal structures by highlighting how progress toward racial justice often hinges on the convergence of

interests between dominant and marginalized groups (Bell, 1980). Interest convergence is the notion that whites will support racial justice agendas to the extent that their material interests are not infringed upon (Bell, 1980). Derrick Bell's (1980) seminal work illustrated how the pursuit of racial equality is contingent upon aligning the interests of whites with those of marginalized communities, particularly in areas such as education. Interest convergence can serve as a lens to examine the challenges of implementing substantive change within neoliberal frameworks, where the material interest of powerful elites often supersedes efforts to address systemic racism.

Another core tenet is the social construction of race, which emphasis the idea that race is not biologically inherent but rather a product of societal norms and perceptions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This perspective challenges essentialist views of race and emphasizes its fluidity and variability across different contexts (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012 & Bonilla-Silva, 2017). CRT contends that race is infused with power dynamics and societal hierarchies, influencing individuals' experiences and opportunities according to their racial classifications (Crenshaw et al., 1995). This perspective allows for a critical examination of how race intersects with other systems of oppression, such as class and gender, to perpetuate inequalities (Crenshaw et al., 1995).

Storytelling emerges as another essential tenet of CRT, emphasizing the importance of narrative as a tool for understanding and challenging dominant discourses about race and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, storytelling serves to validate their lived realities and counteract prevailing narratives of white supremacy (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Taylor, 2016). In the context of Back teachers, their narratives hold significant weight in normalizing their lived experiences within discussions centered on transformation and liberation (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Utilizing these counternarratives to explore the experiences of Black teachers in teaching and residing in New

York City will serve to bolster their agency and enrich broader discussion concerning social justice and equity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

The critique of liberalism reveals that white people have primarily benefited from civil rights legislation and demonstrates that liberalism is not an effective instrument for fostering transformation (Crenshaw, 1989). In her scholarly works, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1988) emphasizes how transformation is unattainable in a society structured around liberalism due to its adherence to a "long, slow, but always upward pull" paradigm and commitment to neutral norms (p. 1334). Uncovering neoliberalism's relation to racism will allow this study to refute claims of neoliberal policy being one derived from "objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity" (Whitman, 2016, p.48). Drawing from a CRT perspective, this study aims to uncover how neoliberalism is a contributing function of American racism and oppression.

Revisionists history within CRT challenges traditional accounts of historical events by highlighting the perspectives and experiences of marginalized groups, particularly people of color (Taylor, 2016). This approach seeks to uncover hidden or suppressed truths about the role of race in shaping historical events and institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). For example, scholars of CRT have analyzed dominant accounts of American history to reveal their complicity in the oppression and marginalization of various communities (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Through the reevaluation of historical accounts to prioritize the perspectives of oppressed groups, CRT underscores the enduring impact of racism and underscores the necessity for fundamental societal change.

The last theme to be mentioned is structural determinism. This key concept emphasizes the role societal structures and institutions play in perpetuating racial inequality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). According to this perspective, racism is not simply the result of individual

prejudices or biases but is embedded within the very fabric of social, political, and economic systems (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Structural determinism argues that racial disparities persist because of systemic barriers and injustices that disproportionately affect marginalized communities (Crenshaw et al., 1995). For example, CRT analyzes how discriminatory housing policies, such as redlining, have led to residential segregation and unequal access to resources and opportunities for communities of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). By focusing on structural determinism, CRT highlights the need for systemic reforms and challenges the notion of color-blind society.

Critical race theory emphasizes the significance of transformation and liberation, with scholars asserting that these objectives are attained by challenging existing power structures and advocating for social justice. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), CRT contends that transformative change requires acknowledging and addressing the systemic nature of racism embedded within societal institutions. Furthermore, CRT scholars argue that liberation necessitates dismantling oppressive systems and advocating for the empowerment of marginalized communities (Crenshaw et al., 1995). This perspective asserts that legal reforms are insufficient without addressing the underlying power dynamics that perpetuate racial inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Moreover, CRT highlights the significance of centering the voices and experiences of people of color in efforts aimed at liberation (Bell, 1992). By prioritizing intersectionality, CRT acknowledges the interconnectedness of different types of oppression and promotes holistic strategies for achieving liberation (Crenshaw, 1991). Ultimately, CRT asserts that transformation and liberation require not only changes in laws and policies but also shifts in societal attitudes and structures to create a more equitable and just society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

In conjunction to the social justice-oriented framework of CRT (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), and the explanations of the liberation and transformation framework, I extend the definition of liberation by drawing from the emancipatory framework offered by Diane Coole (2015). With liberation being the goal of this study, it is important to make clear the framing of liberation used. In *Emancipation as a Three-Dimensional Process for the Twenty-First Century,* Diane Coole (2015) conceived emancipation to be a process broken into three distinctly different dimensions: legal liberation (political), subjective liberation (existential), and socio-economic liberation (social). Through these frameworks, this study aims to illustrate that while Black teachers no longer face the explicit segregation of the past, they still contend with the enduring effects of the realities of *de facto* segregation. These lingering disparities profoundly influence how Black teachers navigate their political, existential, and social freedoms.

Legal emancipation (political) represents the physical release from bondage or slavery (Coole, 2015, p. 532). An example of this form of emancipation is slavery being ruled unconstitutional in 1865. As this level of emancipation focuses on legal bondage, many argue this level of emancipation is still prevalent today in terms of mass incarceration. Justice and emancipation are received when individuals are physically free from reasonably unwanted and unnecessary containment (Foucault, 1975).

Subjective emancipation (existential) represents what Diana Coole (2015) describes as the "subjective self" (p.532). This form of emancipation focuses on the mental state of an individual or group of people. An individual is mentally liberated if they are free-from manipulation or coercion of a hegemonic institution and free-to make decisions and choices autonomously (Coole, 2015). Mental liberation also infers the existence of a critical ethos (Coole, 2015). The critical ethos involves challenging and deviating from commonly accepted notions within a society (Harvey, 2005). This level of existential liberation is typically seen in

ideas around self-image, self-empowerment, and freedom from internalized forms of oppression and domination (Coole, 2015).

Lastly, socio-economic emancipation focuses on the realization of systemic freedom. Socio-economic freedom implies that liberation is reached when institutions are void of hegemonic, racial, and economic practices and structures that oppress people's ability to flourish (Apple, 2004; Brighouse, 2008; Coole, 2015). Socio-economic freedom aims to attain what Wright and Rogers (2015) refer to as positive freedom. Positive freedom empowers individuals to engage in various activities, emphasizing the freedom to act rather than freedom from constraints. It acknowledges that individuals possess greater positive freedom when they can pursue a wider range of choices and actions in the world (Wright & Rogers, 2015). In line with the principles of transformation and liberation outlined in critical race theory literature, liberation can be attained by dismantling societal institutions that hinder the ability of minority communities to flourish. This integrated model is significant because it enables an analysis to evaluate whether teachers are thriving or surviving, assessing the realization of these three components for Black teachers.

Conclusion

Andrea William's research on Black teachers during slavery and Reconstruction illuminates their struggles for literacy and political empowerment, shaping early values of self-reliance and liberation. Despite advancements during Reconstruction, Black teachers faced racism and unequal pay, yet played vital roles in advocating for educational equity. In both the North and South, Black teachers confronted challenges of underpayment and resource inadequacy, exacerbated by cultural and political disparities in segregation practices. Neoliberal policies in the North have led to disinvestment in Black communities, impacting teacher representation and exacerbating inequalities. Gatekeeping tactics and charter schools introduced

under neoliberalism disproportionately affect aspiring teachers, while gentrification further displaces and diminishes Black teacher presence. Alternative teacher preparation programs aim to address shortages and diversity but face challenges in retention. Overall, these issues underscore broader socio-economic and political forces shaping the experiences of Black teachers in New York City. The goal of this study aligns with CRT's ideals of liberation. It is not enough to increase Black teachers' privileges and opportunities in a system which has not considered what it means to first survive and then thrive as a Black educator in a neoliberal structure. By examining the nuanced experiences of Black teachers within neoliberal structures, CRT illuminates the complex relationship between race and economics within an urban living and learning setting.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Methods

Qualitative research plays a pivotal role in understanding the nuanced experiences and perspectives of minority communities, offering insights that quantitative method may overlook (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By employing techniques such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, qualitative research dives deep into the lived realities of individuals, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of cultural, social, and contextual factors (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach enables researchers to uncover complex social phenomena and capture the richness of diverse voices within minority communities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Moreover, qualitative research facilitates participatory approaches that empower community members to actively contribute to the research process, fostering collaborative knowledge production and ensuring that findings resonate with the community's values and priorities (Israel et al., 2013). Additionally, this type of research methodology provides opportunities for reflexivity, allowing researchers to critically examine their own biases and positionality, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and credibility of the research findings (Finlay, 2008). Ultimately, qualitative research serves as a powerful tool for amplifying the voices of marginalized populations, challenging dominant narratives, and advocating for social justice and equity (Patton, 2002). The decision to utilize a qualitative research methodology in studying Black teachers in New York City is justified by the ability to dig into the nuanced experiences of people's lives. As this study was interested in understanding Black teachers lived and professional experiences, employing a semi-structured approach would allow me to hear directly from each participant. The next sections discuss my positionality, data collection, recruitment plan, data analysis, and limitations of this study.

Positionality

The complex nature of identity is what creates a researcher's positionality (Mertens, 2018). McDougal III (2014) articulated the importance of considering intersecting identities as the basis of self-sensemaking. The questions I sought to understand were informed by my identity as a Black educator and resident of New York City. Embedded in this identity are the complicated intersections of race, class, gender, privilege, and activism (McDougal III, 2014). The ways in which my identity is tied to this project were disclosed in the introduction of this dissertation. Furthermore, my identity as a Black teacher and activist has helped me form and maintain meaningful relationships with Black teachers in New York City, further fueling my research interest.

My parents grew up in poor neighborhoods in New York City, and they were determined to raise their daughters in an environment not reflective of their childhood living conditions. By the time I was nearly 13, my parents moved us from the Bronx, New York, to the outskirts of New York City. Traveling back to New York City every weekend throughout the school year and summer created a paradox to how I understood the world. In one light, people saw me as a privileged Black girl living in a house with two cars in the driveway. The assumption placed on my family was that we were rich. However, I knew my parents labored to maintain all they provided for our family.

Even though I physically lived, went to school, and created lifelong friends in New York's suburbs, I remained deeply connected to the joys, struggles, and experiences of my friends and family in New York City. I felt the weight of their joy and struggles, though I was not always tangibly present. I experienced what it was like living in the projects or having to make sense of food stamps to provide for family and extended family. There were so many times I sat and played in a dark apartment because of the fear of a high electric bill. I lived through hot

summers without the luxury of the air conditioner (AC) running all day or sleeping as a family in one room where the only AC ran. There were also hot winters because of the unrelenting pumping of project heat.

Given my less than luxurious experiences in NYC, I learned the importance of community. If a family member could not afford to purchase an AC, everyone pitched in to help. Grocery shopping was often done in big groups given the lack of access to quality supermarkets. Someone with a car would pick everyone up and make a day long trip of food shopping. Different family members would elect to cook big Sunday dinners inviting community friends to socialize and bring leftover food home. Neighbors made themselves available to help pick up items from the convenient store, pharmacy or simply check-in. Yet, I did not understand how challenging living in NYC was as an adult.

Deciding to move to NYC after college gave me the opportunity to experience NYC in its glory and struggles. My experiences as a teacher and New York City resident largely informed my teaching practices in the classroom. I was able to empathize with my students in ways I recognized other teachers could not. I became determined to free my students of the systemic burdens hanging over their heads. I wanted them to have the opportunity to live without worrying, to choose without the choices being between two bad options, and to feel without being policed. I worked towards these concerns not fully understanding how complex systems worked to maintaining privilege and oppression. Considering my lack of comprehension about institutional arrangements, I needed to figure out how to create a platform to have these issues heard. School was the only tool I knew of to help me in this journey.

When I started my doctoral journey, and I took classes that focused on the Black experience, emancipation, and critical philosophical thought, my identity as an activist became clear. Understanding the complex nature of systems and institutions and how they are deeply

intertwined gave me the tools to describe my experiences as well as my students', friends', and families' experiences in NYC. I am now able to translate these experiences into a research project, that informs how I write, think, and talk about societal transformation. I have come to believe it is my role as an educator to use all spaces as the opportunity to learn and relearn information and tools vital towards liberation, particularly for Black people.

I have always been of the mindset and belief that liberation for Black people is liberation for all. I believe it is this philosophical grounding that will guide the trajectory of this project. This dissertation would not be what it is without my mother who emphasized the importance of "never forgetting where you come from". This project serves as a reminder of how to use my power and privilege to advocate for the very communities that made me. As I sought to build community through this project, community is what transformed the scope and reach of this work.

Data Collection

The methodological tool I used to successfully answer the questions this project raises is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews provide a framework that allows teachers to share their stories while offering depth and clarity to the information provided (Yin, 2016). Additionally, employing semi-structured interviews enables a balance between standardized questions and the flexibility to explore emergent themes, fostering a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of Black teachers in New York City (Yin, 2016). Interview data was collected over a two-month period spanning from May 2022 through July 2022. One additional interview took place in October 2023, after leaving recruitment of Black male teachers still open. Prior to beginning this study, I sought and secured approval from the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). All 16 participants read and signed an informed consent

document (See Appendix B). In this section I will explain the processes used to run conduct interviews with teachers.

Recruitment Plan

Participants of this research must self-identify as Black and be either a current New York City teacher or former New York City teacher with the range of 2016-2021. To recruit Black teachers, I created two separate flyers (see Appendix C and D), one showing a Black female teacher and the other showing a Black male teacher. I passed the flyers around via Instagram, Facebook, and via text messages. I asked friends who were principals to pass along the flyers to any interested Black teachers they had, and solicited friends and family to pass along the flyer to their personal and professional networks. Each participant who filled out the demographic survey (see Appendix E) and completed an interview with me received a $25 Amazon gift card.

Semi Structured Interviews

I conducted one interview with each of the 16 Black teacher participants. Up until about halfway through the interviews, I used the same interview protocol for each teacher (see Appendix F). After interviewing Alethia, who offered advice applicable to the goals of this research project in connection to future research, I amended the research protocol to reflection the fill-in-the-black statement asked to the remaining teachers (see Appendix G). To ensure I received responses from the first several teachers interviewed, I sent text messages asking teachers to respond to the newly included prompt. Semi-structured interviewing allowed for the inclusion of non-scripted follow-up questions to participants (McDougal III, 2014). I used 4 of the 5 key identifiers of intensive interviewing as identified by Charmaz (2014): (a) exploration of experiences and situations; (b) reliance on open-ended questions; (c) understanding the research participants' perspective, meanings, and experience; (d) following up on unexpected areas of “inquiry, hints, and implicit views and accounts of actions” (p. 56). The interview protocol was

divided into three parts: initial open-ended questions, intermediate questions and ending questions (Yin, 2016). My interview questions were largely informed by the literature on neoliberalism, critical race theory, and shared experiences between myself and various teachers across the United States.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of interview data with teachers, the critical race theory tenet of storytelling was instrumental in honoring the voices and narratives of the participants while mitigating researcher bias (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). By prioritizing the teachers' stories and perspectives without imposing external interpretations, the research process aimed to authentically capture their lived experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). For instance, when encountering instances that might be labeled as contradictions in the data, I refrained from imposing such labels and instead acknowledged the complexity of the teachers' experiences (Crenshaw et al., 1995). This approach aligns with the principles of critical race theory, which emphasize the importance of centering marginalized voices and acknowledging the multifaceted nature of their realities (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Through this lens of storytelling, the analysis sought to uncover the nuanced layers of the teachers' narratives, allowing for a deeper understanding of the intersections between their identities, experiences, and socio-political contexts (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

To analyze the data, I relied on the tools outlined in thematic analysis, while also considering Yin's (2016) recommended phases for data breakdown. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method utilized to discern, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach involves systematically coding segments of data to identify meaningful concepts, then organizing these codes into overarching themes that capture the essence of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Researchers immerse themselves in the

data, searching for recurring ideas of patterns, which are then refined and defined as themes (Norwell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is utilized across various disciplines due to its flexibility and adaptability in uncovering rich insights from qualitative data. By allowing themes to emerge directly from the data, this method enabled me to explore complex phenomena without imposing preconceived theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By identifying commonalities across all interviewed teachers, this analysis facilitates a deeper understanding of the research topic.

The analysis of data was broken into the three phases recommended by Yin (2016). The three phases recommended by Yin 2016 are: compiling, disassembling, and reassembling. Starting with the compiling phase, I focused on gathering and sorting field notes from interviews. Compiling allowed me to focus on the arrangement, order and organizational structure of notes deemed useful for the following phases (Yin, 2016). The overall goal was to create an organized database that allowed data to be easily found. In this phase, there was some preliminary yet informal analysis used to assess the adequacy of the data collected. As I compiled data, the preliminary data collected was used to assess if there were any final interviews that may be needed to be conducted or reconducted. According to Yin (2016), the questions I focused on during this process were:

1. “What are the distinctive features of my data?
2. How might the collected data relate to my original research questions?
3. Are there potentially new insights that have emerged?” (p.191).

The second phase focused on disassembling. In this phase I focused on breaking data down into smaller chunks. The breaking down of data was done using initial coding (Charmaz, 2014). During the initial coding process, I studied data based on words, lines, segments, and incidents (Charmaz, 2014). At the end of my first coding cycle, I ended up with 44 codes.

However, after consolidation of similar ideas (i.e. *managerial class and leadership or tradition preparation and alternative preparation*), I ended up with 33 codes (see Appendix H). These initial codes will be heavily grounded in the data at hand. The questions I focused on during this process were:

1. "What is this data a study of?
2. What do the data suggest? Pronounce? Leave unsaid?
3. From whose point of view?
4. What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate?" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 116).

Lastly, during the reassembling phase, I focused on theoretical coding. The goal of this phase is to take the codes together in the dissembling phase and group these codes based on the emergence of themes and theoretical concepts (Yin, 2016). During this phase, I looked at the initial codes most useful for developing theory (Charmaz, 2014). To help with this process, Charmaz (2014) suggested considering the following questions when transitioning initial codes into a higher order of thinking and analysis:

1. "What do you find when you compare your initial codes with data?
2. In which ways might your initial codes reveal patterns?
3. Which of these codes best account for the data?
4. Have you raised these codes to focused codes?
5. What do your comparisons between codes indicate?
6. Do your focused codes reveal gaps in the data?" (pp.140-141).

These questions allowed me to create themes with the intent to form a story in the findings analysis.

Limitations

While the sample size of 16 Black teacher participants may be seen as a limitation in capturing the full breadth of experiences within the Black teaching profession in the urban North, it serves as a valuable initial exploration into the complex dynamics of neoliberalism's impact. This study aims to provide a snapshot of Black teachers' experiences in urban spaces, offering insights into the challenges they face and the strategies they employ within the neoliberal educational landscape. By acknowledging these limitations, future research endeavors can build upon these foundations, employing larger and more diverse samples to further elucidate the multifaceted nature of Black teachers' experiences and the effects of neoliberal policies on their professional lives.

Limitations in completing comprehensive historiographies of teachers, including examinations of their economic backgrounds and experiences with race, present challenges in fully understanding how Black teachers interact with neoliberalism. For instance, consider the case of Jackie, who comes from a traditional African family where women typically remain at home until marriage. This cultural context afforded her the opportunity to save, alleviate potential debt, and enjoy the support of her parents, which may not have been the circumstance for all participants. While many encountered difficulties navigating the complexities of neoliberalism, a more detailed historiography would provide additional context to elucidate these struggles, offering readers a clearer understanding of the nuanced dynamics at play.

The absence of comprehensive historiographies limits the depth of insight into the broader socio-economic contexts shaping Black teachers' experiences with neoliberalism. Without a thorough understanding of participants' economic background, including factors such as family support, inherited wealth, or previous employment experiences, it becomes challenging to discern the extent to which neoliberal policies impact their lives. Additionally, historical

trajectories of racial discrimination and educational disparities may intersect with neoliberal reforms in unique ways, influencing Black teachers' perceptions and responses. Consequently, the lack of detailed historiographical data impacts the ability to fully unpack the complex connection between individual experiences, structural forces, and neoliberal ideologies. This underscores the need for future research endeavors to incorporate more robust historical analyses to enrich the understanding of how Black teachers navigate neoliberal educational landscapes.

My positionality as a Black educator and native of New York City undoubtedly enriches my understanding of the experiences of Black teachers in the urban North, particularly in relation to neoliberalism. However, it also poses a significant limitation to the study. My deep personal connection to the city's struggles and triumphs, shaped by my upbringing and professional experiences, may inadvertently bias my interpretation of the data, and influence the direction of my research. Despite all my intentions to approach the study with some levels of objectivity and rigor, my familiarity with the context can possibly cloud my judgement and lead to a partial representation of the complexities faced by Black teachers.

My commitment to this research demands rigorous reflexivity and a keen awareness of how my personal positionality may influence the research process and outcomes. Throughout the data analysis and discussions, I diligently documented my thoughts, emotions, and reactions as they arose, fostering a deeper understanding of my own biases and perspectives. Additionally, having been removed from working and residing in New York City for size and a half year, I am acutely aware of the significant changes that have occurred. While I previously lived with my parents and grandmother, I now grapple with the realities of navigating New York City's housing market as a faculty member at New York University, where skyrocketing rent prices and stagnant wages present formidable challenges. I only gained this perspective towards the later part of cultivating this study and found myself really looking into the data to learn how to

navigate my upcoming experiences. It is my objective to use this data to inform future educators seeking to make New York City their professional and personal home.

Chapter 4

Findings

Overview of Findings

In New York City, the current experiences of Black teachers are shaped by a historical narrative deeply intertwined with systemic oppression, racial domination, and the evolving landscape of neoliberal policies. Neoliberal agendas have not only transformed once marginalized communities but have also left an indelible mark on the educational landscape (Buras, 2015; Lipman, 2011). The echoes of historical struggles, political maneuvers, and societal shifts have framed the exploration of the Black teacher experience, navigating the complexities of liberation, justice, and resistance in the 21st century.

Across all participant interviews, analysis of the data suggests that the neoliberal context in NYC inhibited Black teachers' ability to thrive. Overall, Black teachers shared similar messages relating to their experiences in urban schools. They believed in the power of representation in schools not only for their students, a widely held belief, but also for themselves. Significant representation among leadership and teacher colleagues had the ability to validate their experiences, feelings, and goals, creating a strong sense of belonging and community. Teachers were deeply connected to the work of teaching, viewing it as a contribution toward liberation. They regarded their students as their own, often referring to them as "our babies" and using terms synonymous with community and mutuality. Black teachers similarly described their experiences dealing with housing and living in NYC with frustration and great uncertainty. They expressed complaints about the difficulty of finding affordable housing that catered to their needs while considering their desires and sought housing reflective of a safe yet diverse neighborhood. The concept of diversity largely echoed the importance of residing in

communities reflective of people of color, where they could share cultural experiences encompassing food, professionalism, and enjoyment.

Table 1

NYC Black Teacher Participant Profiles

Participant Pseudonym	Sex	Years Teaching	Current School Type	Current Role	School Experience	Current Residence	Moved from NYC while teaching	NYC Native	Teacher training program
Ajanae	F	1.5	Teacher	Charter	Charter	CT	Yes	Yes	No Training
Alethia	F	7	Teacher	Public	Public	NYC	Yes	Yes	Alternative Preparation
Amar	F	5	Assistant Principal	Charter	Charter	NYC	No	Yes	No Training
Betty	F	6	Teacher	Charter	Charter	NYC	No	No	Traditional
Charisse	F	9	Teacher, Coach	Public	Charter Public	NYC	No	No	Traditional
Haiti	F	11	Teacher	Public	Public	Yonkers	No	No	Traditional
Hawa	F	3	Teacher	Public	Charter Public	NJ	Yes	Yes	Alternative Preparation
Jackie	F	10	Teacher, Coach	Public	Public	NJ	Yes	Yes	Alternative Preparation
LaShae	F	7	Teacher	Charter	Charter Public	NJ	Yes	Yes	Traditional
Lisa	F	8	Teacher	Charter	Charter Public	NJ	Yes	Yes	Traditional
Marsha	F	11	Coach	Private	Charter Public	Middle East	No	No	Alternative Preparation
Monica	F	6	Teacher	Public	Charter Public	NJ	Yes	Yes	Alternative Preparation
Tanisha	F	12	Teacher	Charter	Charter Public	NYC	No	Yes	No Training
Tanya	F	5	Teacher	Charter	Charter Public	NYC	No	Yes	Alternative Preparation
Tyrone	M	6	Teacher	Charter	Charter	NYC	No	No	No Training
William	M	20	Teacher	Public	Public	NJ	No	Yes	Alternative Preparation

Source. Self-reported data by research participants, who either chose their pseudonyms or were assigned one.

The exploration of teachers' backgrounds and demographics, including their varied experiences with school types and home locations, enriches our understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by Black educators in New York City (see Table 1). These

reported experiences are derived from a diverse pool of teachers. In terms of the school type, 25% of the interviewed teachers exclusively worked in charter schools, 25% worked solely in traditional public schools, and 50% had experience in both traditional public and charter schools. The varied school types enables a comparative analysis of teachers' experiences and evaluation of charter versus traditional public schools. For teachers unfamiliar with charter schools, their understanding of the charter system often stemmed from interactions with teacher friends, alternative preparation programs catering to charter schools, or word of mouth. While they all lacked interest in working in the charter school system one teacher expressed concern about the ways charter schools undercut public schools. Conversely, teachers working exclusively in charter schools expressed some interest in working in public schools. Yet, these teachers viewed traditional public schools as inaccessible, non-autonomous or unstructured.

Black teachers' preparation for entering the classroom came through the traditional route by obtaining a degree in education, through an alternative preparation program, or with some receiving no formal training. At the time of each interview conducted over a three-month span, 43.75% of the teachers lived in NYC. Another 37.5% had lived in NYC at some point in their teaching journey but later moved to either New Jersey or Connecticut. Importantly, even though these teachers no longer resided in NYC, they remained committed to teaching in the city. Finally, only two participants never lived in NYC while teaching. One was born and raised in NYC, chose to live in New Jersey for personal liberation reasons, while another was raised in the Yonkers area preferring to work in NYC and live on its outskirts. Finally, this study has a low representation of Black male teachers. Out of 16 teachers interviewed, only two identified as Black males.

As I explore the lived experiences of Black teachers in New York City for this project, I examine the day-to-day realities they face while navigating the challenges of urban education and living. These teachers share narratives drawn from three research questions:

1) What is the Black teacher experience in New York City in the 21st century?

2) How does the evolving political economy in New York City impact Black teachers' motivation to teach in urban communities?

3) What are the historical, social, economic, and political impacts on the Black teacher experience in New York City?

By attentively listening to key concepts expressed by teachers and analyzing data through a critical race theory lens, two prominent themes have emerged: 1) the aspiration to do more than survive, and 2) neoliberalism as complexity in New York City.

Theme 1: The Aspiration to do More than Survive

"I think every student needs a Black teacher because Black teachers like Black mothers are different." - Alethia.

The Black teachers interviewed in this study demonstrated a dedication to their work in the classroom. This dedication is driven by a commitment to the ongoing struggle and liberation of the Black community. Seeing reflections of themselves and their families in their students and the communities they serve, they were motivated by a sense of purpose, striving to go beyond mere survival, as expressed by Bettina Love (2019). Alethia emphasized the importance of a Black teacher's presence in the classroom by connecting their uniqueness to that of Black mothers. She made it clear that every student can benefit from a Black teacher, regardless of their race, class, or academic achievement. Affirming this insight in her reflection on the importance of Black teachers, Ajanae revealed, "I have students that just talk to me in the building because they say you remind me of my mom." However, in thinking specifically about Black students,

Amar bluntly stated that when kids experience difficulties, “they [are] not going to no white lady” as a mother figure. While focusing on ensuring their students’ ability to thrive, Black teachers connected these aspirations to ideas around authentic representation, connection, and relatability. Going beyond mere survival was also connected to Black teachers’ experiences and relationships with their school leadership. This section will explore how Black teachers described their aspirations to do more than survive through the identified subthemes of *authentic representation*, *connection and relatability matters, value, and the lack of leadership opportunities.*

Authentic Representation, Connection, & Relatability Matters

When asked to reflect on both motivations for becoming an educator and the significance of Black teachers in the classroom, every teacher emphasized the crucial role of representation in both the classroom and the school environment. Authenticity was deemed essential not only in the interactions between teachers and students but also in the relationships between teachers and their colleagues and between teachers and the administration. Teachers consistently tied the aspiration to thrive, rather than just survive, to the concept of authenticity and representation. They believed it was essential for their students to see greatness in themselves, for teachers to strive for greatness, and the importance of connecting the two. Representation is vital for both students and Black teachers who, in leveraging their personal experiences, play a crucial role in fostering a more inclusive and impactful educational environment. Charisse stated, “Having a Black educator is important because the students can relate and the teachers can relate to the child, the home life, the language, and the culture in a way that maybe a white teacher may not fully understand.” Charisse understood the unique ability Black teachers have to relate to students. Alethia deepened this thought as she explained why she chose to work in the Bronx: “I felt like that's where I was supposed to be. I’m originally from the Bronx, I was born in the

Bronx. I came back to where I started teaching kids that were very much like me." Black teachers often purposefully select the areas and schools in which they choose to serve, aligning with the environments from which they originate.

Many Black educators recalled the impact of the Black teachers who inspired them, using this to shape their present position and purpose in the classroom. Charisse recalled, "I had one [Black] teacher throughout my entire elementary education, and I saw myself in her. That got me excited to see that my dream can be real." Simply being Black was viewed as an automatic acceptance from students, perceived by teachers as advantageous for fostering high achievement and greatness. Tyrone reflected on this and stated,

> "…it's something different and powerful when you see someone who looks like you teaching you about life because they [are] able to give a different perspective that connects a little bit more. Once [they] see that it's like cool, I can do great work for this guy. Or even if they aren't doing it for themselves, [they] work hard for [me] because [they] know [I'm] in [their] corner. It's easier for kids to feel that way when you look like them when they know who you are [and] you're not afraid to embrace who they are, at the same time."

Amar echoed these sentiments in the following statement,

> "I think it's very important for kids to see people who look just like them standing in front of them, being educators, letting them know that this could be you. I also feel like it builds a love for reading [and] a love for learning."

Jackie talked about the severity of the underrepresentation of Black women in STEM. Being the only Black woman in her engineering discipline at college, with just eight Black individuals in her entire program, she explained that the isolation she felt during undergrad led to her motivation to teach STEM in Black communities in NYC. She stated, "what kept me going is wanting to introduce students to the STEM fields and growing that…so when they get to college it's not such an isolated profession."

Moreover, Jackie and Ajanae underscore the importance of Black representation beyond its immediate connections to academic standards and curriculum. They consistently

communicated to their students their diverse professional engagements. Ajanae articulated her commitment and stated, “I pride myself in talking [to] my kids about what I do outside of work. My students know I own a business [and] I trade stocks. They know everything about me because I want [them] to know that a Black person can do everything that a white person could do, and sometimes better.” In a similar fashion, Jackie shared, “now that I’m a real estate agent my students [are] all into real estate, and now they all want to do that, and have a lot of questions.” Although Jackie does not actively seek a role-model status, she acknowledged the pivotal significance of demonstrating how “there are people like them from their communities that can do things you know, and that they are capable of doing the same or even better than what we present.” Marsha equally avoided the role-model label, she acknowledged she was an important figure to her students stating, “Because I work mostly with Black students, they saw me as this figure, not want to say role model, but someone they could really connect with on a deeper level, rather than just school surface level.” While avoiding the explicit role model label, Black teachers recognized the pivotal significance of demonstrating how individuals from their communities are capable of achieving success and excellence beyond conventional academic standards. Beyond teachers’ external professional pursuits, Alethia asserted her influence in the classroom, affirming, “I’m also a representation [that] a Black woman can be here in this school and teach you.”

As the findings delve into the essential role of representation in education and professional endeavors, a notable extension of this concept emerges—its significance in relation to physical appearance. Ideas surrounding hair and dress become essential in conveying what thriving can look like while embracing one’s identity. In a school that predominately serves Hispanic and Latinx families, Monica recognized the heightened importance of her Blackness. It allowed students to feel seen even when they shared similarities but presented diverse skin tones,

hair textures, styles, and other noticeable physical features. Monica shared a couple of experiences she remembered, stating,

> "…even something like hair, one of my students at first, was the only Black girl in the class. She always had braids and [so] I read a book [where] in the book the girl had different styles and I said, "oh look she has braids like, Alina". And I'd say, "look Ms. Monica [is] going to have braids next week". I [also] have a little girl, she has puffs in her hair, so I [said], "this [is] my puff twin" and she started smiling automatically. So, it's the non-school related things that really helps you to make that difference."

Ajanae also recalled how some kids would respond to her different hairstyles stating, "my God mom did that hairstyle", or "oh my God, I love your hair." Lisa emphasized the importance of seeing and acknowledging color, encouraging her students to embrace the beauty that comes with their melanin. Lisa shared this while also challenging the notion of colorblind,

> "I don't want kids to grow up and say things like "I'm colorblind", "I don't see color". I want you to see it. I want you to see that sometimes I come in with my hair like this and sometimes my hair is in braids [and] sometimes my hair is in twists [and] "oh you have barrettes, I have barrettes too", and "Oh, you have Jordans, I [have] Jordans in the back, let me go put them on, I'll show you."

The importance of debunking traditional ideas around what it means to be professional is emphasized. Jacked shared, "I remember after a while I stopped making it a point to "dress professional" I dress [how]ever. So, you'll see me in class with my Yeezy's, you'll see me in class with my Louis Vuitton slides." Tyrone attributed style to Black culture and its necessity for Black classrooms, stating, "…having that culture, you see a teacher walking in with some fresh shoes on you know that's part of our culture." Tyrone believes it is this connection that motivates students to work hard, trusting that their teacher is "in their corner." Black teachers take pride in how they look and understand its connection to the work they do.

This pride and representation contributed to a sense of safety within the educational environment, as reflected in students' descriptions of their interactions and experiences. Tyrone, for instance, elaborated on this dynamic: "Several of our students from all my years of teaching

have gravitated towards me. Even students who I haven't taught will gravitate towards me or come and spend time in our class." In other words, Betty believed as a Black teacher, she possessed a heightened perceptiveness that allowed her to discern and understand situations more effectively, enabling her to navigate them with greater skill and insight. This heightened perceptiveness connects teachers to their students in ways that are different than their white counterparts. Tanya explained this difference and connection:

> "It's less likely that a white teacher is going to give the students their number and [say] hey [if] something's not right call me. They're going to be reluctant to tell [white teachers] what is going on. Us being more relatable to them they're going to come to me like look I didn't eat 3 nights in a row. My mom having a hard time right now we're going to [a] shelter. They're going to open up to you more because they can relate to you."

Tanya suggested that there is a perceived difference in the likelihood of white teachers sharing personal contact information with students for support. She argued that Black teachers, perceived as more relatable, are more likely to establish the kind of rapport that encourages students to disclose personal struggles. The implication is that the perceived relatability of Black teachers fosters a greater level of trust and openness among students, leading them to seek support and share their challenges more readily than they might with their white counterparts. Marsha explicitly stated, "…it's a huge difference because 1) we are Black, we look like them 2) we can relate to them more and that's important to kids." Lastly, Monica shared the transfer of relatability into the classroom, fostering a culturally relevant environment for the students:

> "I feel like as a black teacher we're able to relate to them a lot more than the white teachers are. One of the students [would say] "Ms. Grant so and so is twerking" and I'd [respond], "that is not twerking." It's the small experiences, you can play music that they know and you'll know the name of the dances and you can engage in different conversations with them because it's based on things you know about them, whereas I went into one of the white teachers class and one of the kids was doing the sturdy dance and then the white teacher looked at me, [and said] what is this."

Monica highlighted the enhanced ability to establish rapport with students compared to their white counterparts. The reference to cultural nuances, such as recognizing and correctly

interpreting dance moves, reflects a form of culturally responsive pedagogy. The contrast with the white teacher's unfamiliarity with a dance move highlights the potential cultural disconnect between educators and students in diverse classrooms.

In thinking about their experiences in the classroom, particularly in relation to their students, Black teachers expressed concerns about their white counterparts. Monica passionately stated, "I cannot stand half the white teachers in the school and a lot of it is their mindset with things and the way they speak to these children." Amar recognized the difference between white teachers and Black teachers by observing classroom management. She stated:

> "Some of the strongest behavior managers I have seen have all been Black. I feel like we understand how we need to speak to get to these kids. We can be that demanding authoritative figure and it's not yelling it's not me being someone I'm not and it's also not the kid looking at it [suspiciously]."

Amar asserted how classroom management was far more effective when executed by Black teachers in comparison to white teachers. In thinking about the perceived differences, Monica drew parallels between the experiences of Black students with white teachers and her own reflections on parenting. The labor undertaken by Black teachers is inherently emotional, signifying the deep care and concern they hold for the well-being of their students, siblings, and other young individuals under their guidance. Monica passionately expressed, "I don't hate white people, but I don't think I would want my child to be taught by a white person." This perspective stemmed from her observation of the overrepresentation of white teachers in classrooms with children of color and their manner of interaction with the students.

These sentiments added another layer to the importance of representation, as Black teachers must reconcile their significance not only for their children or their students but for themselves. Tyrone's unique experience, lacking Black male figures to help navigate the terrain, makes this point evident. He explained,

> "Challenges that I faced was not knowing how to navigate the space because I didn't know any other Black male teachers. [It] was a lot of me doing trial and error and trying to figure this thing out. How far do we go with play fighting with the boys in the classroom or how far do you go with the little girls in the classroom? Are they allowed to hug me? It's walking on eggshells until you figure out what actually works, what's acceptable and what's not."

While this challenge can be relevant to any male teacher, Tyrone specifically emphasizes the necessity for guidance within the context of being Black male teacher. In his interview, he acknowledged the valuable mentorship relationship he has with an older white woman. However, he recognized that, especially in matters of building relationships with students outside of the curriculum, guidance from someone who shares his race and gender would be more impactful. For Black teachers, the representation of race and the intersection of gender signifies a haven on a professional level. Although Betty cautioned that "not all skin folk are kinfolk," Black teachers still associated collegial representation with their well-being, confidence, safety, and overall workplace experience. Betty articulated the importance of "feeling seen" and "feeling understood," emphasizing that having more Black teachers on staff eliminated the need for constant explanations of oneself and one's disposition. She shared:

> "When you move through a space as a Black woman, there are things that happen, and things you go through, and there are days when you're like okay I just need to do this, this, and this, and people are like, "what's wrong with her, why she got an attitude" but actually I don't have an attitude I'm keeping to myself today. You all got something going on, that I don't want to be a part of. Now, where I'm at where it's almost all black people that I work with it's very much "hey good morning how are you?" It's a different type of feel. I feel more comfortable to move and ask questions than I did before. I don't feel like I'm being judged. I can come in with knotless braids, I can take my knotless braids out. That's one of the big things, changing your hair doesn't have to be [a big thing]."

Betty underscored the socioemotional impact of increased representation of Black individuals within the work environment. She highlighted the intricacies of the daily challenges faced by some Black people navigating predominately non-Black educational spaces. Expanding on this, Monica shared her observations about a former co-worker, Lisa, who constantly felt uneasy navigating the space with their white school leader. This discomfort stemmed from the principal

making inappropriate comments about Lisa's body. It's crucial to note that Lisa had no control over her body shape, and the white principal's actions created an uncomfortable environment, emphasizing how her discomfort was a result of his own insecurities.

It became evident that the need for authentic representation extended beyond the classroom setting. The varied perceptions of leadership among Black teachers all converged on a shared priority—the representation of the needs of Black teachers and students in the most authentic way possible. Lisa captured this in her statement, "It's about awareness. I could go with representation matters, very true. But I think it's more about awareness." The discourse on leadership deepened as teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the insufficient representation in leadership, highlighting the inherent conflict between their discomfort and the pressing need for greater inclusivity. Amar shared the experience she had attending a networking event held across the network:

> "When I go to the networking events, I'm looking around I'm [asking myself] where [are] the rest of me's. That's when I [realize] I don't belong. How are they looking at me? I need to participate more because it's not too many of me. Or I shouldn't participate too much because it's not too many of me, but in my school building."

The stark contrast observed in representation within the network was a disconcerting experience for Black teachers. Amar conveyed her sense of not belonging, and Lisa expanded on this by detailing her experience at a network event, subsequently connecting it to the repercussions on her role as a teacher:

> "They had a board party one year and everybody who had been there before [said], "you have to go you're going to see and it's gonna be crazy." [I ask] where is it? And they're like across the street from the planetarium at one of the board members houses. I was like what? Who lives here? And so, we go in it's this grand staircase and I'm like this is someone's home in New York City? You look out the window and the museum is there the planetarium is right there. The board was very representative of whoever lived there. And when we wanted to make curricular changes or [suggest] a read aloud and put it in the books, you'd think I could do whatever I want in my room. Yeah right. That wasn't available, and it did often feel like it wasn't available because I wasn't in the network or in the team or the leadership. When I looked at the people who were it was all white people."

Layla linked the absence of representation on the board, impacting both teachers and students, to the challenges in implementing systemic and curricular changes with meaningful effects on her daily interactions with students. The deficiency in representation encompassed racial and economic facets that held particular significance for her. Other teachers shared this perception during discussions about leadership composition and disposition. Tanya contributed to the discourse by critiquing not only the shortage of Black representation but also the presentation of Black leaders and their authentic connection to the work. She stated,

> “it needs to be more people higher up that are black. To be able to relate to the teachers. I feel like district reps, superintendents Chancellor, they should still teach. So, they can remember what it's like to be in the classroom. To tackle a struggling learner. They get away from it, they get away from what it was like to be, to deal with struggling learners on a daily [basis].”

Tanya expounded upon a critical observation regarding the deficiency in the presentation of leadership, specifically noting its encompassing impact on racial and economic dimensions, a matter of particular significance. This perception is not isolated but resonated among other educators, emerging prominently during discussions on the composition and disposition of leadership roles. Tanya’s contribution deepened the analysis Black teachers had, calling for increased Black representation at higher levels of leadership while advocating for a sustained connection to the teaching profession. Tanya posited that this dual perspective is essential for leaders to empathetically address the challenges faced by teachers dealing with struggling learners on a daily basis. In essence, the quote underscores the multifaceted dimensions of effective and authentic leadership within the educational context.

While the racial background of leadership may not be the sole determinant of good leadership, Black teachers stressed notable distinctions between Black and white leadership, significantly shaping their experiences. Many teachers identified clear differences between Black

and white leadership, with some Black leaders adhering to ideologies aligned closely with traditional or colorblind approaches. LaShae candidly addressed these distinctions, stating, "They put these white leaders, and I have nothing against white people, but I just feel like their role in education is completely different from how us Black teachers think." Monica further illustrated this difference by recalling a CEO's decision to mandate teacher attendance on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, highlighting the occasional discord between the expectation of white leadership and the lived experiences of Black teachers:

> "The CEO is a white man and he created [the school], and everyone was just like this [is] his baby he's never getting rid of it. One year they decided to give everybody two days for cultural observance. Every single white person put MLK down to the point they had to close schools that day because they didn't have enough teachers. And then the following year they hired a black superintendent and instantly we have that day off. The next year [we] observed Juneteenth. We had Juneteenth before they made it a national holiday."

In Monica's experience, the White CEO viewed the MLK Jr. national holiday as a mandatory workday, failing to recognize the importance of the holiday to Black people. The Black leader instantly recognized these holidays. This exposed a perceptible gap between the experiences of having a white versus Black leader. Marsha provided an anecdote that further illustrated the challenges faced with directives from white individuals in leadership roles. She voiced, "It was those uncomfortable situations where I had to deal with a white person in leadership telling me what I need to do or what's right or what's wrong, where I'm like, can you listen to me, I'm the one that can relate to these kids. You can't. I've been in those spaces in professional development workshops." She articulated the discomfort of being told what to do or what's right and wrong by someone who lacks the firsthand understanding she possesses in relating to the students. She also struggles to convey this perspective in a professional development workshop and similar settings.

Even when leaders of a school are Black, Black teachers express a preference for a specific type of Black leadership. The recurring theme centered around the desire for leaders who truly "get it." This sentiment implied an expectation that went beyond verbal articulation—an innate understanding that even expected the interviewer to understand. LaShae addressed the notion of "not getting it," highlighting instances where some Black leaders failed to align with the experiences of the learning and living community. She declared, "Black leaders in charge… You know, but Black. I have this Black leader in charge, but she doesn't get it. Because there's some Black leaders that are in charge, but they don't get it." Here, Amar gave an implicit description of this type of leader they are describing, stating, "The first time I had a Black leader, and when I say a Black man, I'm not saying, because the skin is Black no, I'm saying a BLACK leader." Amar continued:

> "This person came from a DC school; they were their authentic self. Whereas we had a Black leader who was in the academy for five years, but [they're] not Black. [They're] the academy Black and it's not Black. So, diversity within leadership definitely because it gives you that other outlook that a white person is not gonna look at."

It is evident that Black teachers not only seek racial diversity in leadership but also emphasize the importance of leaders who understand the nuanced experiences of Black educators. When leaders get it, Black teachers feel there is a connection to their enlightenment as experienced by Amar: "This is the first time I felt like I had a Black leader who was saying things like "this is not culturally appropriate". That leader open[ed] my eyes. We're teaching kids things they have no idea." The desire for leaders who "get it" extends beyond mere racial identity and encompasses alignment with the unique challenges faced within the educational context. Lashae's critique underscored the need for alignment in Black leadership, emphasizing the necessity for leaders who truly comprehend the experiences of their community. These nuanced

expectations and critiques share the overall view of leadership effectiveness within the educational landscape.

Value and the Lack of Leadership Opportunities

Although no direct questions were posed to teachers regarding their interactions or experiences with their leadership team(s), their perceptions of how the team influenced them emerged as a consistent theme across all interviews. The ability of teachers to thrive was linked to the effectiveness of leadership's ability to help them grow and make them feel valued, further underscoring the paramount importance of leadership within the Black teacher experience. This observation also underscored the critical impact leadership had on teachers' decisions to remain in their schools, even when deeply connected to students and the community. As Black teachers described their experiences with leadership, it was not always clear what racial background the leader had. While some experiences were considered racialized, the emphasis often shifted toward the teacher's race rather than the leader's. When the leader's race was mentioned, it was often linked to the challenges of obtaining leadership opportunities. Therefore, it was important to exclusively focus on reporting Black teachers' overwhelming stories related to professional opportunities, detached from the specific context of authenticity and representation. This conversation triggers teachers to question their value to their administration. Alethia's poignant reflection on a change in administration encapsulated this theme. She expressed:

> "the administration and I were no longer seeing eye to eye, there was a change in administration and I did not feel as valued as I would have liked to felt, and so I had to make a decision that was best for me, it was a tough decision because that had been my only school and I was grounded in the school and invested in the school and the students and the neighborhood."

Alethia experienced the misalignment and devaluation in a school to which she had already dedicated herself before the transition to a new administration. Ajanae's commentary further enriched the perspective on misalignment and devaluation as she reflected on the qualities of

effective leadership. She expressed the essential aspects she sought from her leaders while expressing discontent with her situation:

> "Don't come in only when you know we have visitors coming to the school or when the principals on yo back because she's doing a [observation]. Come in all the time because you want to see me grow as an educator. So, for me the way I would feel like I'm thriving as a teacher is if I had somebody with teaching experience that is able to themselves connect with the kids come in sit in during a lesson not mind jumping in when they see I'm stuck. But then, also taking that time to close the loop. Come back afterwards, when the kids are gone talk to me, what did you see? What did I do good? What did I do that I need to improve? How can I improve it? I always say don't give me advice and not back it up. Don't tell me, you should fix this but don't tell me how to fix it because then baby you no better than me. You not helping me."

Ajanae expressed a nuanced expectation of her leadership engagement in her professional development. She emphasized consistent and proactive involvement, not solely during high-stakes situations or administrative evaluations, but as an ongoing commitment to the teacher's growth. Ajanae desired a mentor with teaching experience who could actively participate in classroom activities and offer constructive and collaborative feedback in real-time. The request for actionable guidance and the avoidance of superficial advice was integral to her perception of effective leadership.

Monica echoed similar sentiments where a perceived lack of professional development and a diminished sense of respect for administrative leadership contributed to her decision to contemplate leaving. She stated:

> "At The Charter School, it got to a point where I didn't feel like I was growing. When I got to a point where I can't voice how I'm feeling and say it, the way I'm feeling and not be afraid to speak to anyone from admin about it that's when I was like my respect for them slowly dwindled and it's time to go."

Monica's experience highlighted the critical moment, which was marked by her inability to express her feelings without fear. This frustration, shared by Monica, connected to a broader finding concerning the treatment of Black teachers based on their authenticity and the inability of

Black teachers to grow professionally. Tanya shared her experience of feeling judged based on her race and passion:

> "I feel like they was making judgments about who I was because I was a Black female… I'm known to be very passionate about what I do. I'm not that person that's going to be in the meetings and just be like yes ma'am. I'll give you a little push back like hey justify [this] tell me why. You expect me to do this I need reasoning. But it gives off as hav[ing] that snotty mentality. I deserve justification…like I've seen leadership roles coming up within a building that I know I'm more than qualified to do. It [becomes] if I give you that role how is that going to help me and I'm like well, what about the things that help me as an educator. What is the thing that makes me look good. But I'm doing all the things to make you look good. When I started to give that push back, is when I started to become like the like the Cinderella of the story."

Tanya's experience revealed a contradiction where leadership recognized the capabilities and values Black teachers bring but showed reluctance to promote them. Continuing this narrative Tanya shared:

> "it's almost as [if] they think because we are the Black teacher we don't really know. Like our word isn't really good enough. So even though you're great at this job and somewhere down the line, somebody sees how great you are, and I've known this from personal experience, even my last recent experience. Someone saying how great you are, they use you for what you really can do. You are [an] asset in that manner, but they don't really want to give you the recognition for it, and it almost feels like it's because of a Black person and definitely because I'm a Black woman at that."

This sense of feeling undervalued and overlooked as a Black woman teacher conveyed a perception that despite her demonstrated excellence, there exists a reluctance to acknowledge her capabilities, particularly in leadership roles. LaShae echoed this sentiment as she voiced her frustration with her school director for not elevating her to leadership opportunities. She felt as though her promotion only occurred due to the advocacy of a Black dean at her school. She stated:

> "if it wasn't for a Dean…I actually got the position because of her because she's a Black woman. And she was like you're very strong as a teacher and she spoke to him and she [said] LaShae, is the best person. He was going to put someone else in charge. Granted she's a minority as well, she's not Black but she's a minority. I don't know what her race is but she wasn't qualified."

To contextualize her frustration with her director, LaShae provided feedback on ways the school could improve the student's academic experience. From this, she felt her director was not actively listening to her, creating a communication barrier:

> “I also try to make my director listen and I told him I say you're not actively listening to me. He was like what do you mean, and I said actively listening is when you're putting your thoughts aside and actually focusing on what I’m saying. You're not and I said when you're ready to actively listen to me [and] understand my point, then we can talk. Otherwise, this is going in one ear and out the other.”

LaShae perceived her director’s inability to listen because of her critique of policies that weren’t serving her students. Despite having data to support her concerns, her director kept over-explaining and justifying actions, suggesting what should be done. Marsha, too, observed similar dismissiveness about race and conversations among white teachers in leadership positions: She articulated: “I worked amongst white teachers, some were in leadership positions who felt like they kind of knew the answers and knew what our kids needed…there were some teachers who were just very dismissive about race and having those conversations.” Marsha’s experience highlights leadership failure and lack of engagement in addressing race within urban educational settings, where race is an integral aspect of both students’ and teachers’ experiences. The system’s tendency to adopt a neutral and colorblind stance poses a threat to the experiences of Black teachers, as race serves as a pivotal aspect of their role in the classroom.

These frustrations experienced by Black women teachers were mirrored in the experiences of Black male teachers. Tyrone recognized his inability to grow and linked it to being Black:

> “Well, I was at the academy for quite some time. Upward mobility was not a thing for a Black male educator… started to realize it's really a toxic environment to where you can't move people up. When you know, like when they kind of deserve it, because they kept changing the bar. It’s a one year well you got to have this type of data and then four years straight I had that data and then it was like well now, you gotta do this, and so they kept changing uh the end game, just to kind of keep you, where I was.”

Tyrone discussed his prolonged tenure at the academy and his limited prospects for upward mobility within the institution. He characterized this environment as toxic, attributing the toxicity to a deliberate impediment to career advancement by continually altering the criteria for promotion. While Tyrone did not feel valued by his administration, William talked about professional development situations where he questioned whether his white principal valued hearing him or the teachers of color when contributing to conversations:

> "Sometimes I would wonder when we would have professional developments [and] issues would arise in school, was she really listening to me? Was she really hearing my voice? Was she really hearing the voice of other teachers of color who were in the school? Or was she just pandering to the, I call them the cookie cutters, the young white teachers?"

William reflected on professional development experiences and questioned the extent to which his concerns, as well as those raised by other teachers of color, were genuinely acknowledged by the leadership. He expressed skepticism about whether actively listening and considering the perspectives of teachers of color was valued. The term "cookie cutter" is introduced to categorized young, presumably white teachers who may be perceived as receiving preferential treatment or superficial acknowledgement. William's skepticism revealed a consistent theme of leaderships' crucial impact on their ability to thrive, feel valued and connected to the schools they work within. The nuanced expectations, challenges, and systemic barriers faced by Black teachers, emphasized a prevalent sense of undervaluation and dismissiveness in professional development and leadership recognition.

Theme 2: Neoliberalism as Complexity in New York City

"It brings me back to the [Kenneth Clark]doll experiment. Were like children pick either the Black doll or the white, and the white is better. But then I don't want them to think that if something's white or is surrounded by whiteness, then this is good, this is better."- Charisse.

Teachers' professional aspirations to surpass merely surviving were marred by the critical need for authentic representation, a profound connection to students' lived experiences, a lack of aligned leadership, and a pervasive sense of devaluation within educational institutions. These experiences closely paralleled those of Black teachers who navigated the competitive, market-influenced terrain of New York City. The ability to flourish (Brighouse, 2008) is challenged and found to be complex as Black teachers narrated their journey through teacher preparation and housing. Most teachers in this study entered the classroom through after-school programs, targeted recruitment, or personal experiences. The decision-making process for alternative preparation programs often hinged on financial considerations. However, for Jackie, choices were complicated by racialized factors, as programs like Teach for America presented opportunities to relocate to states like Mississippi, forcing individuals to confront issues of race and racism in a more tangible context than the comparatively diverse landscape of New York City. Another subtheme deeply connected to conversations around housing, both explicit and implicit, is the impact of gentrification. Teachers expressed the difficulty in finding housing and neighborhoods that reflected diversity, a professional working class, and safety. Teachers also struggled to make sense of their feelings in relation to gentrification. This section will also capture teachers' reflections on whether they perceive themselves as thriving or surviving.

Preparation

Competitive markets and entrepreneurial initiatives in education can introduce complexity to the task of streamlining training processes, ensuring equitable teacher certification,

and fostering noncompetitive learning communities. The field of teacher preparation exhibits diversity as individuals embark on their educational careers through traditional pathways, alternative routes, or with no formal classroom or teacher training whatsoever. Among the interviewed Black teachers, a spectrum of training backgrounds emerges, influencing their preparedness levels, perspectives on readiness, and classroom experiences.

Based on interviews with 16 teachers, only four pursued the traditional route into teaching, having decided during college that they wanted to pursue a career in education. Betty, an advocate for traditional training, emphasized the "greater wealth of knowledge" derived from "solid traditional backgrounds." While acknowledging the value of diverse backgrounds in education, Betty detailed her position on traditional versus alternative preparation:

> "I think sometimes with alternative routes it cuts corners. I've had a resident for the past two years and a methods course online is not okay. It's absolutely inappropriate. You cannot figure out how to teach online. I think that some of these teacher prep programs, or these alternative programs [are] throwing people into classrooms when they don't have any experience is not always the best thing for everybody."

Betty highlighted how alternative preparation programs lack a thorough examination of teaching and learning, often providing insufficient methods. She recognized a tendency to prioritize placing individuals in classrooms over providing adequate training. Betty's critique engages the broader discourse concerning the educational landscape, neoliberal agendas, and their ramifications on teacher training. Alternative preparation programs often overlook critical examinations of the educational environment and its implications for implementation. These programs, influenced by neoliberal agendas, subscribe to ideologies promoting a business-like management model for schools. Consequently, such ideologies also impact alternative preparation programs, which are typically geared towards expediting teacher training for placement in urban and/or rural schools—a pathway frequently favored by teachers of color as an entry point into the profession (Whitford et al., 2019). This privatization of teaching

undermines Betty's training, the ability to uphold public accountability, and the ability to address systemic inequities in the education system (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018 & Apple, 2006).

Amar, a teacher placed in a classroom with training solely focused on behavior management reflected:

> "In terms of prepared, I feel like I was prepared to be a behavior manager. I think back to my training when I got hired. I'm like okay I'm going to be a teacher I'm going to be teaching kids. No, that's not what I felt like I was hired for in the beginning. My training, I had a whole week of training based on behavior management. The training I got was solely on behavior management, how to manage your class. There was no training on curriculum, teaching none of that. It was managing a class just to listen to you."

While Amar felt equipped to manage behavioral aspects of teaching, she expressed a sense of inadequacy in terms of curriculum and instructional preparation. Amar shared how the curriculum was already scripted and prepared for teachers, and all they had to do was read from a script. It is the type of preparation Amar talked about that confirms Betty's suspicions of alternative preparation programs. Amar's experience underscores the prevalent focus within certain educational systems, particularly charter schools, on competition, accountability, and performance metrics. This emphasis often results in a paradigm where student behavior is managed in a manner akin to that of prisoners. As Amar articulated, her training primarily centered on behavior management rather than instructional strategies or curriculum delivery. This underscores the prioritization of discipline and control within the educational framework in urban schools, a phenomenon extensively discussed in the literature addressing the school-to-prison pipeline. Scholars such as Skiba et al. (2014) and Morris (2016) have extensively documented how punitive disciplinary practices, prevalent in environments emphasizing competition and accountability, contribute to the criminalization of students, particularly those from marginalized communities. Alethia, who completed a residency program in New York

City, summarized these critiques and the involvement of charter schools in teacher preparation, expressing concerns about their role and impact:

> "I think charter school undercuts public school and not just because I'm a public school teacher, but charter school requires so little as far as teacher qualifications. They're willing to accept the teacher with a bachelor's degree in the study of ants. You can become a teacher and not necessarily a science teacher, but they will put you in there and make you an English Language Arts [teacher]."

The nuanced perspective offered by Alethia regarding the limitations of alternative preparation programs, despite her active participation, introduces a complexity to the discourse. Both Alethia and Betty discern the tendency of these programs to compromise on thoroughness and efficacy. However, it is imperative to recognize that without the alternative option, Alethia might not have had the accessible opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the field of education. In a reciprocal manner, Betty might not have had the opportunity to mentor teachers emerging from alternative programs, potentially exerting a positive influence on their professional development. These collective insights from Betty, Alethia, and Amar emphasize the necessity for a rigorous and discerning examination of both traditional and alternative preparation programs, investigating their impacts on educators' preparedness for the myriad challenges inherent in the classroom environment.

Haiti and Charisse, despite undergoing instructional and curricular training in a traditional education program, articulated critiques of these programs. Haiti expressed how experience is the best way to learn to teach but finds the traditional program falls short of training teachers for the communities they want to serve. She critiqued the traditional model for catering to suburban schools rather than those in urban areas, especially for classroom management. Charisse echoed these sentiments, stating, "I feel like the courses make things sound so black and white…so there's many situations that certain communities are not represented in the courses." Haiti and Charisse's emphasis on experiential learning, coupled with

concerns about the applicability of traditional training to diverse communities, underscores the need for a more nuanced and inclusive approach in teacher preparation programs to address the complexities of teaching in varied educational settings. Rather than providing critical perspectives on education and embracing culturally relevant pedagogy tailored to urban contexts, traditional programs are swayed by the advocacy of standardized methodologies. This shift redirects the traditional model's focus away from the responsiveness of community needs toward a standardization agenda.

Tyrone, a teacher with no formal training, argued that the traditional model is outdated. Ajanae, a co-worker of Tyrone, shared how he expressed to her that, "the best teachers are the teachers that did not go the education route." In his critique, he expressed the outdated philosophies often used in traditional programs which he feels does not apply to the targeted population. Tyrone draws a comparison between individuals who graduated from traditional models and those who opt for alternative pathways, asserting that those from traditional backgrounds often fail "utilize most of the materials they learn". In contrast, he suggests that individuals from alternative pathways only acquire resources for the things they intend to use. Tyrone's criticisms of the traditional model resonated with Haiti's and Charisse's concerns regarding the lack of diversity and relatability within the curriculum. Despite Tyrone's admission that he did not feel completely prepared for the classroom, he asserted that his inherit "…gift of teaching…" and skills acquired from his political background proved beneficial in the education atmosphere. He credited much of his successful transition to an "amazing lead teacher." While Tyrone conveyed a positive experience entering the classroom directly, Ajanae presented a contrasting perspective, emphasizing the need for more support, especially for teachers lacking the necessary background knowledge. Throughout her interview, Ajanae consistently expressed feeling unprepared, particularly in terms of curriculum, highlighting the intricate cognitive work

required in teaching children. While Ajanae felt equipped to work with children, she identified a deficiency in what she termed the "curriculum aspect."

Furthermore, teachers who have gone the alternative route are grateful for their opportunity but disclose some of the hardships that come along with entering the classroom. With those who went through the alternative pathway there is a clear appreciation of the emphasis of having hands-on classroom experience, feeling like that is the best teacher. There also exist an appreciation for making it attainable to receive a master's degree without paying "…a crazy amount of money" as Hawa articulated. While Tanya would agree with this assessment of having minimal to no debt while obtaining a master's degree, she also noted going through programs like New York City Teaching Fellows, was, "very fast paced to [just] throw somebody in there." Marsha added to this sentiment by reflecting on her experience with NYC Fellows:

> "I find it kind of rough. I'll be honest I feel like my whole transition was a blur. It's very complicated. They throw you in the classroom super quick. You go to training for two months and then you're in the classroom. You do learn by experience; I don't believe you need to be in school for years in order to do the job. At least for me I've learned by experience. But I feel like we could have had more time. They could have at least prepared us a little bit more. For me, I think I survived. You had to teach and get your master's at the same time. What kind of life did I live? It was a lot. I don't think that all teachers come out well prepared."

Marsha's reflection of her alternative preparation experience reflected the rapid and intense transition into teaching, highlighting the blurred and complicated nature of the experience. Marsha's perspective offered the value of experiential learning while also questioning adequate preparation, particularly in the context of simultaneously pursuing a master's degree. Given the fast-paced nature, she raised concerns about the overall preparedness of teachers from such accelerated programs. One area that Marsha highlighted as needing improvement was in relation to disparities in the classroom. Similar to Haiti and Charisse's concern about traditional

education programs lacking diversity and clear connection to diverse populations, Marsha articulated:

> "My school didn't do a good job of preparing me for the disparities that I would face in the classroom. They didn't tailor it to my population of students. And especially because I was in class with a lot of white teachers who were going in inner city schools, and I felt like they didn't have the awareness that they needed. I mean, I'm Black. So of course, I already knew what time it was, but even, I'm black, and I still could have been more prepared."

Marsha emphasized that the absence of tailored preparation for the specific demographic of students is not only a concern for herself but also for white teachers intending to teach Black and Brown students. Black teachers advocated for culturally responsive teacher training, asserting the importance of adequately preparing both themselves and their counterparts to enter the classroom efficiently and provide support to the students they consider their own. Failing to do so perpetuates harmful messages from training programs to teachers, contributing to systemic issues such as the school-to-prison pipeline. This hurried learning experience parallels literature highlighting how alternative preparation programs prioritize the swift integration of young, cost-effective teachers into classrooms, emphasizing tangible outcomes such as a master's degree, leadership opportunities and resume enhancements (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018). The rapid pace of these programs and the emphasis on immediate teacher placement devalue the importance of studying curriculum, which serves to foster innovation and diversity in pedagogy, as well as the imperative to address educational inequities (Apple, 2006). Furthermore, they neglect the cultivation of critical perspectives essential for effectively teaching and empowering students in urban environments, particularly those from marginalized communities (McLaren, 2007).

Hawa expanded on this perspective, reflecting on how her alternative preparation program trained them in a way that "felt like students were in jail or prison." She noted that her preparation programs' master's degree strongly emphasized preparing teachers for charter

schools. In doing so, she observed that, "a lot of charter schools, preached about the school to prison pipeline [and] how they [are] against that but a lot of their systems mimic that type of behavior." Similarly, Jackie expressed concerns about her program's excessive focus on charter schools, utilizing systems and classroom management techniques that were irrelevant to the student population she aimed to serve. The complexity of these perspectives arises as Hawa, despite leveraging these serious critiques, expressed appreciation for the affordability of obtaining her master's degree and accessing classrooms through a pathway she is passionate about. Neoliberal principles, centered on market forces and competition, prioritize cost reduction to appeal to consumers. However, the ramifications of such practices are evident in the experiences of Black teachers during their preparation for the classroom, perpetuating stereotypes, exacerbating inequities, and disseminating pedagogical approaches ill-suited for urban environments. Consequently, these practices not only foster hostile working environments for Black teachers but also impose challenges on their white counterparts.

Housing

As teachers undertook their professional preparation, transitioned into the workforce post-college, or relocated to New York City, they concurrently grappled with navigating the diverse landscapes of the city. While the nature of this experience varied for each teacher, a common thread emerged: dependence on others for survival. Among the interviewed teachers, 88% relied on parents, roommates, or a partner for their living arrangements. One teacher opted not to relocate to the city despite a preference for working there. Haiti, for instance, expressed a desire for proximity to New York City but lacked a significant interest in moving, drawing from her background of being born and raised in the Yonkers area. She had a perceived disinterest in navigating the complexity of being a New York City resident. In contrast, there was a teacher who returned to New York City from Virginia and faced the challenge of residing in a shelter

with three children while navigating the demands of the New York City Teaching Fellows program. Describing this ordeal, she shared, “It was the most horrible experience I’ve ever experienced. It was hard to find an apartment. I had to go to the shelter. I was lucky I was a veteran to not experience it in the severity most people would.” Tanya went on to explain her experience in detail,

> “There really is no support. They make it seem like it's all this support all this help. There really isn't. You get treated differently. No one knows why you are there. I wasn't in the shelter because I couldn't pay bills, I was going to the shelter because I’m transition[ing] from one state to the next. You get treated like you're that person who mis-managing your money and now you and your kids are homeless. It was a very difficult experience. It was many nights I sat up and watch my kids sleep so that the rats wouldn't get them. I promised myself I would never let my kids go through nothing like that again. Work the hardest I can, no matter how, no matter how hard it is. I accepted the first thing possible. I wasn't picky because I knew that I needed something, I’ve got this new career and I knew I needed to get my kids situated, so they could thrive in school because we were struggling getting to and from the shelter.”

Tanya’s housing struggles in the summer of 2016 continued to resonate seven years later, highlighting the persistent challenges of finding suitable accommodation even with a six-figure income. She frustratingly expressed the struggle stating:

> “I am still here. It's not comfortable. It's harder to transition. It's hard to find new space in New York City. It's overcrowded. The cost of living is so high, and families are getting bigger. There's not enough space. I’m a family of six living in a two-bedroom apartment. And I’m looking for three or four bedrooms but it's hard. People getting these 3/4-bedroom apartments and they stay. Whether they need the space or not.”

Tanya’s struggle to find adequate housing in New York City, despite the city’s overcrowding and exorbitant cost of living, exemplifies the challenges faced by urban residents under neoliberal urban policies (Harvey, 2005). As Tanya grappled with the challenge of securing a more spacious home for her growing family, where their financial dependency rested solely on her, she highlighted the reluctance of individuals to relinquish larger living spaces once obtained, contributing to the scarcity of affordable housing options. In the context of New York City, acquiring a more substantial and affordable residence is difficult. Alethia echoed this sentiment,

recounting the enduring legacy of an apartment within her family, a property held across generations that significantly shaped her living experience. Alethia was forced to seek refuge with family after the untimely death of her husband. Subsequently, she was fortunate to secure a rent-controlled apartment provided by her aunt in Harlem. When confronted with the prospect of potentially relocating outside of the city for an enhanced quality of life, Alethia empathetically dismissed the idea of giving up her apartment, responding assertively, “girl don’t be crazy, you know that apartment ain’t going nowhere.” Her steadfast commitment to this living arrangement reflected a profound appreciation, as she questioned the need for change when considering her living situation as a blessing, rhetorically asking, “why you going somewhere?” This narrative highlights the emotional and familial ties to living spaces, underscoring the complex relationship between housing decisions and one’s sense of security and stability.

Besides Alethia, Tanisha was the only other teacher who benefitted from a rent-controlled apartment. Opting to live with her mother in public housing, she found it more affordable than renting her own place, which could cost around $2200 for a one-bedroom or studio apartment. While she recognized the expense of public housing, Tanisha, at one point, shared the rent with several others. Eventually, she took over the rent, managing to renegotiate her mother’s lease and significantly reduce the rent due to her mother being a senior with social security benefits. However, Tanisha was keenly aware that transitioning into the charter school sector with an annual income of over 100k meant refusing to change her mother’s lease. This decision was based on the understanding that it would affect her rent, her mother’s food stamps, and other social benefits that positively impacted both Tanisha and her young daughter. Despite her six-figure income, Tanisha still perceived herself as someone merely surviving, emphasizing the significant impact of altering her mother’s social benefit status. Teachers like Tanisha and Tanya are impacted by housing challenges in urban areas due to policies that prioritize market

forces and profit-driven development (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Urbanization leads to gentrification, which displaces middle-class residents through rising property values and rents driven by private investment (Harvey, 2005). The deregulation of housing in New York City further drives up prices and limits affordable housing options for people like Tanya, who desperately need them.

While these teachers recognized the advantage of living situations that eased the burden of the high cost of living, Monica and Hawa opted to live at home in an attempt to save money. For Hawa, residing at home proved to be a practical means of saving money. However, as she transitioned to independent living, life posed increasing challenges. She shared,

> "I was living with a roommate which was good. I was able to still save money in certain ways. Now that I'm living on my own it's rough and I think it put things into perspective. More aware I'm not earning enough for this. I feel like I'm not being compensated enough for this profession."

As an independent professional, Hawa began questioning whether she was adequately compensated for her daily efforts, particularly when faced with the struggles of solo living. While she managed to save money, her savings didn't fully prepare her for the challenges of independent living. Meanwhile, Monica tried to prepare for independent living, remaining open to various locations and applying to every lottery apartment she could find. While contemplating her moving options, she had to weigh factors such as neighborhood safety and cost per square footage. Despite applying to several affordable housing opportunities, she rarely received responses. Accessing affordable housing proved elusive for Lisa, who consistently found herself making more than the income thresholds required. She expressed confusion over the demands and criteria of affordable housing, stating, "I'm working two jobs and I'm in school, so I don't even understand how that makes sense."

When Monica received the only callback regarding apartment availability, she found the offer disappointing. Recounting the instance, she stated, "I got called back for [a] Harlem studio, they wanted $1800." Standing at the door, Monica could see the window, kitchen, and bathroom, instantly being turned off. Similarly, Monica's former co-worker, Lisa, residing in a studio apartment with her husband, constantly expressed bewilderment, stating, "I don't know how I'm making this work." Despite the charter school offering a moving stipend for relocation to East Harlem, Monica found the prices there to be exorbitant, leading her to rule out moving to Manhattan. To reside in the Bronx, she had to weigh safety advice from her boyfriend, who frequently dissuaded her from potential options. Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island were dismissed due to their commute lengths to and from work. Safety was a recurring concern, echoed by Tyrone as he reflected on his own relocation from Florida to kickstart his career in New York City, describing the process as chaotic: "…so we actually lived with her for the first two months that was chaos. Grace Towers Projects. We can't thrive in this environment. We've had some tough encounters and some even terrible living situations." While Tyrone faced challenging living situations, he found support by leaning on someone to get started.

Marsha recognized the importance of support, acknowledging that she couldn't do it alone. She explained, "I definitely needed to live with someone. I couldn't live by myself because I couldn't afford anything." Reflecting further on her experience, she provided details about her living situation and how it impacted her finances, stating, "my rent took all my money. I was making decent money, but still, most of my money was going to rent. This is not the way I want to live." Realizing the need for change, she felt the impossibility of achieving the goals she had set for herself. She expressed, "I had goals. I wanna buy a house. I can't buy a house here. It's not sustainable. I was saving, but it's not enough for me to get to my next level." Marsha eventually took a bold step by relocating out of the country in pursuit of a better life.

In contrast to these stories, Jackie was one of the few teachers who felt a sense of thriving in navigating the terrains of New York City as a resident. Abiding by her mother's orders to stay home until married and equipped with a dual professional career in real estate, she made a strategic move outside of New York City to New Jersey. Jackie believed this decision was timely, occurring before the cost of living spiked to uncontrollable rates. Even as she reflected on what she perceived as luck in comparison to her peers, she stated,

> "I think now that things have gone up, I wonder with my teaching salary and still making six figures if I would feel like I would be thriving still. Things have gone up, you need to make double that now to be thriving. I feel like had I maybe not had the second income [dual career], maybe I would [be] feeling like I'm surviving."

The changing economic landscape has an impact on teachers' perceptions of thriving. Even with the sought after six-figure salaries and a second career in real estate, the increased cost of living still prompted Jackie's reconsideration of what constitutes thriving in the present economic context. The mention of needing potentially double the current income Jackie made, stressed the escalating financial demands and the potential vulnerability of relying on a single income. These observations all contribute to a nuanced understanding of economic dynamics and the implications for individuals' well-being. These housing realities faced by Black teachers stress the relationship between market forces and profit-driven development in urban areas. The disparities in housing accessibility experienced by these teachers, exemplified by Monica's disappointing apartment offer and Marsha's decision to relocate abroad for a better-quality life, reflect the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities perpetuated by neoliberal policies (Harvey, 2005). Despite Jackie's perceived success in navigating housing issues, her reflections on the increasing cost of living highlight the precariousness of middle-class stability in neoliberal urban environments.

Gentrification

A multitude of teachers articulated their discontent with New York City, contending with the complexities of identifying neighborhoods that authentically mirrored their cultural values and norms. A substantial portion of this discontent emerged as they contemplated the overpowering effects of gentrification on the city they once recognized. This struggle manifested as a continual balancing act between desires, necessities, and the harsh realities they confronted. When articulating their perspectives on gentrification, Black teachers exhibited visible frustration as they struggled to make sense of its multifaceted impacts. A complex relationship with gentrification surfaced among them, characterized by an inconsistent mix of attraction and aversion. While some Black teachers found appeal in the concept of gentrification, this enthusiasm was tempered by a profound sense of loss associated with its repercussions on Black communities. Hawa encapsulated the nuanced stance of most Black teachers in this discourse, remarking, "I think there's pros and cons. It does push marginalized people out of their communities. It also helps the community, in a sense. You see different things or new things coming into your community that wasn't there before."

Haiti further extended this discussion by highlighting how gentrification resonated within the educational realm, affecting students and their experiences in school:

> "I see both sides of the coin. In terms of building up the neighborhoods I think it's great, but at the same time, you have the schools in gentrified areas where some kids are thriving, and some kids are surviving. Especially if you've been there for a long time, it makes things a lot more obvious for students. Students know who don't have, students know the students that don't wear the latest sneakers or the kids who smell a little bit. It's a lot. Or [even] the kids who never have lunch money you know, little things like that [become] a lot more obvious."

Haiti acknowledged that the process of gentrifying certain areas in NYC introduced the potential for a transformation in the demographic composition of nearby schools, thereby emphasizing rather than alleviating poverty within institutions. In contemplating the repercussions of

gentrification on schools, LaShae similarly suggests that it affects the profile of teachers employed in the school building. She draws a connection between gentrification and its influence on schools, expressing her perspective that newly hired teachers might lack competence, stating, “they don’t know what the hell they’re doing.”

Charisse conveyed the complexity of her sentiments on the subject, noting the subtle shifts she observed in its dynamic. Throughout her response, she repeatedly underscored the complexities inherent in her feelings, struggling to articulate a definitive stance due to the conflicting nature of her experiences. Her fluctuation is captured in the following excerpt:

> “It's very complicated, my feelings are complicated when it comes to that because I know that Harlem has so much rich culture in it, and you have areas where it has become gentrified, and you go a couple blocks and it's like, why the shift? But then I know when I go to Harlem I’m not going to certain you [areas]. Yeah, I don't have an answer.”

While Charisse grappled with conflicting emotions regarding gentrification, she exhibited a keen awareness of its impact on communities. Engaged in a thoughtful reflection, she raised pivotal questions that demand careful consideration: “is this community not good?,” “why is it not good?,” “why are we bringing in x, y, and z and other races and now we can call it good.” These inquiries probe into the complex relationship between perceptions of community quality, the factors influencing such judgements, and the implications of cultural and racial shifts within gentrified spaces. This statement sheds light on the complexity of neoliberalism, particularly within the context of gentrification and its effects on communities like Harlem. In urban contexts, this often translates into policies and practices that prioritize economic growth and investment, sometimes at the expense of social equity, identity, and community well-being.

Amar, visibly annoyed by the effects of gentrification, succinctly expressed her sentiments, asserting, “This is my thing with gentrification; if they move into our areas, we need to move into their areas.” Her perspective unfolded as she elaborated on the transformation of

the Harlem community she frequented—a locale deeply rooted in the ownership of Senegalese people. With the advent of gentrification, she observed a stark alteration in the landscape, where the once-familiar stores owned by her community were now replaced by establishments run by individuals with whom she felt no connection. The intense change rendered the area unrecognizable, stripping away the cultural identity that once made it a space she could visit to connect with her people and fulfill her needs. Amar keenly noted how gentrification not only altered the cultural fabric of the neighborhood but also displaced residents due to soaring property values. In her analysis, the association of white individuals with affluence became a driving force behind escalating rent prices, frustratingly observing, “Why, when I go downtown [it] is nothing but fucking white people? No, if they're moving into our area, we need to make a way where we're able to move into their area.”

Drawing from childhood experiences that cast a shadow over her current perspective, LaShae grappled with the complex nature of gentrification, particularly as she attempted to reconcile its impact on her life as an adult. Initially framing her stance as both "for it and not for it," she recollected her childhood in Brooklyn when the neighborhood underwent gentrification. As a child, her perception of the changes was shaped by witnessing an influx of white individuals who, in her words were, “buying up everything” and “kicking us Black folks out.” However, as an adult and homeowner, LaShae's perspective took on a nuanced tone. She acknowledged the financial implications of gentrification, recognizing its potential to elevate the value of properties in the neighborhood. Sharing her complex thoughts, she articulated,

> “Now I’m a homeowner and I’m like these people in the neighborhood don't give a damn. Bring the white people in and let's make everything better. They make your property valuable [high]. So as far as thinking like a homeowner I’m for it. But if you would ask me a few years ago I would of been like nah, I’m not for it. But that's because in my neighborhood now people just don't care. They are dirty, they're like nasty, they just don't care about the neighborhood. Maybe if it was gentrified things would be better, and my property value will go up, things will be great.”

She reflected on the current state of her neighborhood, expressing discontent with its apparent neglect and lack of care. LaShae argued that the infusion of new residents through gentrification could bring about positive changes, citing potential improvements in cleanliness and overall neighborhood conditions. Her evolving perspective highlights the tension between personal interests, community well-being, and the multifaceted impact of gentrification on both individuals and neighborhoods.

Despite being aware of these impacts, similar to LaShae, Tyrone, in certain respects, assigned blame in the form of personal responsibility. While explicitly stating that it is unjust to displace people from their homes, he contended that Black individuals bear a responsibility to advocate for, protect, and maintain their neighborhoods. Tyrone asserted, "I don't think it's fair to not ask to be pushed out when we don't take care of our own neighborhoods." He goes on to elaborate on the notion of responsibility within Black neighborhoods:

> “We lost in some places that sense of community a sense of self. Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 that's what they had. They thrived when they were together. So when we are facing gentrification it's our best bet to work together. Let's give them a reason not to bring these other people in here.”

Tyrone's perspective underscored the importance of communal action in preserving the identity and integrity of Black neighborhoods. He drew historical parallels, emphasized the strength derived from unity and collaboration, and advocated for a proactive approach to counter the challenges posed by gentrification. As Tyrone called for collective action, Lisa challenged this thought addressing how gentrification required an essential precursor: awareness. She articulated,

> “Gentrification is happening because are unaware of the great impact it could have. It's more than just more white people on the train pass 96th street. It's more than my neighbor's wife and she has like a boh[emian] vibe in her apartment. It is a takeover. But to be unaware of that what are we doing.”

Lisa knows the necessity of recognizing the broader implications of gentrification beyond surface-level observation. Her statement implied that a lack of awareness contributes to the perpetuation of gentrification, as individuals may not fully grasp or recognize the complicated and transformative nature of this process. By emphasizing the need for understanding, Lisa advocated for a more informed and proactive stance in addressing the challenges posed by gentrification.

Ajanae provided a compelling illustration of community mobilization in the face of impending changes. She recounted the narrative of a longstanding softball field situated between 110th and 112th street, from Madison to Park Avenue, which had been a fixture for generations—her own grandparents having played there. Adjacent to this, a small flower garden tended by elderly women also held a significant historical presence. Both these spaces, laden with memories, have now succumbed to the encroachment of new buildings:

> "For the field we did push back. We started one of those campaigns on change.org. And a lot of people signed it. Do I think it was actually taken into consideration, no. It's always good to try and make an effort but do people actually look at it and take into consideration before they make that final decision, I don't think that happens, unless it becomes mainstream. Had we posted it on Instagram [maybe] it would have become big and we may have still had our field. But the fact that everybody doesn't know the resources they have [and] the power they have, I think that's what stopped us."

Ajanae made note of the power dynamics at play, observing that the impact of such campaigns might be more significant if disseminated through widely used platforms like Instagram. She lamented the lack of awareness among community members about their potential influence, the untapped power of word of mouth, and the broader resources at their disposal. The failure to harness these resources, she suggested, hindered their ability to effect meaningful change. Yet, Ajanae grappled with a crucial question: even when communities mobilize and voice their concerns, is there genuine consideration of their realities in decision-making processes? Marsha connected deeply with this question, particularly considering the transformations in Harlem, a

vital hub of Black culture. She recognized the pain that comes with the erasure of history within a community. She shared, “[There] is a lot of history in Harlem. To see it being erased right before their eyes. It's a smack in the face.”

Alethia detailed her observations of the impact of gentrification on Harlem, shedding light on subtle yet significant disparities in community resources. She discerned the unfolding changes in localities and the potential messages embedded in them:

> “Who gets the sprinklers and who doesn't. Who gets the garbage cans on the corner and who doesn't. That's huge. Some of our corners don't have garbage cans, where we supposed to put our garbage. You don't want to keep holding it for blocks. But some neighborhoods there’s garbage can[s] on every corner. Who makes that decision and who represented the people that live in my neighborhood? We need to be where the decisions are being made about how the blocks are being divided in the bus routes, about where they're going to put the homeless shelters and where they're going to put the high-rise buildings. We need to be involved especially if those decisions are made about our neighborhood. What block is going to get trees planted and what block isn't? Trees provide a better quality of life. But if we’re not there than the people that are get the trees and the people that are not [there won’t].”

In articulating the unequal distribution of essential amenities and services, Alethia too advocated for community involvement in decision-making processes. Her emphasis on being present in conversations ranging from infrastructure allocation to urban planning underscored the importance of community engagement in shaping the evolving landscape of Harlem during the gentrification process. Jackie recognized these various perspectives on community development, asserting the need for renovation. Despite not entirely attributing the responsibility to the community alone, she characterized gentrification as a “double-edged sword”, a nuanced phenomenon with both positive and negative implications:

> “There are people that are being displaced out of their communities, they can't afford their communities anymore, and they have to go. I feel like there needs to be more support because people shouldn't have to be displaced out their communities, just because of social, economic development. On the other hand, I also see a lot of poverty and I wish somebody would come and renovate some of these homes.”

Jackie's statement reflects the consequences of neoliberal urban politics, where market-driven development often leads to the displacement of longstanding community residents. The lack of affordable housing options and rising costs undermine the community's democratic empowerment and participation in decision making processes (Brenner & Theodore, 2022). Jackie's observation about poverty underscores the systemic inequalities perpetuated by neoliberalism, highlighting the need for more inclusive and community-oriented approaches to urban development.

For educators, the essence of thriving centered around key elements such as community, opportunities for upward mobility, living space, and safety. Charisse emphasized the significance of community, framing thriving as a convenience to her friends—individuals she considers akin to sisters. Similarly, Monica sought housing that would not only provide a residence but also enable her to have friends and family nearby. Meanwhile, Betty aimed for housing that allowed her to maintain her living arrangements with two roommates, underscoring the dependence on shared space. In navigating these priorities, safety and space emerged as crucial determinants in deciding where these educators could establish their homes. Betty found herself in Brooklyn, contending with the challenge of a lengthy commute into East Harlem. On the other hand, Monica opted for New Jersey, navigating the intricacies of traffic, tolls, and fuel costs. Notably, six other teachers also chose to reside outside of New York City, with Tyrone contemplating a similar move. The majority found neighboring New Jersey appealing, while Ajanae opted for Connecticut. The decision to live outside the city stemmed from the belief that it offered a pathway to upward mobility, providing an opportunity to become homeowners, invest, and pursue personal aspirations. However, the allure of neighboring states came with considerations. While some appreciated the perceived advantages that New Jersey offered at comparable prices to NYC, many teachers grappled with the associated costs, including the investment of time, the

impact on children's quality of life, and financial considerations. Amar expressed deep frustration with her quality of life in NYC, contemplating a drastic move outside of the United States. Drawing on her experiences in her family's homeland in Senegal, she vividly contrasted the community-focused, supportive, and loving environment. Recognizing that her education would ensure the well-being of her children, Amar grieved the economic constraints that prevented her from enjoying the level of compensation she could receive in NYC. Her contemplation of a move beyond national borders reflected the intricate balance educators navigated in pursuit of thriving amid the challenges posed by the city's economic dynamics.

Summary

This chapter revealed the nuanced experiences of Black teachers in New York City, deeply influenced by historical narratives of systemic oppression, racial domination, and evolving neoliberal policies. The impact of neoliberal agendas on marginalized communities, particularly in the educational landscape, is evident. Black teachers in NYC face complexities that affect their ability to thrive or survive, with a shared emphasis on the importance of representation in schools. The study explored the diverse backgrounds and demographics of teachers, revealing that 25% exclusively worked in charter schools, 25% solely in public schools, and 50% had experience in both. Of the 16 teachers interviewed, two identified as male, while 14 identified as female. Equally noteworthy are the housing preferences of the teachers. At the time of the interviews, 43.75% of the teachers resided in New York City, 37.5% lived in New Jersey, with one teacher each residing in Connecticut and Yonkers. It is significant to mention that among the teachers residing in New Jersey, 83% had previously lived in New York City and made a deliberate choice to relocate.

The research questions investigated the day-to-day realities faced by Black teachers, leading to two prominent themes: the aspiration to do more than survive and the complexity of

neoliberalism in NYC. The first theme, the aspiration to do more than survive, emphasized the dedication Black teachers had to social and historical ideas of liberation for Black communities. Authentic representation, connection, relatability, value, and the lack of leadership are crucial factors for their aspiration to go beyond mere survival. The second theme, neoliberalism as complexity in New York City, highlighted the challenges Black teachers faced in navigating the competitive, market-influenced terrain of NYC. This included the impact of housing difficulties, teacher preparation complexities, and the effects of gentrification on their professional and personal lives. This chapter underscored the interconnectedness of economic dynamics, power, and the quest for authenticity in the aspirations and challenges faced by Black teachers in New York City. The multifaceted nature of their experiences reflected the broader societal issues that shape the educational landscape and the individual lives of these educators as they strive for liberation.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

"You can't go a day without knowing or understanding who you are in this world; as a Black teacher, as a Black person."- Marsha

In opening this pivotal chapter, it is fitting to begin with the intense words of Marsha, a Black educator whose insights resonate deeply with the essence of this study. Marsha's statement captured the significance of racial identity and cultural consciousness not only within the realm of education but also in broader societal contexts. Implicit in Marsha's declaration is a recognition of the pervasive influence of race on personal and professional experiences, underscoring the relationship between race, economics, and liberation. From Marsha's perspective, the omnipresence of race in daily interactions is undeniable. Like many Black educators in this study, Marsha perceived it as her inherent duty to provide guidance, knowledge, and tools to empower students with a comprehensive understanding of their surroundings. Central to this understanding is the imperative for students to cultivate a strong sense of self-awareness, rooted in an appreciation of their racial identity and history. Marcia's statement also underscored the significance of navigating societal structures and pursuing avenues for individual and collective advancement. All these sentiments exemplify the commitment of Black teachers to the historical struggle toward political, social, and individual liberation.

In building upon Marsha's insights, this discourse extends to encompass the scholarly observations of Marvin Lynn (2002), who used a critical race theory lens to study the influence of race on the experiences of Black male teachers in Los Angeles. Lynn (2002) aptly observed that race permeated both the visible and concealed dimensions of Black male teachers experiences in Los Angeles. Similar to the findings in Lynn's (2002) study, there exists a dedication from Black teachers to the principles of racial uplift, freedom, and transformation.

Black teachers use teaching as a method to enhance and promote their understanding of liberation, mirroring the historical contributions of Black teachers. The concept of liberation has always been deeply intertwined with education and the ongoing struggle for freedom within the Black community. Throughout history, education has been regarded as a powerful tool for teaching, strategizing, and executing plans for freedom (Danns, 2014; Erickson & Morrell, 2019; Givens, 2021; Lewis, 2013; Podair, 2002; Todd-Breland, 2018). Even before the Emancipation Proclamation, education served as a platform for organizing, resisting, and advocating for legal freedom (Williams, 2005; Anderson, 2010). The objectives of Black teachers before and after 1863 were centered around self-reliance, self-determination, control, and sustainability (Danns, 2014; Fairclough, 2001; Fultz, 2008; Givens, 2021). The dedication of Black teachers to these ideals is deeply intertwined with the critical race theory movement toward liberation.

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) define Critical Race Theory, as a framework aimed at investigating the connection between race, racism, and power. This framework empowers researchers to go beyond surface-level analyses and explore the complex social, historical, and legal contexts in which race operates within institutions and communities (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). This framework is dedicated to social and political transformation by challenging power structures and amplifying counter-narratives that challenge dominant narratives (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). In this discussion, I aim to summarize the major findings of both themes by examining them through the lens of racism is normal and the three dimensions of emancipation by Diane Coole (2012). While the findings have highlighted the Black teacher experience, thus answering research question one, I will dive deeper into this discussion by drawing historical parallels to these experiences in NYC. This will serve to illustrate how the evolving political economy impacts the motivation of Black teachers to teach in urban communities, thereby addressing research questions two and three. Finally, woven into

this discussion will be the summarized conceptions of liberation held by Black teachers (RQ4). The conclusion will then address the policy implications and future research. By engaging with these themes, I aim to deepen our understanding of the experiences of teachers both inside and outside the classroom. This study's significance lies in its recognition that in the 21st century, American racism continues to flourish under a neoliberal framework and liberation remains the overarching goal motivating teachers to enter the classroom.

Discussion

The Aspiration to do More than Survive

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans became a battleground for competing interests. The challenges the city faced showcased the disparity between powerful elites and marginalized communities. While Black educators prioritized community recovery, job security, and educational equity, powerful elites focused on broader economic development, often at the expense of marginalized communities (Buras, 2015). These elites were primarily concerned with advancing their own economic agendas and political interests, which did not align with the needs and concerns of Black teachers and their communities (Buras, 2015). The fallout from Hurricane Katrina saw many Black educators lose their longstanding careers, to the hiring of inexperienced, predominately white teachers sourced through alternative preparation programs such as Teacher for America (Buras, 2015; DiMartino & Jessen, 2018). Buras's (2015) work underscored the challenges faced by Black educators as they advocated for their interests within a system dominated by powerful elites. It exposed the complexities of race, power, liberation, and education. These complexities serve as a reminder of the uphill battle Black educators face in championing their ideals and values for education, particularly in urban areas where there is often a stark misalignment of interest between those in power and the communities they serve.

For instance, LaShae held the belief that setting low expectations for students conveyed the message that they could simply progress to the next grade without meeting adequate standards—an approach she deemed incongruent with real-world expectations. LaShae advocated for setting high expectations, viewing it as an expression of genuine care for students, preparation for real-world challenges, and a pathway to academic success rooted in authenticity. Despite her advocacy, LaShae's concerns consistently fell on deaf ears. Similarly, numerous other teachers in this study found themselves in the same predicament, advocating for what they knew to be in the best interest of their students. However, they encountered resistance from white leaders who either overtly or covertly dismissed their expertise, suggesting that they lacked insight into what was best for their students or that their interests diverged from those in power. This disregard for the perspectives of Black teachers reflects a prioritization of interests that are not aligned with the liberatory goals articulated by Black educators.

In Bettina Love's (2019) book *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom,* she argued that the collective "we," encompassing all people but particularly those in the Black and Brown communities, aspire to more than mere survival; we yearn to thrive in this world. Black teachers, particularly those interviewed in this study, not only strive for personal flourishing daily but also invest their time and energy to fostering such thriving within Black communities. Lisa, who relocated to a school she now finds fulfilling, captured the essence of this collective sentiment, remarking on the state of "we" as both a people and as educators, stating, "We have to educate each other. But I think that's hard because people are just trying to survive." Reflecting on Lisa's insights, a crucial connection emerges between liberation and abolitionist teaching.

Abolitionist teaching, as advocated by Love (2019) goes beyond reform of existing systems; it strives to dismantle oppressive structures entirely. Employing Love's (2019)

framework of abolitionist teaching, we witness the diverse ways in which Black teachers' aspirations for liberation manifest in their daily lives, teaching practices, and motivations for entering the classroom. While teachers may not explicitly label their practices, objectives, and motivations as liberation-focused, this project illustrates their ongoing efforts to challenge oppressive systems and effect transformative change in the lives of their students. However, their pursuits are persistently impeded by the demands and interests imposed by neoliberalism on the city.

Love's (2019) definition of abolitionist teaching resonates with the nuanced understanding of freedom Diane Coole (2015) explained in her work *Emancipation as a Three-Dimensional Process for the Twenty-First Century*. Coole (2015) examined the complexities of emancipation in contemporary society, arguing against a narrow interpretation and instead proposing a holistic framework comprising three interconnected dimensions: political, social, and existential. The political dimension, as outlined by Coole (2015), involves the traditional notions of political liberation, encompassing achieving legal rights, representation, and participation in democratic processes. Social emancipation expands the scope to challenge systemic inequalities and transform social structures to ensure equal opportunities and recognition for all individuals and groups (Coole, 2015). This involves addressing issues such as economic disparities, social hierarchies, and cultural norms that perpetuate oppression (Coole, 2015). Lastly, existential emancipation focuses on personal empowerment, self-realization, and liberation from internalized forms of oppression and domination (Coole, 2015). Coole (2015) sees all three of these dimensions as interconnected, suggesting that progress in one dimension often depends on advancements in others.

Black teachers are advocating for systemic change that will allow students to have greater range of choices, thereby maximizing their level of positive freedom within schools. This

advocacy is deeply rooted in the goal of purging institutions of hegemonic, racial, and economic practices that oppress students. However, for many educators, the call to dismantle existing structures within schools often remains confined to the schoolhouse level. While educators may see small gains, they continue to uphold the very policies they seek to dismantle, some unknowingly and others defiantly, highlighting a deep contradiction in their efforts. Further highlighting the complexity of neoliberalism's impacts.

In the socio-political realm, abolitionist teaching is employed as a method to educate students about oppression and societal challenges. Teachers use this pedagogy to empower students to engage positively in their lives and maximize their range of choices, enabling them to navigate and potentially transform a neoliberal society. The narrative around dismantling structures and systems, reimagining what the world could look like, and engaging in community organizing was not a primary focus for the teachers in this study.

For example, when Marsha complains about how gentrification has profound impacts on teachers and students and how it leaves them in a tough situation to have to explain and still uplift students, there wasn’t any organizing that took place in the classroom to empower students to get involved in fighting to save their community from gentrification. When deploying culturally relevant practices, teachers often operate at the psychological level, aiming to affirm students’ identities and instill a sense of agency. Historically, educators practiced fugitive pedagogy, which went beyond traditional means of teaching and learning. This form of pedagogy, while done in secret and implicit to school leaders, served as a means of organizing for political power, transformation, and coalition building (Givens, 2021). This historical approach intertwined education with activism, fostering a robust sense of community and collective action.

In contrast, contemporary teachers in this study largely did not engage in this deeper level of systemic critique and community organizing. There exists a profound conflict between recognizing systemic flaws and understanding how teachers perceive their role in enacting change. The current approach, while beneficial in fostering individual student empowerment, falls short of the broader, more radical transformation advocated by historical figures in education. This highlights the need for a more comprehensive strategy that addresses psychological empowerment and actively challenges and seeks to transform the underlying socio-political structures. This dual approach could better align with the goals of liberation and true systemic change, ensuring that education serves as a powerful tool for both individual and collective emancipation.

While New York City may not have experienced a major hurricane with the same catastrophic impacts as New Orleans, it is nonetheless grappling with policy decisions influenced by the same neoliberal agendas. Policies promoting privatization, gentrification, individualization, business-model management, and competition directly undermine the goals of liberation centered on empowerment, community, knowledge, power, and control (Buras, 2015; Lipman, 2011). Black teachers shed light on the lack of interest convergence as they described ideas about "Black education", transformation, and their experiences teaching, living, and operating in urban communities.

This study has shown how Black teachers' pedagogic approaches and values are in alignment with Coole's dimensions of freedom. By advocating for transformative approaches rooted in cultural relevance (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and abolitionist principles (Love, 2019), Black teachers continuously work to empower students and challenge dominant narratives. Whether through culturally affirming curriculum, their authentic representation of self, or the critique of gentrified communities they work and live within, they continue to foster resilience

and agency within marginalized communities. Across history, Black teachers have leveraged their unique position in the classroom and the broader community to advocate for and actively contribute to the advancement of Black communities (Foster, 1990).

In their capacity as educators, mentors, and leaders in their own right, Black teachers have implemented various strategies aimed at empowering their students and cultivating a sense of agency, self-determination, and community control. For instance, consider Ajanae's cautious approach to implementing an alternative project, a tactic indicative of what Jarvis Givens (2021) terms fugitive pedagogy. Fugitive pedagogy refers to a form of teaching and learning that operates outside or in opposition to traditional educational structures that perpetuate oppression (Givens, 2021). Drawing upon the historical experiences of Black teachers in the United States, particularly during periods of slavery and segregation, fugitive pedagogy has served as a means of resistance and survival (Givens, 2021). In practical terms, fugitive pedagogy manifests in various ways within the classroom of Black teachers in this study. It is evident when Marsha tackles the topic of gentrification and its impact on the Harlem community or when Jackie incorporates lessons on real estate and intentionally presents herself in informal cultural attire. It can be observed in Monica's deliberate efforts to instill love and joy in students, fearing the mistreatment of their Black bodies and minds in the broader society. Similarly, Lisa's decision to color the faces of white characters in instructional materials to reflect her Black and Brown students' identities is a form of resistance. Teachers like Lovejoy and Tanisha reject participation in disciplinary practices that mirror the school-to-prison pipeline, while Haiti infuses cultural experiences into her music classes. Tyrone, recognizing his influence as a Black male educator, embraces his role in shaping the lives of his students. These examples underscore the multilayered nature of fugitive pedagogy and its vital role in empowering Black teachers to

navigate and destabilize oppressive educational structures, aiming to foster agency and liberation among their students.

Representation for self and students often emerges in discussions among teachers, emphasizing the psychological aspects of emancipation. While this focus on representation and self-identity is important, it can perpetuate neoliberal values, ultimately impeding true freedom. Even when teachers and students are encouraged to show up as their authentic selves, they are still expected to follow policies and rules that align with a neoliberal agenda. This creates a paradox where teachers consider themselves thriving yet continue to complain about work conditions. Alethia illustrates this point by mentally removing herself from the harsh realities of work and life, believing that thriving is about a mindset shift. She emphasized the need to believe in thriving and live within that reality. Nevertheless, educators like Alethia recognize the systemic flaws that hinder genuine liberation within the educational system and seek alternative avenues for empowerment that still align with neoliberal values. For instance, while educators aim to empower students to freely express themselves, they also navigate the complexities of ensuring students' safety and compliance with authority figures. This tension between fostering autonomy and maintaining order reflects a broader societal challenge in replicating authentic representation and empowerment beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, despite Black teachers' efforts to empower students, they inadvertently contribute to neoliberalism. Focusing on individual empowerment and resistance within the existing educational framework may unintentionally reinforce neoliberal ideologies of individualism and self-improvement rather than addressing systemic issues. Additionally, some practices, such as infusing cultural experiences into lessons or rejecting disciplinary that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, may be seen as isolated acts of resistance rather than concerted efforts to address broader systemic inequities. Ultimately, the extent to which

authentic representation, empowerment, and positive self-image are mirrored in society at large correlates with the realization of systemic liberation. By expanding their practices of socio-political liberatory goals, educators can advocate for a structural reform that dismantles systems and fosters genuine freedom for all individuals within and beyond the educational sphere.

Derrick Bell (1980) is widely recognized for his concept of interest convergence, which refers to the lack of alignment between the interests of those in power and marginalized groups. Essentially, this idea postulates that dominant groups are more inclined to address racial issues if doing so benefits them in some manner (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Bell (1980) expressed skepticism about the genuine willingness of those in power to relinquish their privilege or share resources with marginalized groups solely for the sake of justice and equality. He argued that "whites simply cannot envision the personal responsibility and the potential sacrifice inherent in Black's conclusion that true equality for Blacks will require the surrender of racism-granted privileges for whites" (Bell, 1980, pp. 522-523). In general, dominant groups tend to resist racial reforms that challenge their privilege or disrupt the existing social order (Bell, 1980). However, they may be more receptive to such reforms if they perceive them as serving their own self-interests or maintaining social stability (Bell, 1980). The situation between Black teachers in New Orleans and the elites provided a clear illustration of how interest convergence operates.

Policy decisions that deviated from the needs of Black teachers, such as school closures, charter school expansions, and changes to teacher employment practices, were made in alignment with economic and political interests focused on historical ideas of urban renewal (Buras, 2015; Moskowitz, 2017). Ironically, these policies displaced individuals within the very communities they allegedly aimed to develop. Such interests directly undermine the goals of liberation and contradict the role Black teachers envision for themselves in advancing these goals within schools. Similar dynamics are observable in other contexts, such as New York City.

When Hawa articulated that the entire education system was flawed, she echoed a perspective consistent the critical race theory framework. Hawa recognized that for true progress to occur, it must extend beyond individual attitudes or behaviors; it necessitates fundamental changes in social, political, economic, and legal institutions to uproot racial inequality and oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This aligns with the insights of scholars such as Bell (1992), Crenshaw (1991), and Delgado & Stefancic (2012), who emphasize the need for systemic change across various domains, including education, criminal justice, housing, employment, and healthcare. Liberation is about challenging the status quo and working towards a society where racial equity and justice are prioritized and realized across all facets of life (Bell, 1992). However, this work proves daunting within the confines of a neoliberal system, which often falls short of achieving complete liberation (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

In their practices, teachers in this study have sought legal emancipation by voicing their frustrations with school policies and practices, seldom advocating for change within the school community. They highlight the ongoing challenges Black communities have in asserting their political power and participating fully in spaces they consider theirs. Despite not being held in bondage like in historical contexts, Black communities still encounter barriers to exercising their rights and influencing decision-making processes due to economic limitations and systemic racialized oppression. While teachers may achieve some victories in challenging policies and demanding change, their efforts often focus on addressing immediate concerns rather than challenging the deeper structural inequalities that perpetuate neoliberalism. In this way, their actions align with legal emancipation by asserting their rights and advocating for greater autonomy within educational institutions. However, by primarily addressing surface-level issues and not challenging the implicit forms of economic and racial oppression that limit their access to decision-making power, they contribute to the persistence of neoliberal agendas.

Culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogy serves as a powerful form of liberation by validating and centering the cultural identities and experiences of marginalized students. By incorporating these pedagogical approaches, educators create learning environments that recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment. This aligns with Diane Coole's (2015) three dimensions of emancipation: critical awareness, collective agency, and transformative action.

Critical awareness is developed as students critically examine their own cultural contexts and histories, recognizing the systemic inequalities that impact their lives (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Collective agency is fostered through collaborative learning experiences that emphasize mutual support and community engagement, encouraging students to see themselves as active participants in social change (Paris & Alim, 2017). Transformative action is achieved when students apply their learning to real-world contexts, advocating for justice and equity within their communities.

Incorporating culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogy both theoretically and practically is essential for achieving broader societal impact. Theoretically, it involves integrating these principles into curriculum design and educational policies, ensuring that the cultural wealth of all students is recognized and leveraged. Practically, it requires educators to implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the cultural needs and strengths of their students, creating inclusive and dynamic learning environments (Gay, 2018).

This approach not only addresses the contradictions within neoliberal educational frameworks but also moves towards a more just and equitable system. By bridging the gap between critical awareness and actionable change, educators can transform classrooms into spaces of liberation, fostering resilience and agency among students. As highlighted in the experiences of LaShae and Tyrone and the broader discussion of gentrification and systemic

inequality, culturally relevant pedagogy provides a pathway to resist and challenge oppressive systems, aligning with Coole's (2015) vision of emancipation. Reclaiming education as a site of social transformation necessitates a commitment to culturally relevant and sustaining practices, ensuring that all students can thrive and contribute to societal change.

The inclusion of culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies would profoundly impact teachers' involvement in liberation, aligning with their professional and personal goals. Professionally, these practices empower teachers to create equitable and inclusive classrooms that validate and uplift the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect (Gay, 2018). Personally, engaging in these pedagogies allows teachers to challenge their biases and develop a deeper understanding of systemic inequalities, promoting continuous self-reflection and growth. As citizens, teachers become advocates for social justice, actively participating in efforts to address and dismantle oppressive systems within their communities.

By integrating these pedagogical approaches, teachers can bridge the gap between their theoretical understanding of emancipation and practical action, contributing to broader societal change (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This alignment enhances their sense of purpose and fulfillment as they see the tangible impacts of their efforts in both their students' lives and the community at large. Ultimately, adopting culturally relevant and sustaining practices enables teachers to live out their commitment to liberation in all facets of their lives, reinforcing their roles as educators, advocates, and citizens dedicated to social justice.

Neoliberalism as Complexity

In adopting the lens that racism is normal to examine the experiences of Black teachers in New York City, this discussion expands upon existing Critical Race Theory literature focused on racism. It highlights the myriad of ways in which racism manifests in teachers’ housing and

professional experiences, entailing both covert and overt forms. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) characterized racism as a pervasive and ingrained societal phenomenon, emphasizing its normalization within various aspects of life. Due to how racism is rooted within our society, these acts often appear mundane and inherent to individuals within the culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). As a consequence, equal opportunity efforts may only address the most egregious instances of injustice, leaving the pervasive, everyday forms of racism that people of color face unaddressed, thereby perpetuating experiences of continued "misery, alienation, and despair" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). While one might argue that there isn't a deliberately racist structure that directly causes racialized experiences, an examination of the data reveals the implicit and explicit racialized experiences that Black teachers encounter while navigating teaching and housing in a neoliberal society. The implicit nature of neoliberal policy complicates both recognition and liberation from it. The implicit nature of neoliberal policy also complicates Black teachers' ability to challenge it while perpetuating its continuance.

In the world of neoliberalism, which is characterized by its strong belief in market principles and reliance on free-market dynamics, people often talk about a set of ideas that promote less government involvement and prioritize market mechanisms for driving both economic and societal development (Somers, 2008). Proponents like Milton Friedman (1995) and Friedrich Hayek (1978) believed that by allowing markets to operate with minimal restrictions, supply and demand will organically shape economic structures, foster innovation, and optimize resource allocation leading to increased efficiency, productivity, and overall prosperity. Moreover, they contend that the competitive nature of markets will naturally weed out inefficiencies and encourage individual initiative. This ideology has influenced policies and practices to prioritize competition, standardization, and accountability, often at the expense of broader educational goals and social justice (Blacker, 2013).

Neoliberal reforms affect teachers and teaching practices. Teachers face increased pressure to "teach to the test," adhere to standardized curricula, and meet performance targets, which can lead to burnout, demoralization, and a loss of professional autonomy (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Santoro, 2018). The emphasis on quantifiable outcomes also marginalizes aspects of teaching that cannot be easily measured, such as fostering critical thinking, empathy, and citizenship (David Blacker, 2013). While teachers in this study complained about testing, they largely cared about the aspects of teaching that cannot be easily measured and are neglected in teaching evaluations.

Black teachers draw from their own experiences and understanding of their students' realities to employ conventional approaches to education, something Black teachers have done historically, which extends beyond traditional curriculum constraints (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Black teachers like Tyrone use strategies aimed at building connections with students, particularly those deemed "difficult," by leveraging shared interest to foster a sense of investment in classroom activities. Ajanae emphasized the importance of connecting with students on a personal level by integrating projects about personality types. She recognized that understanding one's temperament is vital for navigating life's challenges. Drawing from her own upbringing in East Harlem, Ajanae recognized the significance of understanding temperament in navigating both academic and neighborhood challenges, viewing this project as essential for survival and the eventual ability to thrive, surpassing adherence to academic standards. During her interview, Ajanae emphasized that nobody instructed her to take these actions for her students. However, she expressed concern, saying, "Hopefully, I don't get in trouble for it."

Rooted in a perceived necessity to be liberated and thrive, these efforts by other Black teachers in this study often occur discreetly, fearing scrutiny for departing from established curricular norms. This approach -akin to what Ladson-Billings (1995) termed culturally relevant

pedagogy and what Jarvis Givens (2021) identified as fugitive pedagogy- is notably absent from mainstream educational frameworks, particularly in urban contexts, where tailored curricula reflecting students' realities are scarce. With a focus on holistic student development, Black teachers expressed a sense of duty to provide what they perceived as a culturally relevant education. These teachers have defined Black education as being one that prioritizes instilling pride, embracing a cultural experience, fighting towards liberation, and empowering students. The role of Black education in the Black community, as articulated by these teachers, aims to create a learning environment that affirms students' identities, challenges systemic inequalities, fosters critical thinking, and provides useful life skills to uplift individuals from personal and financial struggles.

Haiti observed neoliberalism's effects on classroom dynamics, noting how the integration of race and class translates into a clear divide between the "haves" and "have nots" within schools. This normalization of poverty among children inadvertently reinforces stereotypes, particularly regarding the socioeconomic status of Black and Brown students compared to their white counterparts. While this racial divide may not always be explicitly acknowledged (Bonilla-Silva, 2018), teachers must navigate its implications and work to counteract its impact. This underscores the importance of critical education in addressing systemic inequalities (Love, 2019; McLaren, 2007). Marsha articulated the frustration experienced by educators grappling with the effects of gentrification on their classrooms, particularly in Harlem. Her statement, "As educators, we felt like we were being slapped in the face because we're teaching them, trying to empower them yet they're erasing our history," encapsulated the emotional toll inflicted by gentrification's erasure of community heritage and identity. Marsha's words highlighted the internal conflict faced by teachers who strive to empower their students while witnessing the displacement and marginalization of their communities. The struggle against gentrification

becomes intertwined with the mission of education, as educators fight to preserve their students' sense of belonging and agency amidst rapid social change.

As education priorities shift toward quantifiable outcomes, the concerns and priorities of Black teachers are subsequently overlooked. Neoliberal constraints hinder the realization of their visions, perpetuating a normative educational paradigm that marginalizes culturally responsive practices as unconventional and non-standard. Tanisha expressed this reality as not being free to do what she believed to be best for the students in front of her. She stated, "I'm not free to do what I want. If I'm not doing what they say, then I'm not doing it right." On the contrary, Lisa's experience of feeling affirmed in discussing race in her school underscored the transformative potential of embracing a counter-normative approach. Yet, with an agenda focused on competition and testing, Black teachers often feel compelled to conduct these activities covertly (Givens, 2021), fearing repercussions from administrators who prioritize adherence to a standardized curriculum. These discrepancies highlight a broader issue of systemic racism within education where practices aligned with the needs and experiences of Black students are deemed alternative or supplementary rather than recognized as essential components of a comprehensive education.

As Black teachers navigate these challenges, their commitment to nurturing their students' growth and self-awareness remains unwavering. Black teachers confront the unseen racism inherent in the association of their practices as deviation from the educational status quo by continuing to implement fugitive tactics (Givens, 2021) into their practice. The fear of scrutiny and potential consequences for departing from established curricular norms underscores the normalization of racism within educational frameworks. The discreet nature of these efforts alone reflects a recognition of the systemic barriers that inhibit the implementation of racially

and culturally relevant practices. Often, when educational managers consider holistic approaches to teaching and learning, there is a lack of association with Black teacher pedagogic practices.

The undermining of racial influence not only affects how schools are managed but also shapes the experiences of Black teachers within the educational system. Black teachers often find themselves facing greater challenges in receiving the recognition and opportunities they deserve, as their perspectives and priorities in the classroom are overshadowed by neoliberal goals. These goals emphasize efficiency, accountability, and standardization through measures like performance metrics, target-setting, and hierarchical control structures (Apple, 2006; Lynch, 2014). These goals are often implemented at the expense of creativity, critical thinking, and student-centered approaches. Michael Apple (2006) and Kathleen Lynch (2014) characterized this phenomenon as the rise of a new managerial class in education. The implications of a managerial class extend beyond administrative practices, having profound racialized effects, especially for Black teachers. The adoption of business management principles in education exacerbates inequalities by narrowing the curriculum, perpetuating school stratification, and prioritizing test scores over social justice objectives (Apple, 2006). This trend poses significant challenges to the implementation of Black education, as it marginalizes the cultural relevance and individualized approaches advocated by Black educators.

While Apple (2006) and Lynch (2014) offer generalized insights into educational systems, combining their findings with the experiences and perspectives of Black teachers in this study provides further clarity on how business-like practices exacerbate racialized experiences, stifling the autonomy and priorities of Black educators. Many Black teachers articulated the need for Black representation at the leadership level. Lisa understood that representation alone wouldn't suffice to achieve alignment. Leadership must actively adopt an anti-racist ideology. According to her, this shift would steer schools away from irrelevant practices and curricula.

While Lisa acknowledged that she and her colleagues had influenced certain culturally relevant changes within her school setting, she clearly refrained from crediting her leadership team. Given this, Lisa justified having an anti-racist leadership team as a way to lessen the burden she feels to of constantly justifying and advocating for necessary changes. The ability of Black teachers to experience what Wright & Roger (2015) termed positive freedom would fundamentally undermine neoliberalism's reliance on controlling vulnerable populations. In echoing Lisa's sentiments, surviving within this system as a Black teacher requires a comprehensive understanding of the education system and a critical perspective on ongoing dynamics. Lisa aptly said, "For Black teachers, unless they are fully versed on the education system and how things work, you're always going to be surviving unless you think critically about what is actually happening."

Critical thinking about the educational landscape and its impact on implementation often gets overlooked in alternative preparation programs, which are themselves influenced by neoliberal agendas. Neoliberal ideologies, which promote a business-like model of managing schools, consequently affect alternative preparation programs as well. Typically, these programs are designed to expedite the training of teachers for placement in urban and/or rural schools, a pathway frequently utilized by teachers of color as a means of entering the profession (Whitford et al., 2019). The privatization of teacher training devalues the importance of maintaining public accountability, promoting innovation and diversity in pedagogy, and addressing systemic inequities in the education system (DiMartino & Jessen, 2018; Apple, 2006). In light of this, teachers often enter the classroom without a critical perspective, a deficiency that, as Lisa articulated, is essential for thriving. Peter McLaren (2007), in his research on life in schools, emphasized the necessity for teachers to acquire critical education themselves, a resource that is not always available or offered comprehensively in educational programs.

Training from a critical perspective appears to significantly impact the experiences of Black teachers, providing them with a sense of visibility and dismantling racialized barriers within the educational space (McLaren, 2007). Amar's awakening to the culturally and racially insensitive nature of normalized behavior practices, facilitated by her Black principal's intervention, prompted her to question existing norms that felt ordinary. As Amar displayed frustration with these normalized practices, Hawa always saw the racist implication of discipline measures in the schools she worked within. Hawa's resistance against policies perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline reflected her understanding of the racial implication embedded within educational practices. The system's tendency to operate from a neutral and colorblind perspective, solely focused on achieving results, perpetuates racialized experiences within schools. As Black teachers' voices are often undervalued, these detrimental practices persist, becoming the norm rather than the exception.

Due to the heightened pressure on schools serving marginalized communities to meet performance targets with limited resources, the emphasis is overwhelmingly placed on performance (Ravitch, 2010), hindering the concerns, growth, and professional advancement of Black teachers beyond the classroom. In this study, several teachers articulated the challenges they faced in advancing into leadership roles. Many attributed this lack of progress to their Blackness. LaShae and Tanya have echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that leadership tends to shy away from promoting minorities to leadership roles. Tyrone also highlighted the ever-shifting goalposts that hindered him from advancement, underscoring those systemic barriers. Similarly, Alethia spoke about the constant need to prove her expertise, particularly in advocating for special education children, a task made more challenging by the gatekeeping of white teachers and leaders. Black teachers perceive a prevalent notion among leadership that

their value is confined to the classroom, disregarding their potential for leadership roles and professional advancement.

The articulated need of Black teachers to feel “seen,” “heard,” and “understood” reflects their desire for recognition of their experiences, perspectives, and contributions within educational spaces. It is a call for acknowledgment of their unique challenges and demand for equitable treatment and representation. In a society where racism is normalized, the need to be seen, heard, and understood becomes even more crucial for Black teachers as they strive to navigate and challenge systemic injustices within the education system. Amar articulated that, “sometimes, as Black teachers, we have to work a lot harder.” This diligent effort to establish a reality aligned with one’s values, desires, and needs also extends to navigating the housing landscape in New York City.

The economic landscape of New York City shapes patterns of educational influence, educational opportunities, access to resources, wealth distribution, and residential segregation (Posey-Maddox, 2014). Harvey (2006) examined the political economy of urbanization, exploring how economic processes intersect with political power and social relations to shape urban landscapes. Urban policies, driven by capitalist imperatives to maximize profits, result in processes such as gentrification and the displacement of marginalized communities (Harvey, 2006). While gentrification may revitalize urban areas and increase property values, it frequently sidelines existing communities, leading to displacement. This is also known as the notion of "accumulation by dispossession," where capital accumulates through the expropriation of land, resources, and assets from marginalized groups (Buras, 2015; Harvey, 2006; Lipman, 2011).

Despite intentions to foster economic growth, Black communities are frequently subjected to redevelopment initiatives. Educators observe first-hand the effects of gentrification, a hallmark of neoliberalism, as it reshapes the neighborhoods where Black teachers grew up,

teach, and live. Neoliberal policies, characterized by deregulation and privatization, exacerbate income disparities by disproportionately favoring the affluent while diminishing state support for marginalized groups (Harvey, 2005; Harvey, 2006). This framework often prioritizes immediate economic gains over long-term social welfare (Harvey 2005), reflecting the colorblind principles of liberal democracy. While these policies may not overtly acknowledge racism, adopting a critical perspective informed by the understanding that racism is systemic enables a deeper exploration of the racialized experiences perpetuated by a neoliberal structure, as evidenced by Black teachers' narratives.

Navigating life in New York City poses challenges for Black teachers seeking to live in neighborhoods that encompass diversity, safety, affordability, and a sense of community reflective of their cultural identities. Finding such areas remains elusive, with most neighborhoods deemed safe and suitable for a professional working class failing to be affordable, represent minority cultures and identities, and be in proximity to the neighborhoods where many Black teachers work. This disparity, although widely acknowledged, has become an accepted norm in everyday life, perpetuating racial segregation and limiting housing options for Black individuals (Brenner & Theodore, 2022; Moskowitz, 2017). This causes educators like Amar to grapple with raising her family in an unsafe Bronx neighborhood due to limited alternatives.

Racism, deeply ingrained within the cultural fabric, often renders discriminatory practices ordinary and natural, thereby perpetuating disparities in housing, employment, and education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). By succumbing to the narrative that race is irrelevant, gentrification is able to overlook the lived experiences of marginalized groups and exacerbate their vulnerability to displacement and disenfranchisement. The consequences of displacement are particularly poignant in neighborhoods like Harlem. Alethia recognized this as she declared, "If gentrification continues the way it's going, there's not going to be a place for us here in

Harlem." Ajanae, a Harlem native, found herself powerless in the ability to aid her community in preserving significant artifacts despite their concerted efforts, which included rallying, signing petitions, and presenting arguments. The relentlessness of gentrification threatens to transform Harlem into a shadow of its former self, diminishing its significance as a cultural cornerstone for Black communities.

This process is also exemplified by the influx of corporate entities like Starbucks, banks, and upscale eateries into historically marginalized neighborhoods, as observed by various teachers. Their observations and thoughts highlight the insidious nature of gentrification, wherein the introduction of such amenities serves not to enhance the quality of life for existing residents but rather to attract a new, predominantly white and affluent to the area. This reflects a broader trend articulated by various teachers in which the interests and needs of the existing community are sidelined in favor of catering to the preferences of incoming residents with great purchasing power. A nuanced response that goes beyond solely attributing the lack of investment directly benefiting Black communities to market factors (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2010) suggests that Black communities may be regarded as unworthy of inclusion in the gentrification process.

The passages involving LaShae and Tyrone's critique of the Black community's response to gentrification provide a poignant example of the contradictions within the neoliberal paradigm, while also embodying elements of emancipation as discussed by Diane Coole (2015). Emancipation, in this context, refers to the process of achieving greater autonomy and agency, particularly in resisting oppressive systems. Diane Coole's (2015) insights into emancipation highlight the potential for individuals and communities to reclaim their power and reshape their circumstances, often through critical awareness and collective action.

LaShae's and Tyrone's reflections on gentrification illustrate a form of emancipation through their awareness and nuanced understanding of the issues impacting their neighborhoods.

LaShae's evolution from a child witnessing the displacement of Black residents to an adult homeowner who grapples with the economic benefits of gentrification represents a critical consciousness. Her recognition of the complexities and her ability to articulate them signify an emancipatory awareness of how gentrification affects community dynamics and personal circumstances. Similarly, Tyrone's call for Black individuals to advocate for and maintain their neighborhoods demonstrates an emancipatory ethos. He emphasizes the need for communal responsibility and unity, invoking historical examples like Tulsa, Oklahoma, to underline the importance of collective action in resisting gentrification and preserving the cultural identity of Black communities.

However, both LaShae and Tyrone’s positions also highlight how teachers, despite their emancipatory ideals, remain participants within the neoliberal framework. LaShae’s pragmatic acceptance of gentrification’s financial benefits reflects a neoliberal mindset where economic gain often takes precedence over community cohesion and social justice. Her ambivalence illustrates how individuals can internalize neoliberal values, even when these values conflict with broader communal interests. Tyrone's perspective underscores a further contradiction. While he calls for coalition building and collective action as essential strategies for resisting gentrification, this advocacy remains largely theoretical. Tyrone does not integrate these principles into his teaching practice, maintaining a disconnect between his beliefs and his professional actions. This gap highlights a historical pattern where discussions on topics like gentrification are confined to theoretical realms within education, failing to translate into tangible actions or movements. This inaction perpetuates the neoliberal status quo by not challenging or disrupting the systemic forces at play.

There exists a tension between the desire for liberation and the ways in which teachers participate in and enact this ideal. Often, their efforts manifest in both minor and significant

forms within the constraints of the educational system. When institutions are designed around neoliberal values such as competition, individualism, merit, personal responsibility, accountability, and standards, it becomes increasingly difficult to achieve the various dimensions of emancipation that Diane Coole (2015) described. This strain highlights the challenge of pursuing liberatory practices while simultaneously operating within a neoliberal framework.

While educators like Tyrone recognize the need for collective action, they often do not teach or facilitate this within their classrooms. This disconnect keeps discussions of gentrification and systemic issues within the realm of education without moving toward practical action. Historically, when education moved beyond theoretical discussions to practical action, significant social change was often on the horizon. For example, the Civil Rights Movement was largely successful due to the commitment of teachers and students to planning, learning, and activism (Fairclough, 2007). Educational spaces became hubs for organizing, where the synergy of knowledge and action led to profound societal transformations. However, when this practical dimension is absent, the potential for educational spaces to serve as catalysts for social change diminishes.

Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on results, materialism, and individualism—values often aligned with white middle-class communities—has fundamentally altered the educational landscape. It has overshadowed core values of community, mutuality, and cooperation, which are essential for teaching, learning, and thriving in society. The focus on measurable outcomes and standardized performance has marginalized these communal values, treating them as secondary or even irrelevant. This neoliberal ethos has seeped so deeply into the commonsense of teachers that integration into this framework is often seen as normal, without a critical examination of the harm it inflicts. The emphasis on individual success and competition undermines the collaborative spirit necessary for addressing systemic issues like gentrification and racial

injustice. By prioritizing adherence to competition, individualism, and significant wealth building the system discourages the incorporation of culturally responsive and community-focused practices.

To reclaim education and Black communities as sites of social transformation, it is crucial to reorient its values towards those of community and cooperation. Teachers need to integrate critical perspectives and activist practices into their classrooms, fostering environments where students not only learn about social issues but also engage in collective action to address them. This shift requires recognizing and challenging the deep-rooted neoliberal assumptions that prioritize individualism and material success over communal well-being and social justice. Only then can education fulfill its potential as a powerful catalyst for meaningful societal change.

Conclusion

The narratives of Black teachers in New York City highlight the intersectionality of race, power, and socioeconomic factors in shaping their experiences. The historical legacy of resistance and resilience among Black educators continues to motivate their strategies for challenging oppressive systems and fostering empowerment within their communities. However, systemic barriers, economic disparities, and neoliberal policies create obstacles to realizing the aspirations of liberation within the education system. To achieve meaningful change, there is a need for transformative approaches that address the structural inequalities perpetuated by neoliberalism and colorblind liberalism while centering the voices and experiences of Black teachers and communities. Black teachers' motivations and aspirations for liberation are essential drivers for advocating for equity, justice, and empowerment despite the challenges posed by systemic barriers and oppressive norms.

The *need* to do *more than survive* resonates deeply with Marsha's perspective on liberation, particularly within the context of Black communities. Marsha's belief that race is an ever-present factor in individuals' lives, especially for Black teachers and students, underscores the necessity of not merely surviving but thriving in a world where systemic inequalities persist. Marsha's assertion that "You can't go a day without knowing or understanding who you are in this world; as a Black teacher, as a Black person" speaks to the fundamental importance of identity and self-awareness in navigating a society that often disregards and devalues Black experiences. Her emphasis on incorporating cultural experiences into learning spaces reflects a commitment to empowering Black students with the knowledge of their heritage and worth, laying the groundwork for them to thrive in a society that may not always recognize their full humanity. The connection between education and liberation has deep historical roots within the Black community, dating back to times of slavery when education was viewed as a means of resistance and empowerment (Givens, 2021; Williams, 2005). From organizing for legal freedom to advocating for self-reliance and control during the Jim Crow era, Black educators have long seen education as a pathway to liberation (Fairclough, 2007; Givens, 2021; Todd-Breland, 2018; Williams, 2005). However, this pursuit of liberation extends beyond the classroom, encompassing broader social, economic, and political struggles against systemic oppression.

Critical race theory provides a lens to analyze the complexities of race, power, and liberation. By recognizing racism as a normal and pervasive aspect of society, critical race theory helps this study to underscore the urgency of transformative action. The experiences of Black teachers navigating neoliberal urban environments highlight the connection between race and capitalism, as well as the challenges faced in striving for liberation. By interrogating these intersections through critical race theory, this research amplified the voices and experiences of Black educators, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers they

encounter and the possibilities for change. Centering the experiences of Black teachers and examining the structural forces that shape their realities, this study prompts us to ask the critical question: Are *people* thriving?

Neoliberalism, characterized by minimal state intervention and prioritization of free-market mechanics (Harvey, 2005; Somers, 2011), has exacerbated income inequality and reduced support for vulnerable populations. Gentrification, closely linked to neoliberal policies, has transformed urban neighborhoods in New York City, often displacing lower-income residents (Moskowitz, 2017), including Black families and teachers. As neighborhoods undergo rapid changes driven by market-driven policies, Black teachers find themselves priced out of their communities and facing challenges in finding affordable housing inclusive of their needs and wants. Gentrification alters not only the physical landscape but also erases cultural and historical significance, exacerbating marginalization among Black residents. The lack of alignment between the interests of Black teachers and powerful elites in NYC perpetuates systemic inequalities, hindering racial progress. Neoliberal policies prioritize economic development over marginalized communities' needs, leading to disempowerment and alienation among Black educators. Interest convergence theory suggests racial progress hinges on aligning the interests of marginalized and dominant groups (Bell, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Within the classroom, Black teachers confront racial attitudes and biases that impact their interactions with students, colleagues, and leadership. They challenge practices that perpetuate stereotypes and marginalize students of color, advocating for authentic representation, relatability, and connection in educational spaces. However, they also face systemic barriers and resistance to change within the education system, highlighting the need for recognition, leadership opportunities, and equitable treatment of Black teachers. Their experiences underscore the intersectionality of race, class, and education in shaping their lived realities. Despite facing

systemic challenges and barriers, Black teachers strive for empowerment and liberation, both for themselves and their students.

Addressing these challenges requires recognizing and challenging the systemic structures of power and privilege that perpetuate inequalities in education and urban development. Black teachers' voices and experiences must be central to decision-making processes, and efforts to promote educational equity must prioritize the needs and concerns of marginalized communities. The goal is for all people to reach a point in which they are thriving, living, and leading flourishing lives.

Policy Implications

This study examines policy implications through a multidimensional lens, considering both systemic transformation and specific policy initiatives. Echoing Diane Coole's (2015) framework of the dimensions of emancipation, the quest for complete liberation underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the political, social, and existential dimensions of freedom. The proposed policies interlink with these dimensions, recognizing the importance of systemic change alongside measures to empower Black teachers economically, socially, and politically. By integrating Coole's (2015) three dimensions of emancipation, the policy initiatives outlined aim to dismantle structural inequalities, foster social integration, and promote individual and collective fulfillment for Black educators.

Systemic Transformation

This research underscores the importance of reimagining economic models beyond neoliberalism. A shift towards a social market economy, balancing free-market principles with social policies, offers a viable alternative. Such a model would empower Black teachers to thrive economically and contribute to building resilient communities, free from the detrimental effects of gentrification. A social market economy is a socioeconomic system that combines elements of

free-market capitalism with social policies aimed at promoting social justice, equity, and the well-being of all citizens (Müller-Armack, 2006; Stiglitz, 2013). In a social market economy, the government intervenes in the market to ensure fair competition, regulate industries, and provide social welfare programs to address inequalities and support vulnerable populations (Müller-Armack, 2006; Stiglitz, 2013). One of the key features of a social market economy is its emphasis on balancing economic freedom with social responsibility (Wright, 2019). While individuals and businesses are free to engage in economic activities and pursue profit, the government intervenes to ensure that basic needs are met, social safety nets are in place, and essential services such as healthcare and education are accessible to all (Wright, 2019).

In urban areas like New York City, Black teachers often encounter numerous challenges, from access to affordable housing to economic stability. In cities with soaring housing costs, finding affordable accommodations near schools can be particularly daunting. However, a social market economy offers promising solutions to these issues. Through policies like housing subsidies, rent controls, and affordable housing initiatives, a social market economy can make housing more accessible and affordable for Black teachers and other low-income residents. This not only alleviates financial burdens but also enhances the overall well-being of Black educators by providing them with stable and secure living conditions.

Beyond the realm of housing, economic challenges such as lower wages and limited career advancement opportunities further compound the struggles faced by Black teachers. Yet, the implications extend beyond personal finances. For Black educators, economic stability is linked to their ability to thrive professionally and, ultimately, to their capacity to positively impact the academic, social, and overall life outcomes of Black students. If Black educators experience holistic thriving, encompassing both professional fulfillment and financial stability, the realization of liberation becomes more tangible for both them and their students.

There is an urgent need to reassess teacher education and preparation programs to prioritize culturally relevant pedagogy and practices. This involves revising standards and curricula to ensure that educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage effectively with diverse student populations (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Training programs should center their curriculums around the political, social, and existential dimensions of freedom, as articulated by Coole (2015), to address the needs of all minoritized communities. The implementation of culturally relevant practices is essential for Black educators to see themselves reflected in their educational experiences. The deep understanding and study of the social, economic, political, and historical significance of their role in the classroom further grounds their purpose for teaching and enhances their connection to the ability to thrive.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) acknowledges and incorporates student's cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives into the curriculum and instructional practices (Ladson-Billings, 2013). By ceasing fugitive pedagogic practices and learning, which often result from the lack of relevant pedagogic practices in educational spaces, educators can comfortably promote dimensional freedoms as outlined by Coole (2015). Furthermore, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) would build upon the principles of CRP by sustaining and nurturing cultural identities over time. These practices would go beyond surface-level cultural inclusion to actively challenge dominant narratives and structures that perpetuate inequity and marginalization (Paris & Alim, 2014). CSP would create learning and teaching environments where Black communities could thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. By integrating a thorough critical education into teacher education and professional development programs, institutions can equip educators with the essential skills required to advance liberatory goals. These policy implications are crucial steps towards dismantling structural barrier to liberation for both Black educators and students.

Future Research

This study has been dedicated to exploring the experiences of Black teachers in New York City, contextualizing their encounters within the broader historical, political, social, and economic landscapes. To build upon this research and contribute to the advancement of liberatory efforts and transformative change, a couple of recommendations are proposed. First, a notable absence in the narratives of teachers is the lack of community engagement in their approach to work. Many teachers, particularly those in urban settings, appear to overlook the importance of integrating community involvement into their pedagogic practices. This discrepancy is stark when considering the historical role of Black teaching in fostering community connections. The shift away from community-orientated approaches suggests a significant departure from past norms, possibly influenced by neoliberal ideology. Neoliberal policies have seemingly eroded traditional community ties, particularly in marginalized communities (Brenner & Theodore, 2022; Moskowitz, 2017; Posey-Maddox, 2014; Zukin, 1995). Investigating the mechanisms through which neoliberalism impacts community involvement among teachers, especially Black educators, is essential for understanding the shift and guiding future interventions.

Second, there is a need for further research into the socio-economic lives of Black teachers in New York City. Understanding the historical legacies and socio-economic conditions of Black teachers and their families can provide valuable insights into their present circumstances and shed light on any historical continuities. Studies conducted in other urban centers, such as post-Katrina New Orleans and Chicago, have highlighted the profound impact of neoliberalism on Black educators. However, there remains a gap in understanding the holistic experiences of Black teachers in New York City, particularly regarding housing and community dynamics. Comprehensive research in this area, with a focus on racialized experiences and

socioeconomic factors, is crucial for advocating systemic changes that address the root causes of disparities in urban environments.

References

African American Odyssey: A quest for full citizenship. *Library of Congress.* Retrieved from https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african-american-odyssey/reconstruction.html.

Allison, T. (2006). The displacement of Black families and communities: San Francisco as a case study in political response: An interview with N'Tanya Lee. *Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy*.

American Antiquarian Society. (n.d.). Freedmen and Freedwomen in the Documents of the Post-Civil War South: Introductions to the Collections. Retrieved from https://www.americanantiquarian.org/Freedmen/Intros/freedteachers.html

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*: The University of North Carolina Press.

Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and Curriculum: On analyzing hegemony*. Routledge.

Apple, M. (2006). *Education the "Right" way: Markets, standards, God, and inequality.* Routledge.

Au, W. (Ed.) (2009). *Rethinking Multicultural Education: Teaching for racial and cultural justice*. Rethinking Schools.

Back, A. (2003). Exposing the "Whole segregation myth": The Harlem nine and New York City's School Desegregation Battles. In J.F. Theoharis & K. Woodard (Eds), *Freedom North: Black freedom struggles outside the South, 1940-1980* (pp. 65-91). Palgrave Macmillan.

Baker, R. S. (2006). *Paradoxes of desegregation: African American struggles for educational equity in Charleston, South Carolina, 1926-1972*. University of South Carolina Press.

Banks, J.A., & Banks, C.A. (2010). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. John Wiley & Sons.

Beezer, B. (1986). Black Teachers' salaries and the federal courts before *Brown V. Board of Education*: One beginning for equity. *The Journal of Negro Education, 55*(2), pp. 200-213. https://doi.org/10.2307/2294882

Bell, D. (1980). *Brown v. Board of Education* and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review, 93*(3), 518-533.Retrieved from https://harvardlawreview.org/print/no-volume/brown-v-board-of-education-and-the-interest-convergence-dilemma/

Bell, D.A. (1992). Faces at the bottom of the well: The Permanence of racism. Basic Books.

Bernstein, B. J. (1962). Case law in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. *The Journal of Negro History, 47*(3), 192-198. https://doi-org.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/10.2307/2716502

Bernt, M. (2011). The 'double movements' of neighbourhood change: Gentrification and public policy in Harlem and Prenzlauer Berg. *Urban Studies, 49*(14), 3045-3062. DOI: 10.1177/0042098012437746

Bettina, L. (2019). *We Want to do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom.* Beacon Press.

Bifulco, R., & Ladd, H. F. (2006). The impacts of charter schools on student achievement: Evidence from North Carolina. *Education Finance and Policy, 1*(1), 50-90.

Blacker, D. J. (2013). *The Falling rate of learning: The Neoliberal endgame.* Zero Books.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2017). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Booker, K., Gill, B., & Zimmer, R. (2014). Charter high schools' effects on long-term attainment and earnings. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research.

Boyd, D., Goldhaber, D., Lankford, H., & Wyckoff, J. (2007). The effect of certification and preparation on teacher quality. *The Future of Children, 17*(1), 45-68.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589-597.

Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2022). *Spaces of neoliberalism: Urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brighouse, H. (2008). Education for a flourishing life. *Teachers College Record, 110*(13), 58-71. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810811001306

Buras, K. L. (2011). Race, charter schools, and conscious capitalism: On the spatial politics of whiteness as property (and the unconscionable assault on Black New Orleans). *Harvard Educational Review, 81*(2), 296-330. DOI:10.17763/haer.81.2.6l42343qqw360j03

Buras, K. L. (2015). *Charter schools, race, and urban space: Where the market meets grassroots resistance*. Routledge.

Buras, K. L. (2016). The Mass termination of Black veterans teachers in New Orleans: Cultural politics, the education market, and its consequences. *The Educational Forum, 80*(2), pp.154-170. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2016.1135379

Butchart, R. E. (1988). “Outthinking and outflanking the owners of the world”: A Historiography of the African American struggle for education. *History of Education Quarterly*, *28*(3), 333–366. https://doi.org/10.2307/369087

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Chubb, J. E., & Moe., T.M. (1990). *Politics, Markets & America’s Schools*. The Brookings Institution.

Clotfelter, C.T. (2004). *After Brown: The Rise and retreat of school desegregation.* Princeton University Press.

Coole, D. (2015). Emancipation as a three-dimensional process for the twenty-first century. *Hypatia, 30*(3), 530-546. doi: 10.1111/hypa.12161

Crenshaw, K. (1988). *Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law*. *Harvard Law Review, 101*(7), 1331–1387. https://doi.org/10.2307/1341398

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*(1), 139-167.Retrieved from http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8?utm_source=chicagounbound.uchicago.edu%2Fuclf%2Fvol1989%2Fiss1%2F8&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241-1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Crenshaw, K. Q., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds). (1995). *Critical race theory: The Key writing that formed the movement*. The New Press.

Creswell, J.W., & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Sage Publications.

D'Amico, D., Pawlewicz, R. J., Earley, P. M., & McGeehan, A. P. (2017). Where are all the Black teachers? Discrimination in the teacher labor market. *Harvard Educational Review*, *87*(1), 26-49. Retrieved from https://cmepr.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Where-Are-All-the-Black-Teachers.pdf

Danns, D. (2003). *Something better for our children: Black organizing in Chicago public schools, 1963-1971.*Routledge.

Danns, D. (2014). Faculty desegregation, 1969-1981. In *Desegregating Chicago's public schools: Policy implementation, politics, and protest, 1965-1985*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Danns, D., & Span, C.M. (2008). History of schooling. In T. L. Good (Ed.), *21st century education: A reference handbook* (Vol. 1, pp. 265-273). SAGE Publications, Inc.

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

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. NYU Press.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. NYU Press.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* Sage Publications.

Desmond, M., & Emirbayer, M. (2010). *Racial domination, racial progress: The Sociology of race in America*. McGraw-Hill.

Dimartino, C., & Jessen., S.B. (2018). *Selling School: The Marketing of Public Education*. Teachers College Press.

Douglass, D.M. (2005). J*im Crow moves North: The Battle over Northern school segregation, 1865-1954*. Cambridge University Press.

Dumas, M.J. (2011). A culturally political economy of school desegregation in Seattle. *Teachers College Record, 113*(4), 703-734. DOI:10.1177/016146811111300402

Duneier, M. (2016). *Ghetto: The Intervention of a place, the history of an idea.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Dworkin, R. (1980). *Taking rights seriously.* Harvard University Press.

Erickson, A. T., & Morrell, E. (Eds.) (2019). *Educating Harlem: A century of schooling and resistance in a Black community*. Columbia University Press.

Fairclough, A. (2001). *Teaching equality: Black schools in the age of Jim Crow.* University of Georgia Press.

Fairclough, A. (2006). The cost of *Brown*: Black teachers and school integration. *The Journal of American History, 91*(1), 1-12. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3659612

Fairclough, A. (2007). *A Class of their own: Black teachers in the segregated South*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Finlay, L. (2008). Reflecting on 'reflective practice'. *Practice-Based Professional Learning.* The Open University. Retrieved from https://oro.open.ac.uk/68945/1/Finlay-%282008%29-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf

Formisano, R.P. (1991). *Boston against busing: Race, class, and ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s.* The University of North Carolina Press.

Foster, M. (1990). The politics of race: Through the eyes of African American teachers. *Journal of Education, 172*(3), 123-141. https://doi.org/10.1177/002205749017200309

Foster, M. (1997). *Black teachers on teaching.* The New Press.

Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage.

Freidus, A. (2019). “A great school benefits us all”: Advantaged parents and the gentrification of an urban public school. *Urban Education, 54*(8), 1121-1148–843.

Friedman, M. (1955). The role of government in education. In R. A. Solo (Ed.), *Economics and the public interest* (pp. 123-144). Rutgers University Press.

Fultz, M. (1995). Teacher training and African American education in the South, 1900-1940. *The Journal of Negro Education, 64*(2), 196-210. https://doi.org/10.2307/2967242

Fultz, M. (2008). “As is the teacher, so is the school”: Future directions in the historiography of African American teachers. In W. J. Reese & J.L.Rury (Eds.), *Rethinking the history of American education* (pp. 73-102). Palgrave Macmillan.

Gasman, M., Samayoa, C., & Ginsberg, A. (2017). Minority serving institutions: Incubators for teachers of color. *The Teacher Educator, 52*(2), 84-98. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2017.1294923

Gay, G. (2018).*Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* Teachers College Press.

Giridharadas, B. (2018) *Winners take all: The Elite charade of changing the world.* Knopf.

Given, J. (2021). *Fugitive pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the art of Black teaching.* Harvard University Press.

Glaude Jr., E. S. (2017). *Democracy in Black: How race enslaves the American soul*. Penguin Random House LLC.

Goodwin, A. L., Roegman, R., & Reagan, E.M. (2015). Is Experience the best teacher? Extensive clinical practice and mentor teachers' perspectives on effective teaching. *Journal of Urban Education, 51*(10), 1198-1225. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915618720

Guarino, C., Santibañez, L., & Daley, G.A. (2006) Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(2), 173-208. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3700588

Green, P., Baker, B., & Oluwole, J. (2008). Achieving racial equal educational opportunity through school finance litigation. *Stanford Journal for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, 4*, 283-338. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2389428

Hackworth, J., & Smith, N. (2001). The Changing state of gentrification. *Journal of Economic and Human Geography, 92(*4), 464-477.

Hall, J. N. (2020). *Focus Groups: Culturally Responsive Approaches for Qualitative Inquiry and Program Evaluation*. Myers Education Press.

Haney, J. (1978). The effects of the *Brown* decision on Black educators. *The Journal of Negro Education, 47*, 88-95. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2967104

Hart, C. M. D. (2020). An honors teacher like me: Effects of access to same-race teachers on Black students' advanced-track enrollment and performance. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 42*(2), 163-187. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373719898470

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2006). *Spaces of global capitalism: Towards a theory of uneven geographical development*. New Press.

Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution.* Verso Books.

Heineke, A. J., Mazza, B., & Tichnor-Wagner, A. (2014). After the two-year commitment: A Quantitative and qualitative inquiry of Teach for America teacher retention and attrition. *Urban Education*, *49*(7), 750–782. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085913488603

Holmes, M. J. & Hudson, B. J. (1994). Missing teachers, impaired communities: The Unanticipated consequences of *Brown v. Board of Education* on the African American teaching force at the precollegiate level. *Journal of Negro, 63*(3), 388-393. https://doi.org/10.2307/2967189

Ingersoll, R.M. & May, H. (2011). *Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage.* Consortium for Policy Research in Education. https://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/researchreport/1221_minorityteachershortagereportrr69septfinal.pdf

Israel, B.A., Eng, E., Schulz, A.J., & Parker, E.A. (2013). *Methods for community-based particiaptory research for health.* John Wiley & Sons.

Jang, S. T., & Horn, A. S. (2017). *The Relative effectiveness of traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs: A Review of recent research.* Midwestern Higher Education Compact. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED587431.pdf

Kirk, J. A. (2009). The NAACP campaign for teachers' salary equalization: African American women educators and the early Civil Rights struggle. *The Journal of African American History, 94*(4), 529-552. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25653977

Klein, N. (2007). *The Shock doctrine: The Rise of disaster capitalism.* Picador.

Kluger, R. (2004). *Simple justice: The History of Brown v Board of Education and Black America's struggle for equality*. Vintage Books.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491. https://doi.org/10.2307/1163320

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp.1-11). Routledge.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). Landing on the Wrong Note: The Price we Paid for Brown. *Educational Researcher, 33*(7), 3-13. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3700092

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). Its Not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture: The Problem with teacher education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly 37*(2): 104-19. DOI:10.1525/aeq.2006.37.2.104

Ladson-Billings, G. (2013). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Review, 83*(1), 74-84. Retrieved from https://www.teachingworks.org/images/files/CRP_remix_HER.pdf

Ladson-Billings, G. (2017). The (R) Evolution will not be standardized: Teacher education, hip hop pedagogy, and culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0. In D. Paris & H.S. Alim (Eds),

Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world (pp. 141-156).

Lash, M., & Ratcliffe, M. (2014). The Journey of an African American teacher before and after *Brown v. Board of Education*. *The Journal of Negro Education, 83*(3), 327-337. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.83.3.0327

Lemann, N. (1991) *The promised land: The great Black migration and how it changed America.* Vintage Books.

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

Lewis, P. (2016). *Teaching while Black: A New voice on race and education in New York City.* Empire State Editions.

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

Lipman, P. (2017). The landscape of education “refrom” in Chicago: Neoliberalism meets a grassroots movement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 25*(54), 1-32. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.25.2660.

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

Lynch, K. (2014). New Managerilaism: The Impact on education. The Journal of Contemporary Community Education Practice Theory, 5(3), 1-11. http://concept.lib.ed.ac.uk/article/view/2421

Lynn, M. (2002). Critical race theory and the perspectives of Black men teachers in the Los Angeles public schools. *Equty & Excellence in Education, 35*(2), 119-130. DOI:10.1080/713845287

McDougal III, S. (2014). *Research Methods in Africana Studies.* International Academic Publishers.

McLaren, P. (2007). *Life in schools: An Introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education.* Pearson Education, Inc.

Mertens, D.M. (2018). *Research and evaluation in education and psycholgy: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.* Sage Publications.

Miller Sr, R.R. (2018). Valuing critical thinking and relationships over compliance. In D.A. Santoro & L.Cain (Eds), *Principled resistance: How Teachers resolve ethical dilemmas* (pp.53-67). Harvard Education Press.

Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: Social justice and the fight for public space*. Guilford Press.

Morris, E.W. (2016). Pushout: *The Criminalization of Black girls in schools.* The New Press.

Moskowitz, P. (2017). *How to kill a city: Gentrification, inequality, and the fight for the neighborhood.* Nation Books.

Müller-Armack. (2006). The Social market economy as an economic and social order. Review of Social Economy, 36(3), 325-333. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1583412

Newman, K., & Wyly, E. (2006). The right to stay put, revisited: Gentrification and resistance to displacement in New York City. *Urban Studies, 43*(1), 23-57.

New York City Charter Schools. (n.d.) Charter Enrollment Trends. Retrieved from https://schools.nyccharterschools.org/sites/default/files/resources/Charter-Enrollment-Trends.pdf

Nieto, S. (2009). *Why we teach now.* Teachers College Press.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 1-13.

Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2016). The state of racial diversity in the education workforce. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf.

Orfeild, G., & Eaton, S.E. (1996). *Dismantling desegregation: The Quiet reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*. The New Press.

Paris, D., & Alim, H.S. (Eds). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world.* Teachers College Press.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Petchauer, E. (2012). Teacher licensure exams and Black teacher candidates: Toward new theory and promising practice. *Journal of Negro, 81*(3), 252-267. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.81.3.0252

Podair, J.E. (2018) *The Strike that changed New York: Blacks, whites and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville crisis.* Yale University Press.

Posey-Maddox, L. (2014). *When middle-class parents choose urban schools: Class, race & the challegne of equity in public education*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Ramsey, S. (2008). *Reading, writing and segregation: A Century of Black women teachers in Nashville.* University of Illinois Press.

Research Spotlight on Alternative Routes To Teacher Certification: NEA Reviews of the Research on Best Practices in Education. Retrieved from http://www.nea.org/tools/16578.htm.

Rickford, R. (2016). *We are African people*: *Independent education, black power, and the radical imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Rogers, B. L., & White. T.C. (2019). Teaching Harlem: Black teachers and the changing educational landscape of twenty-first-century central Harlem. In A.T.Erickson & E. Morrell (Eds.), *Educating Harlem: A century of schooling and resistance in a Black community* (pp.298-327). Columbia University Press.

Rothstein, R. (2004). *Class and schools: Using social, economic, and educational reform to close the Black-white achievement gap*. Teachers College Press.

Rushek, K. A. (2017). The global education reform movement and its effect on the local African American community. *Diaspora Indigenous and Minority Education, 11*(3), 139-147. doi: 10.1080/15595692.2016.1219848

Sacks, P. (1999). *Standardized minds: The high price of America's testing culture and what we can do to change it*. Perseus Books.

Sanders, R., Stovall, D., & White, T. (2018). *Jim Crow schools: The Impact of charters on public education*. Beacon Press.

Santoro, D.A. (2018). *Why teachers leave the profession they love and how they can stay.* Harvard Education Press.

Sassen, S. (2001). The global city: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton University Press.

Scott, J., & Holme., J.J. (2016). The political economy of market-based educational policies: Race and reform in urban school districts, 1915 to 2016. *Review of Research in Education, 40*, 250-297. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16681

Siddle Walker, V. (1993). Interpersonal caring in the good segregated schooling of African-American children: Evidence from the case of Casewell County Training School. *The Urban Review, 25*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01108046

Siddle Walker, V. (1996). *Their highest potential: An African American school community in the segregated South*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Siddle Walker, V. (2000). Valued segregated schools for African American children in the South, 1935-1969: A review of common themes and characteristics. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(3), 253-285. https://doi.org/10.2307/1170784

Siddle Walker, V. (2001). African American teaching in the South: 1940-1960. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(4). https://www.jstor.org/stable/3202502.

Siddle Walker, V. (2013). *Hello Professor: A Black principal and professioanl leadership in the segregated South*. University of North Carolina Press.

Siddle Walker, V. (2018). *The lost education of Horace Tate: Uncovering the hidden heroes who fought for justice in schools.* The New Press.

Skiba, R.J., Arredondo, M.I., & Williams, N.T. (2014). More than a metaphor: The Contribution of exclusionary disciplinary discipline to a "school-to-prison pipeline." *Equity & Excellence in Education, 44*(4), 546-564. Retrieved from https://research-ebsco-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/c/pejgdu/viewer/html/7gxsmqc5nf

Smith, N. (2002). New globalism, new urbanism: Gentrification as global urban strategy. *Antipode, 34*(3), 427-450.

Solórzano, D.G., & Yosso, T.J. (2002). A Critical race counterstory of race, racism, and affirmative action. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 38*(2), 103-119. DOI:10.1080/713845284

Somers, M. (2008). Genealogies of citizenship: Markets, statelessness and the right to have rights. *Socio-economic Review, 9*(2). https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwr001.

Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2017). A Coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S. Learning Policy Institute.

Stiglitz, J. (2013). *The Price of Inequality: How Today's divided society endangers our future.* W.W. Norton & Company.

Taylor, C. (1997). *Knocking at our own door: Milton A. Galamison and the struggle to integrate New York City schools.* Columbia University Press.

Taylor, E. (2016). The Foundations of critical race theory in education: An Introduction. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp.1-11). Routledge.

Thompson, A., & Pease-Alvarez, L. (2018). In D.A. Santoro & L.Cain (Eds), *Principled resistance: How Teachers resolve ethical dilemmas* (pp.53-67). Harvard Education Press.

Tillman, L. C. (2004). (Un)Intended consequences? The Impact of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision on the employment status of Black educators. *Education and Urban Society, 36*(3), 280-303. doi:10.1177/0013124504264360

Todd-Breland, E. (2018). *A political education: Black politics and education reform in Chicago since the 1960s*. University of North Carolina Press.

Tushnet, M. V. (1994). *Making Civil Rights law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court. 1936-1961*. Oxford University Press.

Villegas. A., & Irvine, J.J. (2010). Diversifying the teacher force: An Examination of major arguments. *The Urban Review, 42*(3), 175-192. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0150-1

Villegas, A., Strom, K., & Lucas, T. (2012). Closing the racial/ethnic gap between students of color and their teachers: An elusive goal. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(2), pp.283-301.

Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An Exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research*, *16*(4), 547–559. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1177/1049732305285972

Weeda, J. (2018). Personal or Professional? In D.A. Santoro & L.Cain (Eds), *Principled resistance: How Teachers resolve ethical dilemmas* (pp.53-67). Harvard Education Press.

White, T. (2016). Teach for America's paradoxical diversity initiative: Race, policy, and Black teacher displacement in urban public schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 24*(16), 1-42. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.24.2100

Whitford, D. K., Zhang, D., & Katsiyannis, A. (2019). Academic Achievement of Students Taught by Teachers from Differing Preparation Programs. In C.A. Lubienski & T.J. Brewer, *Learning to teach in an era of privatization: Global trends in teacher preparation.* (213-227). Teachers College Press.

Whitman, K. (2016). Students on the margins-margins: A Critical examination of research on African American foster youth in higher education. *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals, 4*(1), 47-54. Retrieved from https://journals.charlotte.edu/urbaned/article/view/449

Wilkerson, I. (2010). *The warmth of other suns: The epic story of America's great migration.* Random House.

Williams, H. A. (2005). We are laboring under many difficulties: African American teachers in freedpeople's schools. In *Self-taught: African American education in slavery and freedom*: The University of North Carolina Press.

Wright, E.O. (2019). *How to be an Anticapitalist in the twenty-first century.* Verso.

Wright, E.O., & Rogers, J. (2015). *American society: How it really works*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Zukin, D. (1995). *The Cultures of cities.* Blackwell.

Zukin, S. (2010). *Naked city: The death and life of authentic urban places*. Oxford University Press.

Appendices

Appendix A

PROTOCOLS Hawkins, Jasmine

APPROVAL LETTER

To: Danns, Dionne

Protocol #: 15147

Protocol Title: THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Type of Submission: Amendment

Level of Review: Exempt

Approval Date: Thursday, October 6th 2022

Expiration Date: no date provided

**If Expiration Date = "No date provided," this research does not require annual renewal; thus there is no expiration date.*

The Indiana University HRPP approved the above-referenced submission. Conduct of this study is subject to the IU HRPP Policies, as applicable.

Additional Notes:

Amendment A002

This research is exempt under the following category:

-Category 2(ii)

Documents approved with this submission:

Attachments

Data Collection Instrument	Black Teachers in NYC Survey 6.1.22.docx
Study Information Sheet	Information Sheet 2022 Dissertation 6.1.22.docx
Recruitment Materials	Email of Interest 2022.docx
Recruitment Materials	Black Teachers NYC Recruit W.pdf
Recruitment Materials	Black Teachers NYC Recruit M.pdf
Protocol	Interview Protocol Questions 5.18.22.docx

PROTOCOLS Hawkins, Jasmine

APPROVAL LETTER

To: Danns, Dionne

Protocol #: 15147

Protocol Title: THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Type of Submission: Amendment

Level of Review: Exempt

Approval Date: Thursday, October 6th 2022

Expiration Date: no date provided

**If Expiration Date = "No date provided," this research does not require annual renewal; thus there is no expiration date.*

The Indiana University HRPP approved the above-referenced submission. Conduct of this study is subject to the IU HRPP Policies, as applicable.

Additional Notes:

Amendment A002

This research is exempt under the following category:

-Category 2(ii)

Documents approved with this submission:

Attachments

Data Collection Instrument	Black Teachers in NYC Survey 6.1.22.docx
Study Information Sheet	Information Sheet 2022 Dissertation 6.1.22.docx
Recruitment Materials	Email of Interest 2022.docx
Recruitment Materials	Black Teachers NYC Recruit W.pdf
Recruitment Materials	Black Teachers NYC Recruit M.pdf
Protocol	Interview Protocol Questions 5.18.22.docx

Appendix B

INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH

THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY
IRB #15147

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH
You are being asked to participate in a research study. Social scientists do research to answer important questions that might help change or improve the way we do things in the future. This document form will give you information about the study to help you decide whether you want to participate. Please read this form, and ask any questions you have, before agreeing to be in the study.

TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY
All research is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or may choose to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate, or deciding to leave the study later, will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled and will not affect your relationship with Indiana University the research team.

This research is intended for individual 18 years of age or older. If you are under age 18, do not complete the survey.

This research is for residents of the United States. If you are not a U.S. resident, do not complete the survey.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?
This study seeks to explore the Black teacher experience in New York City. This study looks to understand their experiences by capturing the impact of urban policy in urban communities and schools in New York City. Furthermore, this study is interested in exploring if Black teachers still use education as a necessary means to fight against policies that do not align with the needs of their students.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you were identified as a current or former Black New York City teacher.

The study is being conducted by Jasmine N. Hawkins at Indiana University in the Educational Leadership & Policy Studies Department.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE STUDY?
If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things:

- Complete a brief electronic questionnaire providing demographic information and responses to questions regarding your racial identity, employment status, name of school currently or previously worked at, years you have worked as a NYC school teacher, borough where you've taught, type of school (public, charter, private), contact (email).

- If you are eligible, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, via Zoom. The total duration of the interview is contingent upon the flow of conversation and willingness to continue.
- Review the transcript of the interview for accuracy via an optional 30-minute follow-up Zoom meeting.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

While participating in this study you may be uncomfortable while answering the survey and/or interview questions. While completing the survey and taking part in the semi-structured interview you can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer.

There is a risk someone outside the study team could get access to your research information from this study. Given this, I will be the only person who has access to the information gathered in this study. All confidential information will be password protected and saved to an external hard drive.

I do not anticipate that these risks will be greater than what can be expected in everyday life.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

We do not expect that you will receive any personal benefits from taking part in this study; however, I hope the study will allow you to share your experience and raise awareness about Black teachers' experiences across New York City.

HOW WILL MY INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

I will make every effort to keep your personal information confidential, but I cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. No information which could identify you will be shared in publications about this study. The only individuals who will have access to this information will be members of the research team who have completed training on the ethical execution of research and have been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Indiana University.

Your personal information may be shared outside the research study if required by law. We also may need to share your research records with other groups for quality assurance or data analysis. These groups include the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and state or federal agencies who may need to access the research records (as allowed by law).

The interviews will be audio-video recorded for transcription purposes. Prior to recording, you will be asked to use a pseudonym of your choosing. Researchers will only refer to you using this name. Video and audio recordings of the interview will be transcribed under your chosen pseudonym, so the information cannot be traced back to you directly. Direct quotes may be shared during publication, but the pseudonym will be used to ensure confidentiality.

WILL MY INFORMATION BE USED FOR RESEARCH IN THE FUTURE?

Information collected in this study may be used for other research studies or shared with other researchers for future research. If this happens, information that could identify you, such as your name and other identifiers, will be removed before any information is shared. Since identifying information will be removed, we will not ask for your additional consent.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATION?

Following the conducted interviewed, you will be reimbursed for your time with one $25 Amazon Gift Card sent to the email address that you provide.

There is no cost to participate in the study.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

If you have questions about the study or encounter a problem with the research, contact the researcher, Jasmine N. Hawkins, at jasnhawk@iu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information or to offer input, please contact the IU Human Research Protection Program office at 800-696-2949 or at irb@iu.edu.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

If you decide to participate in this study, you can change your mind and end the interview and your participation at any time. If you decide to withdraw, you can do so by telling the researcher you no longer wish to participate.

Subject's Printed Name:____

Subject's Signature:___________________________________Date:____________

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent:____________________________________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:_________________________Date:__________

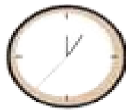
Appendix C

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

Researchers at Indiana University are seeking participants for a study on the experiences of Black teachers in New York City

Participation in this study includes:

- **1 interview**



Eligible Participants:

- Self-identify as Black
- Experience teaching in NYC K-12 schools

$25 GIFT CARD COMPENSATION

Interested in participating?

- Follow this link to learn more and see if you are eligible: https://tinyurl.com/BlackTeachNYC
- Contact Jasmine Hawkins at jasmhawk@iu.edu

Study approved by Indiana University Institutional Review Board (IRB #15147)

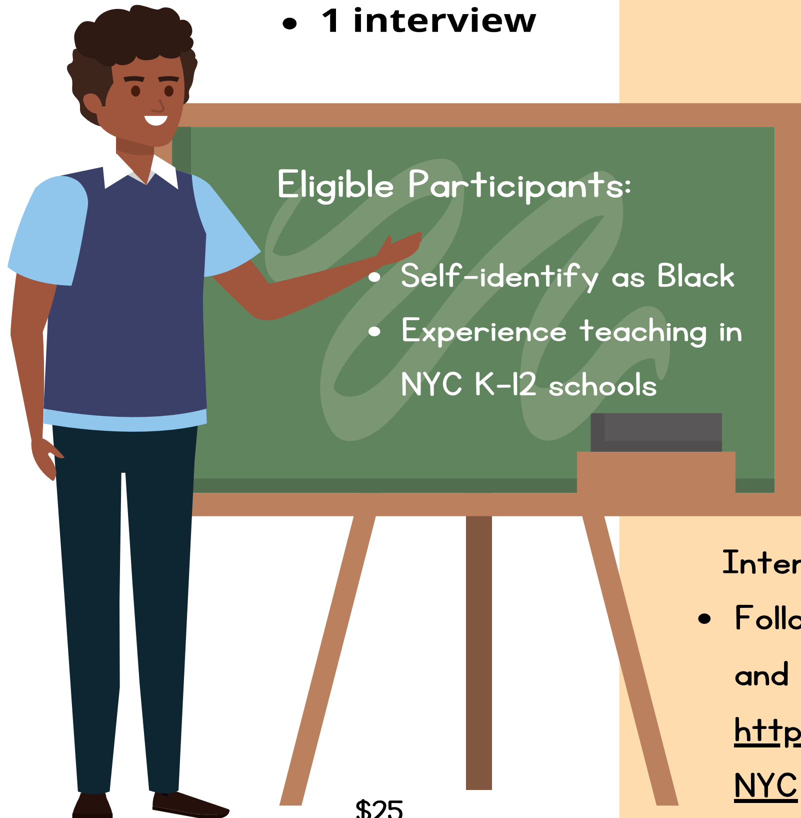
Appendix D

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

Researchers at Indiana University are seeking participants for a study on the experiences of Black teachers in New York City

Participation in this study includes:

- **1 interview**



$25
GIFT CARD
COMPENSATION!

Interested in participating?

- Follow this link to learn more and see if you are eligible: https://tinyurl.com/BlackTeachNYC
- Contact Jasmine Hawkins at jasnhawk@iu.edu

Study approved by Indiana University Institutional Review Board (IRB #15147)

Appendix E

Black Teachers in New York City

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q2 What is your racial identity

- ◯ Black or African American (1)
- ◯ white (2)
- ◯ Native American (3)
- ◯ Asian (4)
- ◯ Mixed Race (specify): (5) ____

Q3 Are you currently employed as a New York City teacher?

- ◯ No (1)
- ◯ Yes (2)

Skip To: Q3 If Are you currently employed as a New York City teacher? = Yes
Skip To: Q14 If Are you currently employed as a New York City teacher? = No

---

Q3 How long have you been employed as a New York City teacher?

____

Display This Question:
If Are you currently employed as a New York City teacher? = No

Page 1 of 4

Q14 Have you previously been employed as a New York City teacher?

○ No (1)

○ Yes (2)

Skip To: Q15 If Have you previously been employed as a New York City teacher? = Yes
Skip To: Q16 If Have you previously been employed as a New York City teacher? = No

Display This Question:
If Have you previously been employed as a New York City teacher? = Yes

Q15 Was your employment between the years 2015-2022?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Skip To: Q16 If Was your employment between the years 2015-2022? = No

Display This Question:
If Have you previously been employed as a New York City teacher? = Yes
And Was your employment between the years 2015-2022? = No
Or Have you previously been employed as a New York City teacher? = No

Q16 Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. Based on your responses you are not eligible to participate.

Skip To: End of Survey If Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. Based on your responses you... Is Displayed

Page Break

Q4 Select all the boroughs you have taught in

- ☐ The Bronx (1)
- ☐ Brooklyn (2)
- ☐ Manhattan (3)
- ☐ Queens (4)
- ☐ Staten Island (5)

Q5 What are the names of the schools you have previously taught at? (input N/A if you've only taught in 1 school)

- ○ School 1 (1) ____
- ○ School 2 (2) ____
- ○ School 3 (3) ____
- ○ School 4 (4) ____
- ○ School 5 (5) ____

Q6 Where do you currently work? (Name and location)

____

Q7 If you are working in a school, what is your current role?

- ☐ Teacher (1)
- ☐ Instructional Coach (2)
- ☐ Dean of Students (3)
- ☐ Administrator (4)
- ☐ Counselor (5)
- ☐ Testing Coordinator (6)
- ☐ Union Representative (7)

Q8 If you are working in a school, is it a public, charter or private school?

- ○ Charter School (1)
- ○ Private School (2)
- ○ Public School (3)

Q19 Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. Based on your responses you are eligible to participate. Please share your email address to confirm that you'd like to be contacted to participate in the interview. I will also use this email to send your electronic gift card upon completion.

____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix F

THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Question 1: What is the Black teacher experience in New York City in the 21st century?

Question 2: What are the historical, social, economic, and political impacts on the Black teacher experience in New York City?

Question 3: How does the evolving political economy in New York City impact Black teachers' motivation to teach in urban communities?

Question 4: How do Black teachers in New York City define liberation?

Part I

Intention: Exploring Black Teachers School/Teaching Experience

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
   a. Why did you choose NYC?
2. Thinking about your educative journey to becoming a teacher, in what ways were you or were you not adequately prepared to teach in NYC?
3. What influenced your decision to work at a charter, public or private school?
4. How would you describe your experience as a black teacher in NYC schools?
5. Given your overall teaching experience/career, why have you remained a teacher?
   a. Or why are you no longer in an official teacher role?
6. How important is it to have Black teachers in an urban school setting?
7. Are there any school-related policies (national-local) you disagree with?
   a. How do these policies impact your students?
8. How involved are you in the community in which you teach in?

Part II

Intention: Exploring and understanding Black Teacher's Living Experiences

1. As a NYC teacher, how did you go about navigating housing decisions?
2. What factors impact or have impacted the communities you sought/seek to live in?
3. As a New York resident, if you had your choice, with no barriers, where would you ideally want to live?
   a. What would be the ideal demographic make up (race, class, gender, occupation, etc)?
4. How would you describe your experience as a NYC resident or as a Black NYC resident?
5. How involved are you in the community in which you live in?
6. Would you consider yourself thriving or surviving as a New York City resident?

a. What does it mean to thrive as a NY/NY adjacent resident?

Part III

Intention: Understanding Black Teachers Thoughts and Feelings Towards Neoliberal Policies

1. What are your thoughts on gentrification in Black and Brown communities?
   a. Has this impacted your living or intent to live in NYC experience?
2. What are your thoughts on charter schools?
3. What are your thoughts on alternative pathways to teaching?
4. What are your thoughts on using state test as an accountability measure?
5. What are your thoughts on state teaching certification test?

Part IV

Intention: Exploring Black Teachers Understandings of Liberation, Emancipation, Freedom

1. What is the role of education for Black communities?
2. How do you define Black education?
   a. Is it something you incorporate into your learning spaces?
3. When you hear these words what thoughts or feelings come to mind?
   a. Liberation
   b. Freedom
   c. emancipation
4. How do you connect one, two, or all of these words to your role as a Black teacher?
5. In thinking about schools, the teaching profession, Black and Brown communities, the communities you live in, gentrification, race in America, and society at large, what does change look like to you?
   a. Participants can answer this question however they like.

Part V

Intention: Interview Wrap Up

1. Is there anything you would like to clarify of the things you have shared?
2. Is there anything not asked that you would like to share?
3. What feedback do you have for the questions asked today?
4. Finish the sentence. Dear Black Teacher:

Appendix G

THRIVING OR SURVIVING IN NEW YORK CITY: THE BLACK TEACHER EXPERIENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Question 1: What is the Black teacher experience in New York City in the 21st century?

Question 2: What are the historical, social, economic, and political impacts on the Black teacher experience in New York City?

Question 3: How does the evolving political economy in New York City impact Black teachers' motivation to teach in urban communities?

Question 4: How do Black teachers in New York City define liberation?

Part I

Intention: Exploring Black Teachers School/Teaching Experience

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
    a. Why did you choose NYC?
2. Thinking about your educative journey to becoming a teacher, in what ways were you or were you not adequately prepared to teach in NYC?
3. What influenced your decision to work at a charter, public or private school?
4. How would you describe your experience as a black teacher in NYC schools?
5. Given your overall teaching experience/career, why have you remained a teacher?
    a. Or why are you no longer in an official teacher role?
6. How important is it to have Black teachers in an urban school setting?
7. Are there any school-related policies (national-local) you disagree with?
    a. How do these policies impact your students?
8. How involved are you in the community in which you teach in?

Part II

Intention: Exploring and understanding Black Teacher's Living Experiences

1. As a NYC teacher, how did you go about navigating housing decisions?
2. What factors impact or have impacted the communities you sought/seek to live in?
3. As a New York resident, if you had your choice, with no barriers, where would you ideally want to live?
    a. What would be the ideal demographic make up (race, class, gender, occupation, etc)?
4. How would you describe your experience as a NYC resident or as a Black NYC resident?
5. How involved are you in the community in which you live in?
6. Would you consider yourself thriving or surviving as a New York City resident?

a. What does it mean to thrive as a NY/NY adjacent resident?

Part III

Intention: Understanding Black Teachers Thoughts and Feelings Towards Neoliberal Policies

1. What are your thoughts on gentrification in Black and Brown communities?
    a. Has this impacted your living or intent to live in NYC experience?
2. What are your thoughts on charter schools?
3. What are your thoughts on alternative pathways to teaching?
4. What are your thoughts on using state test as an accountability measure?
5. What are your thoughts on state teaching certification test?

Part IV

Intention: Exploring Black Teachers Understandings of Liberation, Emancipation, Freedom

1. What is the role of education for Black communities?
2. How do you define Black education?
    a. Is it something you incorporate into your learning spaces?
3. When you hear these words what thoughts or feelings come to mind?
    a. Liberation
    b. Freedom
    c. emancipation
4. How do you connect one, two, or all of these words to your role as a Black teacher?
5. In thinking about schools, the teaching profession, Black and Brown communities, the communities you live in, gentrification, race in America, and society at large, what does change look like to you?
    a. Participants can answer this question however they like.

Part V

Intention: Interview Wrap Up

1. Is there anything you would like to clarify of the things you have shared?
2. Is there anything not asked that you would like to share?
3. What feedback do you have for the questions asked today?

Appendix H

Black NYC Teachers Code Book

TOPIC CODE: Neoliberalism as complexity in urban spaces

Code Name	Preparation
Code Description	As participants reflect on what it means to have well-prepared teachers in urban classrooms, these responses are reflective of contradictory and/or complicated thoughts perhaps exacerbated through neoliberalism.
Example Excerpt	
Child Codes	• **Alternative preparation programs:** • **Traditional educational programs**

Code Name	Choice (in school)
Code Description	

Code Name	Surviving in a Neoliberal Economy

Code Name	Access to teaching certification/Experience with the test

TOPIC CODE: The Black teacher experience/We Want to do More Than Survive

Code Name	Representation Matters

Code Name	Connection/Relatability
Code Description	

Code Name	Lack of/Surface Community Involvement-Complex

Code Name	Thriving

Code Name	Surviving

Code Name	Perceptions of Leadership
Child Codes	White vs. Black Leadership

Code Name	Dear Black Teacher

Code Name	Contradiction/Complexity

Code Name	Authenticity Matters for Self and Students

TOPIC CODE: When the interest does not converge/Material determinism

Code Name	Democratic empowerment/power in urban communities

Code Name	Black Education
Child Code	Leadership

Code Name	Transformation

TOPIC CODE: Racism as a normal experience

Code Name	Testing

Code Name	Education in Black Communities/Black Education

Code Name	Role as a Black Educator

Code Name	Racial Capitalism through Gentrification

Code Name	Language

TOPIC CODE: Emancipation, Freedom, and Liberation

Code Name	Liberation

Code Name	Freedom

Code Name	Emancipation

JASMINE N. HAWKINS

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Educational Policy Studies, *Indiana University School of Education*, Bloomington, IN (2024)

M.S.T Adolescent Education 7-12, *State University of New York School*, Plattsburgh, NY (2012)

B.A Mathematics, *State University of New York School*, Plattsburgh, NY (2012)

S.A Urban Problems and Solutions, *University of Warsaw*, Warsaw, Poland (2022)

CERTIFICATION & LICENSURE

New York State Initial Certification in Adolescent Education in Mathematics (7-12)
February 2012

Education Law
Nov 2023

RESEARCH INTEREST

Social Foundations of Education ♦ Race and Education ♦ Critical Theories in Education ♦ Black Teachers ♦ Black Communities & Institutions in the U.S. ♦ Social Justice Education ♦ Cross-racial relationships between students and faculty

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

September 2021- Present — **Visiting Lecturer**, Framingham State University Department of Sociology & Criminology, Framingham, MA

September 2022-Present — **STEM Professional Affiliate for I CAN PERSIST (ICP),** Indiana University, UNC Chapel Hill, University of Massachusetts-Boston

August 2019-Spring 2023 — **University Supervisor/Graduate Assistant of Transition to Teaching Program,** Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington, IN

June 2019-August 2019 — **STEM Co-Instructor for Balfour's Scholar STEM Summer Academy,** Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington, IN

September 2015-July 2017 — **7th/8th Grade Math Teacher,** The Melrose School, Bronx, NY

September 2014-July 2015 — **7th/8th Grade Math Teacher,** Hyde Charter School, Bronx, NY

July 2013-June 2014 **7th/8th Grade Math Teacher,** Harlem Children Zone, Promise Academy I, New York, NY

December 2012-June 2013 **High School Algebra Teacher**, Urban Assembly for Media Studies, New York, NY

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Assistant Professor & Associate Instructor, ***Indiana University, School of Education***

Introduction to Educational Thought. (Fall 2018- Spring 2020; Fall 2022-Spring 2024)

Legal and Ethical Issues for Teachers. (Fall 2020 – Spring 2022; Fall 2023)

Visiting Lecturer, ***Framingham State University, Department of Sociology & Criminology***

Race and Ethnicity. (Spring 2023, Fall 2023).

Black Communities & Institutions. (Fall 2021, Summer 2022, Fall 2023).

Critical Race Theory. (Spring 2022, Fall 2022).

Sociology of Rap & Hip-Hop. (Fall 2022).

LGBTQ Communities in the U.S. (Fall 2021).

Adjunct Professor, ***Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, School of Education***

Critical Praxis for Elementary. (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)

Multicultural Education/Global Awareness. (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)

PUBLICATIONS

****PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES***

Hawkins, Jasmine, and Dionne Danns. (2022). “Jarvis R. Givens, Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching”. *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d’histoire De l’education* 34(2). https://doi.org/10.32316/hse-rhe.v34i2.5083.

****Papers in progress***

Hawkins, J. American racism in the 21st century: A CRT examination of neoliberalism

Hawkins, J. (2023). Awakening in the Sunken Place: How Black women educators thrive in carceral spaces.

Hawkins, J. & Elfreich, A. (2022, November). Honoring Relations in Educative Spaces: A Duoethnographic Study of Mentorship, Teaching, and Healing.

Hawkins, J. & White, Dionne. May I Ask, Is Systemic Change Really the Goal?

Non-Peer Reviewed

Hawkins, Jasmine. "As Black People, Here's Why We Must Invest in Ourselves, Together." *Blavity: News*, 2 Dec. 2020. Op- ed, https://blavity.com/as-black-people-heres-why-we-must-invest-in-ourselves- together?category1=opinion.

Hawkins, Jasmine. "Between the world, you and me: why solely voting just won't cut it anymore." *Indiana Daily Student: Black Voices*, 15 Oct 2020. Op-ed, https://www.idsnews.com/article/2020/10/black-voices-between-the- world-you-and-me- why-solely-voting-just-wont-cut-it-anymore-election-2020.

Hawkins, Jasmine. "Black teachers deserve more recognition." *Indiana Daily Student: Black Voices*, 22 Sept 2020. Op-ed, https://www.idsnews.com/article/2020/09/black-voices-black-teachers-deserve-more-recogniton.

Hawkins, Jasmine. "Society is overly critical of Kamala Harris due to her race and gender." *Indiana Daily Student: Black Voices,* 1 Sept 2020. Op-ed, https://www.idsnews.com/article/2020/08/kamala-harris-race- gender-vice-president.

PRESENTATIONS

Hawkins, J. (Fall 2023). May I Ask, Is Systenic Change Really the Goal? Workshop Presentation for the School of Education.

Hawkins, J. (2023, April). Thriving or Surviving in New York City: The Black Teacher Experience in the 21st Century. Panel session for the Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society (CRRES), Bloomington, IN.

Hawkins, J. & Elfreich, A. (2023, April). Honoring Relations through Curricular Co-Creation: A Duoethnographic Study of Mentorship, Teaching, and Healing. Paper accepted at American Educational Research Association (AERA), Chicago, IL.

Hawkins, J. & Elfreich, A. (2022, October). Culturally Responsive Supervision in an Alternative Licensure Program in Rural Indiana. Presentation at Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS), Indianapolis, IN.

Hawkins, J. & Elfreich, A. (2022, November). Honoring Relations in Educative Spaces: A Duoethnographic Study of Mentorship, Teaching, and Healing. Paper accepted at American Educational Studies Association (AESA), Pittsburgh, PA.

Hawkins, J. (2021, November). *Black Solidarity and the Classroom: Should Black Educators be Responsible for Delivering a Liberatory Curriculum?* Paper presented at the American Educational Studies Association (AESA), Portland, OR.

Hawkins, J. (2020, October). *An Ode to Our Superheroes: Why Black Teachers Deserve to be Seen in Education Policy.* Paper presented at the Black Doctoral Network Annual Conference (BDN), Atlanta, GA (via Zoom).

Hawkins, J. (2019, November). *Why a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification Should be Considered in Education*. Poster presented at the Education Law Association Annual Conference (ELA), Norfolk, VA.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Research/Data Assistant. Historical Foundation of Education. Active Research project. Searched, captured, and synthesized literature related to desegregation in Northern cities. (2021-2021).

Focus Group Facilitator. Counseling & Educational Psychology Department. Led focus groups with diverse populations of students to understand their experiences within their school community. (2021-2021).

Transcriber. Counseling & Educational Psychology Department. Transcribed 90-minute-long interviews for a project focused on students of color experiences. (2021-2021).

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

Future Faculty Teaching Fellowship, University Graduate School, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2022-Spring 2023).

Achasa Beechler Dissertation Proposal Fellowship, Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington, IN. (Spring 2022).

Malloy Travel Fund, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2019 & Fall 2022).

Faculty Doctoral Fellowship, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2018-Spring 2021).

Profitt Fellowship, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2017-Spring 2018).

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Nominated. Lieber Memorial Teaching Award. (2023-2024).

Awarded. Outstanding Associated Instructor of the year. (2021-2022).

Neal Marshall Black Culture Center Hall of Famer Inductee. (May 2023).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

National

Academics Committee Liason, Association of Black Culture Centers (ABCC) Conference. (2023).

Annual Meeting Proposal Reviewer, Critical Race Studies in Education. (2022).

Media Co-Creator, Black Doctoral Network. (March 2021-August 2021).

University

Volunteer, Neal Marshall Black Culture Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2021-Present).

Book Club Facilitator, Neal Marshall Black Cultural Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. (Spring 2022-Present).

School of Education Representative, Dean's Graduate Student Advisory Board, Indiana Univeristy, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2022-Current).

Panelist, Cultivating Genius Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington IN. (March 2023).

Graduate Student Association President, Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington, IN. (Fall 2022- Spring 2023).

School of Education

DEI Workshop, *May I Ask, Is Systemic Change Really the Goal*. The School of Education Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. (Fall 2023).

Member of Committee on Teacher Education, Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington, IN. (May-2019-May 2020).

Graduate Student Association Treasurer, Indiana University School of Education, Bloomington, IN. (May 2019- May 2020).

Community

Indiana Coalition for Public Education, Bloomington, IN**.** (Spring 2018- Fall 2019).

Inaugural Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee, The Melrose School, Bronx, NY. (Fall 2015-Spring 2017).

PROFESSIONAL AFFLIATIONS

Member, American Education Research Association (AERA)

Member, *American Educational Studies (AESA)*

Member, Education Law Association

Member, Association of Black Culture Centers

Member, Black Doctoral Network

Chapter Advisor, Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority, Inc.

Lifetime Member, Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honors Society