

California State University, Northridge

Dignity's Elements: Mexican American Studies' Transformational Resistance and Hip
Hop Manifestations through Counterstorytelling

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By

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Dedication

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ABSTRACT

Dignity's Elements: Mexican American Studies' Transformational Resistance and Hip Hop Manifestations through Chicana/o Counterstorytelling

by

Bryant Partida

Master of Arts in Chicana and Chicano Studies

Despite historical neglect and exclusion of Chicanas/os, Mexicans, and Latinas/os in the educational system, the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in Tucson, Arizona debunked deficit perspectives of urban students of color. According to Jeff Bigger's (2012), after a 12 year run that resulted in narrowing the achievement gap of more than 60 percent of Mexican American youth, Arizona's conservative right began to hone in on the program as a part of its anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican crusade. In Spring of 2010, the Arizona State Legislature passed House Bill 2281 or other wise known as the Ant-Ethnic Studies Bill. The bill was aimed at dismantling the only prior existing K-12 Ethnic Studies program in the nation. A veil of ignorance and fear as Acuña (2011) describes perpetuated anti-(im)migrant/Mexican sentiment that would fuel a historical attack against Chicana/o Studies in Arizona and nationwide. This veil dominates the political rhetoric in Arizona that was conveyed in the language of HB 2281 as majoritarian story of the MAS program. Tom Horne along with other proponents of dismantling MAS argued that the program promoted the overthrow of government, denigration of American values, and taught students to resent people of other races. They failed to acknowledge the positive impacts that MAS's Critically Compassionate Intellectualism (CCI) model had in the lives of students in and out of the classroom. This research is focused in

highlighting the counterstories of four MAS alumni through a critical ethnography to demystify the majoritarian narrative attack against Ethnic Studies in Arizona. The counterstories are engaged to identify how MAS's CCI model developed transformational resistance through engaging a critique of oppression and motivation for social justice. The research also draws alumni Hip Hop to find correlations between the CCI model of MAS.

Chapter One: Thesis Introduction

“In Elementary, Lyte had the Jordache look; Like me and any other kid who cared about books; But then I got wise and I begin to listen; To the wack teachers and the wick-wack system; My mother put me in *Weusi Shule*; Which means black school in Swahili; And there is where I learned black history; And how to be the best that I can be; I went back and now the school is closed; There is nowhere for black youth to go; To be taught by brothers and sisters who knows what it means; To be a black child or a white teen; In the end the youth is being mistreated; Which means the world is being cheated”

-“Heal Yourself” by H.E.A.L. (Human Education Against Lies), lyrics by MC Lyte

“Once I took these classes they definitely helped me...they definitely opened my eyes, I was finally label certain shit. I know they say it’s bad to label, but it is also good to know what the fuck is surrounding you...that is pretty much what they did, they opened up my eyes..to like the system and how it works...I mean they didn’t indoctrinate into you, they weren’t like you need to... “this is it,what it is, and this is that and that” like really all they did was give me the literature and like where there was books and stories similar to mine.” –Top Nax

During a Phoenix scorching Sonoran Desert summer, community members from Arizona and from the around the United States came together for an *encuentro* titled “Artists Gathering for Dignity: Resist, Rebel, and Create”. The *encuentro* was a collaborative effort organized by Puente Arizona, Tonatierra, and a delegation of community artists and cultural workers from Los Angeles, California. Throughout the *encuentro* dialogues took place that focused on the current situation in Arizona regarding anti-immigrant/Mexican sentiment, policies, and police repression. In addition to the dialogues, the community based artists, cultural workers, and activists facilitated various skill shares with participants. These dialogues centered on various areas including lyrical writing, recording, radio broadcast, stencil making, and linocuts to name a few. The second day of the *encuentro* ended with a report back and different groups showcased of their work. Some of the participants included a group from Tucson including Roberto Dr.

Cintli Rodriguez and a few students from the nation's only existing K-12 Mexican American Studies (MAS) Program in the Tucson Unified School District.

This *encuentro* was a re-encounter for myself and various other Mechistas from Arizona State University. We re-established our relationship with Tucson community members and students of MAS who we met during previous coalition efforts against the first Arizona anti-ethnic studies Senate Bill 1108. Senate Bill 1108 was introduced and failed in 2008. It was during this Artist Gathering for Dignity that I was first introduced to the Hip Hop work of the MAS students. I also learned how Hip Hop played an integral part in their lives. I was a part of the lyrical and poetry writing working group led by Los Angeles Hip Hop emcee Cihuatl Ce. This group included people from Texas, California, as well as Tucson's LGBT community and immigrant rights activist Raul Ochoa. We compiled poetic pieces that reflected our struggles and lived experiences. We later joined groups with the recording/beat making group that included a few Tucson Hip Hop heads. The recording/beat making session was facilitated by Los Angeles Hip Hop MC Tolteka. We combined each group's projects of spoken word and poetry over beat boxing and a soulful looped voice. The end result was an extensive Hip Hop and spoken word track that reflected our skills and realities.

Soon after, I continued to see and hear Tucson's Hip Hop community flourish into community park jams, cyphers, hip-hop spaces, and community building. After moving to Los Angeles from Phoenix, I stayed up-to-date via the Internet. During one of my more recent visits to Tucson, with the CSUN delegation, I reconnected with several MAS alumni. The CSUN delegation visited Arizona on three occasions to support the efforts and fight to preserve MAS in TUSD. As I reflected upon these experiences, I began to

unpack my interest in understanding the potential relationship between culturally relevant education, and Hip Hop how the two foster transformational resistance. Relatively speaking, the customs, histories, traditions, and knowledge of Hip Hop and cultures of our communities are not something you merely do, but rather it is something that we live.

Throughout the course of continued reflection and writing of this thesis, my past encounters with Hip Hop in both formal and informal educational spaces came to mind. In unpacking my own relationship with Hip Hop and education, I discovered the lineage of ongoing critical transformation. As a Hip Hop head, my relationship with Hip Hop allowed me to dig within the crates of my personal story and read between the lyrical lines that composed my life. I found early memories of elementary school Graffiti on alley dumpsters with crayons, Luniz bumpin' and cruisin' in South Phoenix with my older cousins before going to class at Southwest Elementary. I think back to Wu-Tang Clan's "C.R.E.A.M." on the Box music channel every morning, and mix tapes dubbed from Power 92.3 FM.

In a traditional home as the first born son of two Mexican immigrant parents, the music of the late 80's and early 90's, namely *Gangsta Rap* left a sour taste in their mouth and resulted in them forbidding me from listening to anything that resembled Rap. To my parents, Rap music only proliferated drug abuse and gang violence, and attached a negative meaning to the music and to those who listened or were affiliated with it, resulting in a deficit and racialized perspective. All this did was make me want it more, but my kindergarten days of the *Tootsie Roll* on the school bus at Valley View Elementary were placed on hold as I acquired an interest in Punk and Hardcore music.

Needless to say, even during my days involved in Punk and Hardcore music, Hip Hop would still seep into my life. As a straight edge, politically charged Hardcore kid, my energy went into saving my lunch money to pay entrance fees to Hardcore shows, buy shirts, and records. I was part of a Hardcore band with fellow straight edge, brown, youth in my school. Whether it was walking around Cesar Chavez High School and seeing the B-Boys practice everyday, watching the freestyle cyphers go down in the school quad, or listening to one of the few other brown people at a Hardcore show telling me about their dubbed KRS-One tapes; Hip Hop was still very present in my life. It wasn't until my Junior year of high school that I began to find writing as an outlet for my angst and reflections. Eventually, I came across spoken word and found myself drawn by the fluid ability to share and express myself in a rhythmic manner that spoke to my reality.

My first purchased Hip Hop cd was Wyclef Jean's *The Eclectic III* that my parents gifted me in the 7th grade. At the same time, I listened to my friend Adrian constantly playing Kanye West's *The College Dropout* during our high school marching band practices and I was inspired to write my first spoken word piece. Little did I know that my first piece "The Power of Spoken Word", would win first place at my high school's poetry contest and would be my inspiration to continue my own personal writing and reshape my relationship with Hip Hop. I began to explore other realms of Hip Hop. This (re)exploration of Hip Hop began with simple conversations with two Hip Hop heads, Zach and Chris about artists, like Talib Kweli, Mos Def, Common and Black Star in our senior English class. This music drew me into a different realm of Hip Hop emcees and lyrical content that made more sense to me. The music related to my understanding

of cultural identity, but I still could not find a connection between my high school and my lived experiences.

At the same time, my educational experiences slowly began to find intersections with the unpacking of my relationship to Hip Hop. These intersections began to develop on Saturday mornings during my Senior year in Professor Soza's English 101 class in the ACE (Achieving a College Education) Program at South Mountain Community College (SMCC). The demographics consisted of predominantly students of color from low-income communities in Phoenix who had aspirations of attaining a higher education. In Professor Soza's class my life and world perspective transformed. A shift took place in my educational experience when I was exposed to Professor Soza's curriculum, centered on a Chicana/o Studies Lens. My perspective and understanding of the world and myself made much more sense when discussing the East L.A. Chicana/o blowouts. As the nation attempted to criminalize im/migrants, Mr. Soza contextualized the Chicano reality using pedagogical practices centered on Chicano Studies. I saw how this lens could be bridged with Hip Hop through such thing as a literary analysis that deconstructed Dead Prez's song "They Schools" in a historical and personalized manner. The deconstruction of Hip Hop music and content in the classroom that reflected who I was helped me to connect the dots between education and my reality. In turn, the fact that I could relate to the course content and the teacher inspired and drew my interest to learn. Not only did it engage my critical thinking and learning, but provided a way in which to identify and understand my educational experience via hip-hop and culturally relevant material.

For the first time, I was able to hear Hip Hop music and draw a connection with experiences in and out of the classroom as a student of color. The association between

Hip Hop and my lived experiences was strongly reinforced by Professor Soza's Chicana/o Studies based curriculum, that centralized our experiences as marginalized students of color. From this experience, as a seed was planted that germinated into who I currently am. This becoming of self was initiated through reflections of questioning my identity and interrogating my roots in Professor Soza's course. It was experiences like this that contributed to the development of my cultural and political identification as a Chicano. My identification as a Chicano came at a pivotal point in my education. As a child of Mexican immigrant parents living in South Phoenix, I felt that my high school curriculum failed to reflect my lived realities. This life changing moment was not static, as it began to interweave itself with my previous encounters with Hip Hop music, identity, culture, and politics.

My exploration of Hip Hop's elements, mainly Graffiti, spoken word, freestyling, and Deejaying encompassed a critique and analysis of oppression motivated by social justice. This critique and desire for social justice tuned in with Hip Hop's values of peace, unity, love and having fun. This relationship between Hip Hop and my educational experience is continuously developing by my motivation to question and analyze the conditions of my reality and those of my community in a transformative manner. In turn, this has offered me methods in which to unpack my multi-layered relationship with hip-hop music and the transformative practice within certain hip-hop elements that I have been drawn towards. Learning from the lyrics of Black Star (Talib Kweli and Mos Def), KRS-One, Dead Prez, Common, and Tupac, late in high school contributed to my analysis of life and strategies for movement building. It was through their music I found an affinity and intersection with my experiential knowledge and that of the Black

community. This strong sense of affinity with hip-hop would later be reinvigorated when I encountered hip-hop artists who identified with *indigenismo*¹ and the Chicana/o community's struggle such as El Vuh, Olmeca, Cihuatl Ce, and Los Nativos during my undergraduate years at Arizona State University.

I began to ponder if my experience with Hip Hop and education was one that was unique. I wanted to further understand and unpack the Chicana/o experience within hip-hop and its elements. The album *Mos Def and Talib Kweli are Blackstar* is an example of Hip Hop music that presented a pivotal conversation of cultural resilience in the midst of commercial shifts American society saw in the 90's era of hip-hop going into the 21st century. It is in this context that Black Star reinvigorated a sense of black community resilience in what Tricia Rose (2011) would describe as the ascending ill state. These are just very few examples of how the Black community draws its interpersonal relationship with the past, present, and future of Hip Hop music and culture. What I feel is necessary, is a more detailed documentation of the Chicana and Chicano hip-hop experience, beyond the generalizations of Latin Rap. Just as Hip Hop is rooted in cultural traditions of oral history, knowledge, and struggle of the Black communities across the world have found intersections with Hip Hop culture (Rose, 1994). The Chicana and Chicano community is not foreign to Hip Hop culture whatsoever. Chicana and Chicano knowledge systems offer diverse understandings on the human experience and purpose of life that are shaped by multifaceted factors of class, gender, and community history that is distinct from the "American" world view (Pizarro, 2004). I draw from Pizarro's Chicana/o Knowledge systems to expand on how Chicanas/os have and continue to play

¹ Spanish translation of Indigeneity, meaning relating to Indigenous peoples

a vital role in Hip Hop that has not seen much written about it. Certainly, it is of great importance to explore experiences of Chicanas/os to Hip Hop culture to understand the potential to create social change in and out of the classroom.

There are several related questions that helped me to focus on the specific research questions for this thesis and idea for future research. Do Chicanas and Chicanos experience the understanding of their identity, lived experiences, and social realities, as interpreted by the black community through Hip Hop's elements? How have Chicanas and Chicanos encountered an organic intellectual process of enacting and understanding self-determination, dignity, and hope through Hip Hop era similar to the black community of the 70's Bronx? How do Chicanas and Chicanos interpret the four elements of Hip Hop in relation to their social and historical realities and conditions? In turn, how do these experiences construct Hip Hop's fifth element of knowledge, as introduced by Afrika Bambaataa, through Chicana/o epistemologies and knowledge systems?

They serve as critical points of reflection that guide my research interest for this thesis work and aspiring future work. I seek to contribute to current and upcoming work on Hip Hop studies while in turn bridging culturally relevant education and critical race theory in the interdisciplinary field of Chicana/o Studies. Furthermore, I will continue this research by unpacking and documenting how the elements of Hip Hop intersect and inform Chicana/o identities much as it did for the Black and African community. Although Black and Brown communities share similar historical experiences of oppression and struggle, each one notably has specific standpoints and perspectives to offer in relation to issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality. The purpose of these

questions and reflection points is not intended to separate one community from the other, rather interpret and understand the Chicana/o hip-hop experience relationship to that of Black and African experience in an interdisciplinary manner. Through this approach, I believe we can create and explore diverse ways to project Hip Hop's potential via formal and informal education and to manifest resistance, dignity, identity formations, decolonialism, and knowledge systems amongst Chicanas/os to not only transgress but also transform.

In a period where the educational experiences of Chicana/o and Latina/o students are predisposed to deficit models, the school to prison pipeline, and when the most accessible Rap music reflects the detrimental effects of capitalism, one wonders where, how, and when does dignity exist? The elements embedded in Critically Compassionate Intellectualism, a transformative model, were rooted in the MAS program from TUSD prior to its dismantling. The elements and practice of Hip Hop by alumni of the program not only exemplify what dignity looks like for the MAS alumni, but rather aspire to live it daily to transform not only themselves, but the world around them. The alumni who participated in this thesis have seen Hip Hop and MAS intersect, create, and validate the stories of Chicana/o experiences as realities with dignity. I was asked by a fellow *compañera*² at this previous NACCS conference in San Antonio to explain why I chose to focus on the concept of "dignity". She also asked for references to the literature used. I thought about how I could answer the question but instead reflected on past experiences and felt that I didn't necessarily seek literature to help define dignity word per word. Rather, the elements of dignity serve as a play on words for the elements encompassed by

² Spanish for a friend

education as well as Hip Hop. Dignity has been drawn by stories like others and mine who found a path of understanding, identity, affirmation, and resilience through a culturally relevant education and Hip Hop. Whether the struggles are in the 70's Bronx Hip Hop park jams, Arizona against Anti-Ethnic Studies Attacks and Immigration Raids, *El Hormiguero's*³ transformative organizing through collective living, or the Zapatistas' inspiring 20 years of resistance in Chiapas, Mexico, our struggles to create a world where many worlds fit and with dignity run parallel.

“The indigenous peoples who support our just cause have decided to resist without surrender, without accepting the alms with which the supreme government hopes to buy them. And they have decided this because they have made theirs a world, which is not understood with the head, which cannot be studied or memorized. It is a world, which is lived with the heart, a world which is felt deep inside your chest and which makes men and women proud of belonging to the human race. This word is DIGNITY. Respect for ourselves, for our right to be better, our right to struggle for what we believe in, our right to live and die according to our ideals. Dignity cannot be studied, you live it or it dies, it aches inside you and teaches you how to walk.” –Subcomandante Marcos

The attack on ethnic studies is nothing unfamiliar. Nicol (2013) argues in that the Culture Wars were not merely an ideological debate, rather a “calculated and strategic effort by conservatives, using philanthropic dollars from corporate donors to dismantle and rid the academy of certain fields which ‘...provided critiques of traditional politics, culture and social affairs, that worked affirmatively for the transformation of the existing social order” (Nicol 2013, 2) as cited in (Bobo, Hudley, and Michel 2003). In contrast, the attacks on and dismantling of the Mexican American Studies program in the Tucson Unified School District are no different than the Cultural Wars that Nicol referred to. The attack on MAS also demonstrates what James (1996) describes as backlash from

³ A collective home and community space located in the Northeast San Fernando Valley in Pacoima, California

conservatives countering any anti-racist or multicultural efforts to maintain Eurocentric hegemony. In a historical perspective, the needs of Chicana/o students lack adequate attention and have seen reoccurring attacks from exclusionary laws like Proposition 187 in California (Delgado Bernal, 2000). The anti-(im)/migrant-Mexican sentiment in Arizona has been proliferated by right wing conservative politicians, political groups, and vigilantes. The interest in private prisons and conservative think tank involvement in creating policies have all played a role in the construction and maintenance of this sentiment. Acuña (2011) writes that stereotypes and myths like those associated with the majoritarian story behind HB 2281 and the dismantling of the Mexican American Studies program thrive because ignorance and fear. Despite Arizona's conservative right grounding their political rhetoric in a veil of fear, Chicana/o studies have played a significant role in shaping the studies of Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Latinas/os, teaching students, and encouraging advocacy for the Chicana/o community (Acuña, 2011).

What could be one of the most evident threats to all of these components of Arizona's conservative majoritarian story? An education with dignity, such as the one developed by Mexican American Studies (MAS) Program in Tucson. The initial attack on MAS by Russell Pierce and Tom Horne is grounded in a similar argument proposed Bobo, Hudley, and Michel (2003) and Acuña (2011). The attack against ethnic studies, specifically Chicana/o Studies, is fueled by myths and ignorance. These myths are encompassed at large by HB 2281's language designating programs like MAS in the TUSD as promoting anti-American values through studies involving people's culture, identity, and history. As a result, MAS was seen as a threat to the status quo because it

challenged a dominant Eurocentric narrative that maintained power for white male heterosexual elites. In addition, not only did MAS see high achievement rates of TUSD graduates, high standardized scores and enrollment into institutions of higher learning, but also provided a method for students to engage critical consciousness and critique of power by becoming agents of change. It was by applying a model of Critically Compassionate Intellectualism (CCI) that MAS used culturally relevant education (CRE) that resulted in transformation in the lives of students and their community.

This critical transformation posed a challenge to the aforementioned components of the majoritarian story in Arizona, because what is feared the most, is a people who know who they are. The significance of this research project is to challenge Arizona's conservative majoritarian narrative, namely its view of the MAS program. The counterstories of alumni will be the evidence used to demonstrate how CCI and CRE impacted the lives of MAS alumni and the potential correlations with their relationships to Hip Hop. And in addition, this work will contribute to existing work on the positive impacts of CRE in preparing students to understanding their realities, become agents of change in their communities, and discover their self-empowerment. Through the counterstories, the research seeks to demonstrate how of transformational resistance developed in these alumni via their educational experiences and potential correlations with their involvement in the Hip Hop elements of Deejaying, Emceeing, Breaking, or Graffiti. A focused is placed on Hip Hop for potential future research. I am interested in how Hip Hop can be applied as a CRE model to facilitate transformational resistance for urban students of color, particularly Chicana/o and Latina/o students; furthermore, drawing a bridge from the education to Hip Hop will help to engage the potential Hip

Hop has as educational tool for Chicana/o and Latina/o Students in formal and informal educational spaces. In hopes that by drawing this bridge, future work can be down developing Hip Hop centered in a CCI model to serve and facilitate the development of transformational resistance. Which then can be utilized as a method to develop Hip Hop based curriculum, aide in teacher preparation, community engagement, and Chicana/o Studies.

Dignity's Elements: A Chapter Overview

In chapter two, I focus on establishing my theoretical framework. The theoretical approach is grounded in transformational resistance. Through a Critical Race Theory lens, transformational resistance refers to student behavior that demonstrates critiques of oppression and motivation for social justice (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Drawing from Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, I will specifically engage two categories of transformational resistance: internal and external resistance. By applying these categories we can analyze the educational and Hip Hop experience of MAS alumni through a critical ethnography that connects transformational resistance, Hip Hop, and the MAS experience.

Establishing transformational resistance as my theoretical framework, I offer the following research questions: How do the educational experiences of Mexican American Studies alumni demonstrate characteristics of transformational resistance? How do alumni of the Mexican American Studies program manifest transformational resistance in the elements of Hip Hop? Lastly, given the power of dominant narrative exemplified in the eventual dismantling of TUSD's MAS program, the stories below are significant in

cracking and forging counter narratives within education and Hip Hop. How do the manifestations of transformational resistance via the experiences of the MAS alumni compose counter stories to a majoritarian narrative? The research questions seek to engage and contribute to the conversation of transformative potential in intersecting CRE and Hip Hop with urban Chicana/o and Latina/o students.

With concurrent conversations regarding CRE and Chicana/o experiences within Hip Hop culture, I offer a review of literature in chapter three for each of these. I begin by looking at culturally relevant education, pedagogies, and curriculums and its relationship to such things as identity development, critical consciousness development, Hip Hop. I then transition to literature that discusses the Chicana and Chicano relationship with Hip Hop culture. The literature review focuses on discussing and interrogating the themes in relation to one another in order to build a bridge between Hip Hop and CRE. By reviewing literature under this frame we can better analyze and bridge the data analysis and findings in this research. Thus, I provide a pathway for future research that builds on existing work on the transformative potential of culturally relevant education, Hip Hop, and Ethnic Studies within a Chicana/o experiential lens.

Chapter four of the thesis presents a detailed outline of my methods and research design, which is a critical ethnography grounded in counterstorytelling. The chapter shares a review on the qualitative methodological use of counterstorytelling, as well as the critical role ethnography plays in conducting the research. In addition, I discuss the design and application, specific site, and sample collection of the thesis' counterstorytelling critical ethnography. Lastly, the Chapter four concludes with a brief

overview of the lay summary including my positionality, strengths, ethics, barriers, and assumptions as well as introduction to the four MAS alumni.

Chapter five examines the interviews of the educational and Hip Hop experiences of 4 alumni of the Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson. This chapter is very specific about how the alumni were involved in this beyond the actual interviews. The alumni were also asked to review, clarify, and approve their stories. To honor their experiences through counterstorytelling, excerpts from the interviews and the document stories are included in the discussion. Through the counterstories we can discover how MAS's model of CCI facilitated the development of transformational resistance both in and out of the classroom. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the findings, limitations, and further research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework-Transformational Resistance

In order to fully engage this thesis' theoretical framework of transformational resistance, it is necessary to have an understanding of the Mexican American Studies Program's history, model, and curriculum structure. In turn, this foundational understanding of MAS will allow the project to be thoroughly discussed and analyzed. As mentioned previously, the attack on Ethnic Studies on a national scale is nothing new. Ethnic Studies has forged a space of resistance and transformation for marginalized people of color. Ethnic Studies challenged socially warranted knowledge of the western world by bringing the experience people of color to the center of the conversation. In this process students have learned to critically interrogate themselves and society at large, while at times developing a desire to create change and challenge social inequities. The establishment of ethnic studies in the United States whether it was K-12 or higher education came as a result of community and movement building by students and community members who desired a better and relevant education.

Luis Urrieta Jr. and Margarita Machado-Casas contextualize the attack on ethnic studies, in particular MAS writing that:

“In the US, the attacks on Ethnic Studies programs, in Arizona and elsewhere, the censorship campaigns against books like Richard Delgado's *Critical Race Theory*, Elizabeth “Betita” Martínez's *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*, Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Bigelow and Peterson's *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, and Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, amongst others, and the conservative white political backlash against empowering educational approaches for minority urban youth are the most recent manifestations of cultural annihilation campaigns. Such attacks have been historically protected by systemic white privilege in social, economic, legal, and political realms (Mills 2000) that also dictate and control knowledge and the production of knowledge as a property of whiteness (Orozco 2011). Thus, Western knowledge has been positioned as a “master narrative

requiring the congruence of other cultures” (Doxtater 2004: 629)” (Urietta & Machado, 2013).

Urietta and Machado better contextualizes how the attack on Ethnic Studies is due to a rampant dominant narrative in the United States that is historically deeply rooted in whiteness. Furthermore, Urietta and Machado (2013) maintain that Ethnic Studies is a threat because it validates the knowledge systems of people of color at a time major demographic shifts with rising populations of people of color in the United States. Moreover, Roberto Cintli Rodriguez (2012) refers to the attack on MAS is one that began some 500 years ago and is unique because it has tapped the culture knowledge of its students through an indigenous based curriculum deemed outside of Western civilization by Tom Horne.

Never Again A World Without Us

The Chicano Blowouts of 1968 created one of the many ruptures in traditional education and forced open the doors to public education. The Blowouts also led the establishment of Ethnic Studies programs throughout the United States. It was in 1969 in Tucson, Arizona when students from Tucson High Magnet School walked out along side the community calling for an equitable education for their youth (Nevarez, 2010). Soon after, a group named “Cormas” who had been participating in walkouts at Tucson High and was assembled called for an educational boycott. The mobilization of Chicana/o youth resulted in the establishment of culturally relevant education. The University of Arizona (U of A) in Tucson created its Mexican American Studies Program in 1969. According to by Teitelbaum (2011), although the U of A had successfully established its

MAS program, the elementary and high schools were still dealing with attempts to segregate their student populations.

Encountering issues of segregation, TUSD and the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare found themselves in the court for five years. In May of 1974, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a lawsuit on behalf Roy and Josie Fisher, two African American parents of students in the district (Nevarez, 2010). Soon after, in October of 1974, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) filed a similar lawsuit on behalf of Chicana/o students known as the Mendoza Plaintiffs (Herreras, 2012). Both lawsuits were consolidated into one case, which finally ended in June of 1978. The resolution was a desegregation order that required TUSD to eradicate all remnants of discrimination. The order was not fully lifted until 2009 (Teitelbaum, 2011). In the 1990's community activists in Tucson began placing pressure on TUSD to create a program that resembled that of the U of A. Due to this pressure, TUSD established the Mexican American Studies program in 1998. According to Teitelbaum, by July of 2004 the program had grown to encompass African-American, Pan-Asian, Native American and Mexican American/Raza studies.

The Dismantling of Mexican American Studies

My earliest memories of the Arizona state government criminalizing or demonstrating anti-Mexican/(im)migrant sentiment goes as far back as 2000. The English for Children initiative, other wise known as the anti-bilingualism initiative, was introduced and passed. In 2004, the English for Children Initiative was followed by Proposition 200 that also known as "Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act."

Proposition 200 was aimed at requiring valid proof of citizenship in order to register to vote, a valid form of identification to vote at the polls, and verify immigration status of people requesting public benefits in order to receive them. I was able to better identify the effects of these issues when I became more informed during the student walkouts of 2006 against House Resolution 4437. At this point, the conservative shift in Arizona became much more visible to me especially when joining M.E.Ch.A. at Arizona State University and organizing our first campaign against Proposition 300. Proposition 300 passed thus forcing undocumented students attending public universities or community colleges in Arizona to pay out of state tuition because of their immigration status.

From then on I recall conservative and anti-immigrant sentiment proliferated by national and state political public officials such as John McCain, Jon Kyl, J.D. Hayworth, Russell Pierce, J.T. Ready, Sheriff Joe, and Jan Brewer. The state capital in Phoenix, Arizona became the “laboratory” for anti-(im)migrant/Mexican legislation. It was on a weeknight with fellow Mechistas when eating at a local campus restaurant and studying that I received an email about Russell Pierces’ initial attack on ethnic studies and M.E.Ch.A. The battle against Senate Bill 1108 began. The accelerated immigration police state of Arizona an overt legislations targeting the Mexican and (im)migrant community, would roll in as community raids took place with Sheriff Joe’s implementation of the 287(G) Agreement. It was in 2010 that we saw the passing of the well known attack on (im)migrants, Senate Bill 1070. SB 1070 was followed by the passage of HB 2281; the third legislative attempt to dismantle Ethnic Studies in Arizona. This bill particularly targeted the Mexican American Studies K-12 program in the Tucson Unified School District.

According to Jeff Bigger's (2012), after a 12 year run that resulted in narrowing the achievement gap of more than 60 percent of Mexican American youth, Arizona's conservative right began to hone in on the program as a part of its anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican crusade. The year 2006 was a pivotal year for migrants in the United States who on a national scale mobilized in the millions to denounce the extreme criminalization of their communities via House Resolution Bill 4437 or the Sensenbrenner Bill named after the Wisconsin Republican House Representative Jim Sensenbrenner. Meanwhile back in Arizona in spring of 2006, the co-founder of the United Farm Workers Dolores Huerta addressed students of Tucson High Magnet School. In Dolores Huerta's presentation to the Tucson High students, she vocalized her anger with the surge of Republican sponsored anti-immigrant bills including HR4437 by remarking, "Republicans hate Latinos" (Sagara, 2006). The comment by Dolores Huerta enraged former Superintendent Tom Horne and marked the beginning of the conservative right pushing towards the dismantling and eradication of the MAS/Raza & Ethnic Studies in TUSD.

Ochoa O'Leary, Romero, Cabrera, and Rascon (2012, 98) stated that, "Tom Horne proceeded to reprimand the school for allowing a partisan speech and insisted that equal time be provided for State Deputy Superintendent, Margaret Garcia Dugan, a Latina and Republican, to rebut Huerta's comments." Furthermore, Biggers (2012) shared that during a subsequent follow up between Margaret Garcia Dugan and students, students were informed that no one would be granted permission to ask any questions or make any comments. Leilani Clark, alumni of MAS and attendee at Garcia Dugan's presentation, shared that students were directed not to ask any questions and if they

desired to do so they must have been submitted two weeks prior in a written form (Rodriguez, 2010). With these specific rules set in place, the efforts of students to demonstrate their resistance would not go unseen despite the attempts to silence their voices but never their presence. During Garcia Dugan's presentation a group of MAS supporters taped their mouth shut, raised their fist in protest, and walked out (Biggers, 2012). What would follow is the conservative right embracing the idea of a conspiracy of the Mexican plot to take over Arizona and referred to "Raza Studies" was a radical ideology that promoted the *reconquista* or reconquest of Arizona and the Southwest to return to Mexico.

This plot ignited a series of bills that were designed to target the MAS program in TUSD. According to Alfonso Nevarez (2010), the first bill that sought to target MAS was Senate Bill (SB) 1108 in 2008. SB 1108 was proposed as a Homeland Security Bill with intent to heighten security on the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona, but a certain component of the bill was specifically focused on a general attack towards ethnic studies or ethnic based student organizations in Arizona. The measure was written to include prohibiting students at state universities and community colleges from forming groups based on race of their members. Former Arizona State Senator and sponsor of SB 1108 Russell Pearce publicly stated that his target was not "diversity instruction, but schools that use taxpayer dollars to indoctrinate students in what he characterized as anti-American or seditious thinking and is partially a response to the controversy surrounding TUSD's ethnic studies program" (Benson, 2008). According to the bill, no publicly funded school should teach the denigration of American values or encourage dissent against those same values. Due to the lack of clarity behind this bill and much of a critical

response from community members, academics, students, and teachers the bill did not pass the senate floor. Although, the conservative right's language and arguments presented in SB 1108 to dismantle MAS would be a consistent strategy for the following anti-ethnic studies bills in the state of Arizona.

It only took another year for the conservative right to revamp the 2008 bill and attempt to dismantle MAS with the newly proposed SB 1069 in the summer of 2009. According to Romero (2011), SB 1069 came with much fear mongering discourse and solidified the same rhetoric that we saw the following year in House Bill (HB) 2281. SB 1069 stated the following as it encroached on dismantling MAS:

“A school district or charter school in this state shall not include the program of instruction any courses or classes that either: 1. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group. 2. Advocate ethnic solidarity instated of the treatment of pupils as individuals” (Arizona Revised State § 15-112, 2010).

The bill did not see much support due to a push back from a bi-partisan coalition of state elected officials that managed to kill the bill before it came to a final vote on the Senate floor (Romero, 2011).

Although SB 1108 and 1069 did not make it to the hands of Governor Janet Napolitano to receive a signature to be instated as Arizona state law. That soon changed the following year in 2010 with HB 2281. With Napolitano eventually left her post as Arizona governor and current governor Jan Brewer stepped in and brought her anti-(im)migrant sentiment with her. With Jan Brewer signing SB 1070 into law, the door would open a bit more for other anti-(im)migrant and anti-Mexican legislation to make its way through the legislative process and onto the desk of the governor to sign. With the passage and attention placed on SB 1070, HB 2281 passed the House and continued to the Senate, where it was heard on April 7th of 2010. During the Senate Education

Committee hearing, Tom Horne testified that he sponsored the bill because “he believed that Mexican American Studies promoted anti-American sentiment and resentment towards White People” (Romero, 2011). The vote went down party lines, 4 to 3 in favor of the passing HB 2281. The bill passed in the committee in spite of Education Committee Chairman Republican John Huppenthal’s failure to acknowledge its public contestation and proceeded to a vote. As a result the Republicans casted their votes blindly despite a prior request for more information regarding the MAS program to make an informed decision. On May 11th of 2010, HB 2281 was officially signed into law as *ARS 15-112* by then Arizona State Governor Janice “Jan” Brewer. Romero states Brewer had no first hand knowledge about the MAS program and refused to meet with MAS to gain a better understanding of the program’s success (Romero, 2011). In spite of much public contestation that the bill was unconstitutional, the TUSD School board switched their stance on December 30th to comply with all requirements of HB 2281 and ordered all district employees to comply as well despite the fact that it was denounced as unconstitutional. It was on December 31st of 2010 that HB 2281 became the implemented law known as Arizona Revised Statute 15-112 (ARS § 15-112), which stated that classes or courses in public schools throughout the state of Arizona could not engage or encourage:

1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government. 2. Promote resentment towards a race or class of people. 3. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group. 4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instated of the treatment of pupils as individuals (Arizona Revised Statute § 15-112, 2010).

The passing of the bill was a strategic success for the conservative right. Tom Horne and his successor as state Superintendent position John Huppenthal would continue to seek the program’s demise.

According to Kyle Todd (2012), in January of 2011 when Horne who was on his way out as Superintendent, declared the MAS program in violation of the recently instated ARS § 15-112. As a result, TUSD was given 60 days to comply, but the state failed to provide a concise and clear approach of how to do so. In response, eleven ethnic studies administrators including former director Sean Arce and teachers such as Curtis Acosta, Sally Rusk, and Maria Federico Brummer along with two students came together to question the constitutionality of ARS § 15-112. The lawsuit filed by the group of eleven would become part of the larger campaign known as Save Ethnic Studies. TUSD was asked to join as a part of the lawsuit but TUSD Superintendent John Pedicone refused. Rather, TUSD opted to compromise its ethnic studies courses by making them electives as opposed to core classes. In the meantime, John Pedicone continuously denounced student resistance against the dismantling of MAS (Todd, 2012). Yet again, another declaration was made by John Huppenthal accusing the MAS program to be in violation of the Arizona state statute. Superintendent Huppenthal demanded that the program be eliminated within 60 days or the district would face a penalty of 10 percent reduction from its state funding. The following day, Huppenthal called for an audit to be conducted where evidence demonstrated that there was not clear violation of the law.

Soon after TUSD facing Huppenthal's threat to withhold more than 14 million dollars in state aide, Michael Hicks brought the MAS suspension resolution before the board to comply with ARS § 15-112 (Herreras, 2012). Despite many supporters including University of Arizona's College of Education assistant Professor Nolan Cabrera, Chicano rights activist Salomón Baldenegro Sr., and Tucson attorney Isabel Garcia voicing their support of MAS, the TUSD board voted 4 to 1 in support of suspending the MAS

program. Only Adelita Grijalva voted no. This was a crucial moment in the dismantling of MAS for it included banning certain literature from TUSD classrooms including MAS supporter Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America*, Elizabeth Martinez's *500 Years of Chicano History*, and Bill Bigelow's *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*. Soon after, TUSD released a list of books to be banned from eleven of the MAS classrooms. Teachers were advised on January of 2012 by district spokesperson Cara Rene that books must be cleared from all classrooms, boxed up, and sent to the textbook depository to be stored (Biggers, 2012; Herreras 2012). We later saw Sean Arce, the former director of MAS, fired in April of 2012 as efforts continued to dismantle MAS piece by piece (Hing, 2012).

The majoritarian narrative of HB 2281 and the logic of Tom Horne is generated from a legacy of racial privilege. The majoritarian narrative intersects layers of assumptions about race and issues of sex, class and other forms of oppression that are present as well (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, 31). These assumptions are through the gaze of white middle/upper class heterosexual men. Tom Horne never visited a MAS class while in session and based the logic of his arguments to support the elimination of MAS through racial and social "natural" privileges reinforced by "stock stereotypes" (Yosso, 2006, 9). The majoritarian narrative's intent is to silence the stories and experiential knowledge of the students, teachers, and supporters of MAS, therefore it is necessary to recount the stories of marginalized people of color in resistance in the raising of critical consciousness about social justice (Yosso, 2009, 10).

Education with Dignity

The pedagogy and praxis of MAS demonstrated positive achievements for Chicana/o, Latina/o, and other students of color. The program not only closed the achievement gap, for participating students but also challenged the Chicana/o educational pipeline and deficit models of teaching and curriculum. Prior to the TUSD board's elimination of MAS, the program's goals and intentions were clearly defined on the Tucson Unified School District's website. The vision and goals of the Mexican American Student Services Section of the TUSD is dedicated to nurturing the empowerment and strength of their community of learners through advocacy of K-12 culturally relevant curriculums centered on social justice. In addition, the established curriculums invoked critical consciousness in all their students. It is through the Curriculum Content Integration that the experiences of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os are brought from the margin to the center. Moreover, according to the Mexican American Student Services website's theoretical overview:

“Our transformative curriculum brings content about Chicanos/Latinos and their cultural groups from the margin to the center of the curriculum. These curriculum features the following qualities: cultural relevance, cultural competence, social justice emphasis, state alignment, and academic rigor.”

The program immersed Chicana/o and Latina/o students in learning that was transformative provides them with tools and skills to understand and unpack social inequalities, reflect on their experiences, become involved in social justice, and succeed in their educational endeavors. Moreover, the centralizing of experiences for a particular group, in this case Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, did not exclude other diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. In diversifying the transformative approach of MAS' curriculum, the educational experiences of all students in the program were engaged. In

addition, it implemented a program that challenged prejudice while fostering academic rigor and achievement. The curriculum encompassed lessons and activities utilized by teachers to develop positive attitudes and community building amongst diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups (tusd1.org, n.d.).

The transformative methodology of the MAS program was implemented via a student service model that offered students academic rigor and opportunities to develop a critical consciousness. So, as to increase student success, students were also provided with social and academic scaffolds (tusd1.org, n.d.). These approaches were significant contributors to the development of students' preparation to independently enter the world, assume control of their lives, and develop leadership. The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), MAS' research program, was a student-led social research program that was implemented in some of the MAS History and American Government courses. By taking these courses students, met their high school junior and senior social science requirements. According to the TUSD MAS website, through these SJEP classes students would intersect the research and analysis of social inequalities with the class curriculum. Moreover, SJEP was a key component in fostering the development of the program's CCI model, because a central goal was to provide students with opportunities to equitable education, academic rigor, critical consciousness and independence development, and leadership preparation (tusd1.org, n.d.; Arce, Romero, Cammarota, 2009). The MAS CCI Model included a counter hegemonic curriculum and pedagogy based on Paulo Freire's theories and student-teacher interactions centered on authentic caring

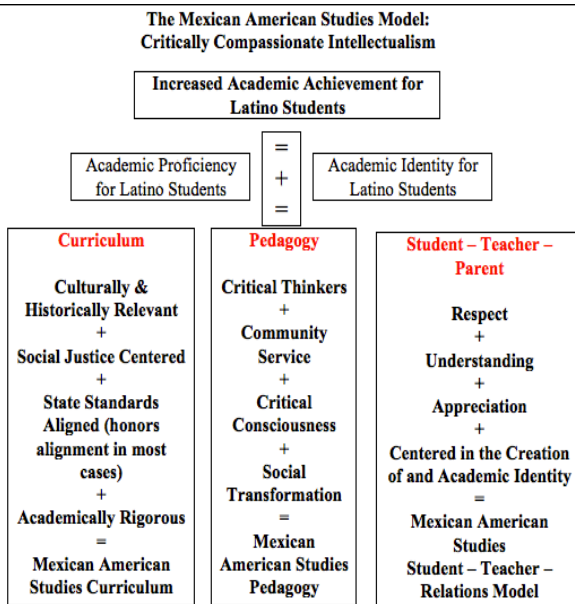


Figure 1

Figure 1 demonstrates the MAS model of engaging the components of curriculum, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parent relations to actualize intellectualism that is both critical and compassionate. According to the MAS Student Service model website, by implementing a transformative

curriculum model the experiential knowledge and stories of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os became central. Therefore CCI offers students opportunities that go above and beyond their prior educational experiences. The pedagogy of MAS is influenced by the work of Paulo Freire and has developed its lessons under the framework of critical pedagogy, popular education, and participatory action research. This pedagogical approach was fundamentally focused on the student being creators and holders of their own knowledge. The program also provided students with the tools to identify social issues and develop solutions to address these issues. Through this pedagogical praxis all students had the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and dialogue in learning environments that were typically exclusive for advanced placement or honors courses (Solorzano & Ornelas, 2002). Lastly, the MAS model established a teacher-student component that prompted educator’s engagement with their students from a state of authentic caring drawing on a full human connection (Valenzuela, 1999).

The integration and implementation of the Mexican American Student Service Model was realized via the implementation of Chicana/o Studies classes from K-12.

According to the TUSD website, Chicana/o Studies classes in elementary schools provided educational environments with co-teaching, modeling, guest teacher, and enrichment. While in middle school Chicana/o Studies Classes the focus was solely on the 7th and 8th Grade Social Studies. Lastly, high school Chicana/o Studies classes integrated elementary co-teaching and middle school's stand alone approach of the Social Studies course. To compliment the Chicana/o Studies classes, the Mexican American Student Services engaged teachers in professional development that promoted practices of how to implement the enhancement of academic identity and achievement of all students, but in particular Chicana/o, Latina/o, and students of color. The professional development was framed using Latino Critical Race Theory also known as LatCrit. Tara J. Yosso in her piece "Toward a Critical Race Curriculum" describes LatCrit as a branch of CRT establishing a framework addressing the consequential effects of racism beyond the Black/White binary that exist.

Furthermore, Yosso states "LatCrit draws on the strengths outlined in CRT, while at the same time, it emphasizes the intersectionality of experience with oppression and resistance and the need to extend conversations about race and racism to include all colonized and marginalized people of color" (Yosso, 2002). As a result, the professional development program promoted various practices that would enhance the academic and identity of all students, but specifically students of color (tUSD1.org, n.d.). All of these functioned in conjunction with the parent/community involvement *Ce-Ollin* (One Movement) Parent *Encuentros* (Gathering). Through these *encuentros*, parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds would have opportunities to see children presentations.

These presentations demonstrated their intellectual growth and in turn, established a foundation for parent engagement in social justice and transformation.

The success of the culturally relevant and compassionate program resonated beyond the underlying theoretical foundations. The students who were once a part of TUSD MAS reflect dignity, self-love, and critical consciousness. According to the Fall 2009 quarterly newsletter of TUSD MAS Department “Tezcatlipoca: Reflexiones,” Elias Rodriguez, a senior at Cholla High Magnet School, spoke of his lack of awareness of the courses before his junior year. After completing a full year in one of the American History/Chicano Perspectives course taught by Lorenzo Lopez, Rodriguez believed that he had learned to think outside the box and built an understanding for the importance of students having a strong sense of identity. It was because of this course that Elias was able to analyze his environment as well and become more involved with his community through *Corazon de Aztlan Youth Leadership Retreat* for youth sponsored by Chicanos Por La Causa as well as local hip-hop showcases (MAS Newsletter, 2009).

In addition, Michelle Aguilar sister of the late Consuelo Aguilar graduated from the MAS program in 2002 and moved onto pursue a higher education at the University of Arizona, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Physiological Sciences and continued as a medical student graduating in spring of 2010. Michelle Aguilar was an active member of M.E.Ch.A. while at Tucson High and shares in the MAS Fall 2009 newsletter that the program taught her a lot about the contributions her ancestors made and the responsibility of students to give back to their community.

In addition to the MAS’s CCI contribution towards the positive development of students, a process of (re) humanization and reflection took place within the minds and

hearts of the students and educators. Roberto Dr. Cintli Rodriguez shares three philosophical bases of MAS-TUSD Maiz-Based Curriculum. In this approach, the curriculum exemplified the educational experiences with dignity for students in the MAS program. Dr. Cintli explains that the MAS-TUSD curriculum metaphorically derives from 7,000 years of maiz-based or Mesoamerican knowledge. MAS-TUSD educator Norma Gonzalez, with the guidance of elder Tupac Enrique Acosta, characterizes the Indigenous component of the curriculum as a decolonial process of Chicana/o Studies meaning that it focuses on deconstructing over 500 years of layered westernized colonialism and developing a deeper understanding of one's indigenous roots and identity.

This profound approach of lived experience in the curriculum of MAS-TUSD is fundamentally anchored in the concepts of In Lak Ech (You are my other Self), Panche Be (To seek the root of the Truth), and Hunab Ku (Grand Architect of the Universe). In addition, the maiz-based knowledge ideas deriving from the Aztec-Mexica peoples included Four Tezcatlipocas, or four compañeros: Tezcatlipoca-reflection, Quetzalcoatl-wisdom, HuichtliPOCHTLI-will, and Xipetotec-transformation (Rodriguez, 2011). All of these Indigenous concepts were dialectically associated with not only the transformation of self and humans, but the educational process as well. The transformation of this educational process not only encompassed academic superiority, but the creation of students who are critical and compassionate as well.

A recent study conducted by Nolan L. Cabrera, Jeffrey F. Millem, and Ronald W. Marx (2012) at the University of Arizona examined the relationship between participating in MAS, and student achievement. The researchers focused on the areas

under most scrutiny in the battle against the program: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) scores, high school graduation rates, and reported intentions of students continuing to college. The study looked at four cohorts consisting of 26,022, where 1,587 of those students completed at least one course in the MAS program. Students were then separated based on the intersection of race/ethnicity by socioeconomic status by gender (Cabrera, Millem, & Marx, 2012). The results of the study found that MAS students were 162 percent more likely to pass the AIMS than those did not take an MAS course. In addition, the cohort graduation rate for three of the four (2008, 2009, and 2010), MAS participation was a positive predictor with 51 percent of students more likely graduating than non-MAS students (Cabrera, Millem, & Marx, 2012).

Transformational Resistance

A critical component of the MAS model and curriculum centralized Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences and developed critical consciousness. The curriculum and model manifests an analysis of social inequalities and desire for social justice that corresponds with the theoretical framework of transformational resistance. Under this framework, we can further identify and analyze the manifestations of transformational resistance via the MAS alumni participant's educational and hip-hop experiences. For the purpose of thoroughly engaging the research questions in this project, the theory of transformational resistance presented by Daniel Solorzano and Dolores Delgado Bernal in the article "Examining Transformational Resistance Through a Critical Race and

Laterit Theory Framework: Chicana and Chicano Students in an Urban Context" will best fit. As defined by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, transformational resistance is one that:

“Refers to student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice. In other words, the student holds some level of awareness and critique of her or his oppressive conditions and structures of domination and must be at least somewhat motivated by a sense of social justice. With a deeper level of understanding and a social justice orientation, transformational resistance offers the greatest possibility for social change” (2001).

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) also contest that existing research on the sociology of education lack and often times ignore examining and studying Chicana and Chicano Student resistance. Moreover, they distinguish between self-defeating, reactionary, conformist, and transformational resistance as drawing on an understanding of the complexities within culture to draw parallels amongst school and society at large (McLaren, 1993).

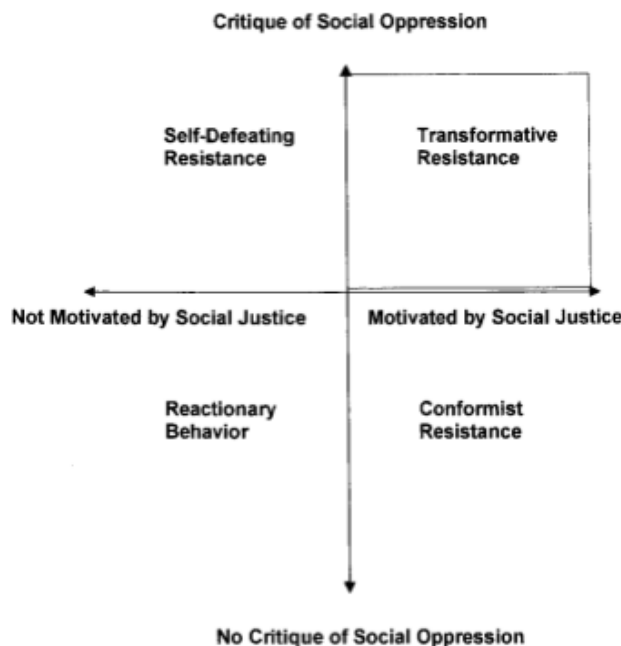


Figure 2

Although the different forms of resistance are neither static nor rigid, much of the resistance literature has focused on self-defeating and fails to explain responses of students of color to social and cultural reproduction (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). By critiquing existing work on traditional resistance studies, Solorzano and Bernal

exemplify the need to unpack oppositional behavior that seeks to address social inequities (Quijada Cercer, D. Ek, Alanis, Murakami Ramlho, 2011). In critiquing traditional forms

of resistance, providing a positive approach as to how students can engage resistance informed by their positionality in relation to social inequities. Moreover, in her previous work, Delgado Bernal in her previous work defines transformational resistance as a framework to understand some of the positive strategies used by Chicana and Chicano students to successfully navigate through the educational system (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1997).

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal argue that transformational resistance within the framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Theory's (LatCrit) tenets "allows one to look at resistance among Students of Color that is political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual social change is possible" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). It is through this scope of identification and analysis of the MAS alumni's educational and Hip Hop experiences will be situated to provide a holistic understanding of the positive impacts of MAS, transformational resistance will be framed under the following tenets of CRT and LatCrit: (1) centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination; (2) challenge of dominant ideology; (3) commitment to social justice; (4) centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) an interdisciplinary perspective (2001). In addition to CRT and LatCrit framing this theory of resistance in an interdisciplinary manner they offer the following:

(a) challenges the traditional paradigms, texts, and separate discourse on race, class, gender, language, and immigration status by showing how at least these five elements intersect to affect our understanding of Chicana and Chicano school resistance; (b) helps us focus on the racialized and gendered experiences of Chicana and Chicano high school and college students; (c) offers a liberatory or transformative response to racial, gender, and class oppression; and (d) utilizes the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, and the law to better understand the various forms of oppression. It should be noted that a CRT and LatCrit framework is anything but uniform and static, and we use as many of the five themes as possible to examine

the resistance of Chicana and Chicano students.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that transformational resistance is not self-explanatory rather as Solorzano and Delgado Bernal state that in order to identify and analyze this type of resistance it is important to understand that the awareness and motivation of the students is crucial. Thus, in order to fully interpret the transformational resistance of the MAS alumni via the elements of Hip Hop, the methodology must focus on engaging the framework within these same understandings. It is necessary to focus this project's data collection methodology as a critical ethnography that consists of interviews that focus both on their educational experience and how it transcends into elements of Hip Hop.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

For the purpose of this thesis, this review will evaluate literature within the frame of the five tenets of Critical Race Theory. Under this frame there will be a well-rounded explanation of work that informs the identification of transformational resistance through the MAS alumni's counterstories. In the first section of this review, I examine literature that discusses culturally relevant education, pedagogies, and curriculums and its relationship to such things as identity development, critical consciousness development, and relationship to Hip Hop. I then transition to literature that discusses Chicana and Chicano relationships with Hip Hop culture.

These areas of literature were identified to serve as insightful sources for the thesis research questions, theoretical framework, and critical ethnography. The purpose of examining an interdisciplinary and diverse set of literature was to expand on the various areas that the thesis work seeks to further inform, contribute, and bridge potential gaps. The literature reviewed in this chapter is also framed within the tenets of CRT/LatCrit in order to provide more of an interdisciplinary analysis of relevant ideas and concepts. These ideas and concepts seek to inform the research by looking at literature that focuses on race and intersection with other forms of oppression, motivation to be involved in social justice, challenge to dominant ideologies, and literature that focuses on the experiential knowledge of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os and other communities of color for examples. It is through this diverse set of work that we can interweave the theoretical framework of transformational resistance. Through these intersections of the literature on Culturally Relevant Education, Pedagogies, and Curriculums as well as Chicana/o Hip Hop experiences an array of diverse concepts can

help to develop the analysis of transformational resistance in this thesis but also contribute to existing work.

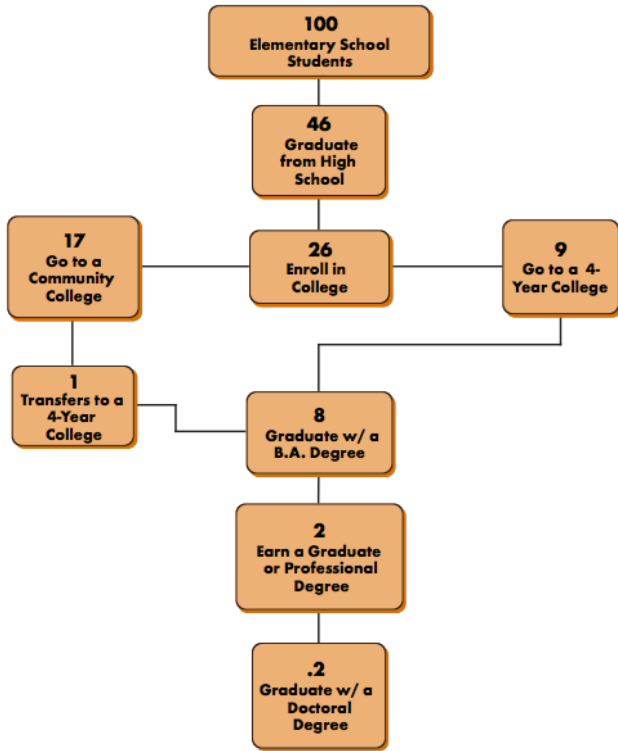


Figure 3

Culturally Relevant Education, Pedagogies, and Curriculums

This section is concerned with literature about education, pedagogy, and curriculums that are culturally relevant. In addition, taking the literary conversation into work written on social justice education and then into popular culture in order to weave in Hip Hop. The diversity in the literature provides ideas and concepts to enrich the understanding of transformational resistance in

this work. This is facilitated through understanding the role that CRE plays in the development of critical consciousness and a desire for social justice. Within these areas I seek to unpack several intersecting subjects that will help inform the research in relation to identifying how transformational resistance comes about through education that is relevant to the students. In this case, how the Mexican American Studies model contributes to potential transformational resistance via the educational and Hip Hop experiences of the MAS alumni. First, we will take a look at literature that contextualizes a brief overlook into the experiences of Chicanas/os in the educational pipeline. Thereafter, the review will move forward into taking in a closer look at literature that takes a closer look at the Chicana/o educational pipeline and

depictions of youth of color in urban communities and schools. As a result, we contextualize a better understanding as to why culturally relevant, education, pedagogies, and curriculums are necessary.

According to Yosso and Solorzano (2001) who based their study on the information collected by the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the presence of unequal educational outcomes for Chicanas/os is quite clear. Based from Figure 3, Yosso and Solorzano's research on Chicanas/os in the educational pipeline, students in public schools live in poverty, deal with racial micro aggressions, are pushed out for various reasons, or receive inequitable educational opportunities. From 100 Chicanas/os who begin their education from elementary school, only 0.2 of those students graduate with a doctoral degree. Alejandro Covarrubias's "Quantitative Intersectionality: A Critical Race Analysis of the Chicana/o Educational Pipeline" extends the analysis of the educational pipeline by emphasizing the use of data to find educational inequalities intersecting with not only race but class, gender, and citizenship status as well. Moreover, Covarrubia's finds that Chicanas outperform Chicanos throughout the pipeline. Although two-thirds of non-citizen men and women are pushed out before even attaining a high school diploma while Mexican origin people with birthright citizenship are twice as likely if not more to receive their diploma and 3 times as likely to not be pushed out prior to graduation (2011).

Historically, Mexican-American students have been stigmatized by myths. According to Valencia and Black, Mexican Americans have been labeled as not valuing education grounded in the notion of "deficit thinking" (2002). Valencia and Black go on to state, "deficit thinking refers to the idea that students, particularly of low-SES (socio

economic status) background and of color, fail in school because they and their families have internal defects, or deficits, that thwart the learning process” (2002). Moreover, Seaton, Dell’Angelo, Spencer, and Youngblood state that urban youth deficit perspectives are all too widespread and embedded in multiple layers throughout the educational system (2007). Julia Bryan states that “racial and ethnic minority students in many urban schools often feel powerless in a majority dominated school culture where language, class, and culture differences are seen as deficits (Bryan 2006; Cummins 1986; Noguera 1996). The embedded deficit perspectives of young people, particularly of color, see them as problems with no positive societal contributions. Although deficit is very much embedded in the social constructs of the public educational system, Lee (2007) argues two perspectives of characteristics and needs for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. He establishes that the differences are between the aforementioned cultural deficit and cultural differences.

In addition, these young people are fixable without really discussing the root of what may be causing the problems they find themselves in (Kim & Sherman, 2006). Ginwright and James (2003) share that mainstream literature on youth development has excluded youth of color and a deeper examination of their struggles and responses. These societal issues that urban youth of color encounter are reinforced by misinformed popular notions problematizing youth as delinquents, criminals, and contributors to existing societal issues (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Rendering urban youth of color as the perpetrators of their unhealthy realities and conditions does not speak to how their lives are in jeopardy as Marcos Pizarro shares in his book *Chicanas and Chicanos in School: Racial Profiling, Identity Battles, and Empowerment*. According to the 1998 Census

Bureau, one in three Chicanas/os were being raised in poverty. Pizarro describes that the limited opportunities for Chicana/o students is defined by this life of poverty that correlates with various negative outcomes such as high rates of teen pregnancy, gang affiliation, drug problems, and imprisonment (Pizarro, 2005).

As a result of pathologizing and criminalizing of urban youth of color through public policy, researchers fail to consider the implications of race and poverty. As a result, limiting youth development models (Ginwright & James, 2002). The social pathology construct has associated notions and images of violence and gang activity with urban communities. These associations of urban communities have become synonymous with social and academic inadequacy (Duncan Andrade, 2005). As Duncan-Andrade goes on to discuss, the “othering” of young people of color, in particular males, not only speaks to the justification for political rhetoric to reinforce negative societal notions, but also misrepresents and dehumanizes urban youth of color. With an educational push out factor and “othering” of youth of color through socially warranted pathologies, in 1997 incarcerated youth composed 62 percent while 34 percent of these same youth make up the United States population (Ginwright and James 2003). All of these social, political, and economical barriers that urban youth of color encounter are largely contextualized by James Garbarino’s concept of “social toxins” that are unhealthy for a person’s well being and hinder development of these youth (Garbarino, 1999; Ginwright and Cammarota 2002; Ginwright and James 2003).

The work of Pizarro, Duncan-Andrade, Cammarota, and Ginwright overlap by interpreting Garbarino’s social toxins as conditions that are historically constructed with various intersecting layers. Neither static nor coincidence, unpacking historical

marginalization of youth of color provides a lucid understanding of how social toxins impede the healthy development of urban communities and youth. Ginwright and Cammarota reference Poussaint and Alexander's *Lay My Burden Down. Unraveling Suicide and the Mental Health Crisis Among African-Americans* is an example demonstrating social toxins correlating with historical trauma that has affected the mental and physical well being of African American men and women. Furthermore, they point to these social toxins as being amplified and internalized through racism, perpetuated through institutional violence ranging from encounters with police to attending public schools (Poussaint & Alexander, 2000; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Ginwright and Cammarota analyze historical trauma by applying post-traumatic slavery syndrome as a way in which to interpret the consequential impacts of racism on black communities thus revealing black youth engagement in life threatening activities like that mentioned by Pizarro.

Through this lens, we can see the implications of historical trauma. According to Rosenbloom and Way, a majority of the research about racial and ethnic discrimination is centered on what they refer to as Black/White relations. Yet this research fails to acknowledge subtle racism and discrimination, often encountered in urban high schools by African American, Latina/o, and Asian American high school students (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Very similarly, Duncan-Andrade draws from the work of Valencia (1991) and his interrogation of public school system failures to educate Chicanas/os. Similarly, Valencia states that the sociopolitical context as a deeper analysis of how the circumstances and histories of Chicanas/os in the United States are correlated with school failure (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). School failures amongst Chicanas/os are not new and

are deeply rooted in history through a form of oppression, described as educational inequality (Valencia, 2010). Through historical significance, as studies have demonstrated, minority students interpret historical significance that highlights the importance of cultural values (Terzian & Yeager, 2007). Although, understanding historical significance is necessary for students of color in urban schools as the findings demonstrated that high achieving Latina/o students limitations and gaps that Yeager and Terzian's findings were based of 70 AP students predominantly of Cuban origin. There is no dialogue in the literature regarding the diverse interpretations of historical significance amongst Latinas/os.

The understanding of historical significance and education of students of color correlates with the analysis of relevant curriculum. To shift from examining the consequences of social toxins of students of color and relationship with school performance, it is important to discuss the existing potential to navigate the educational pipeline. When schools are mirrors of society at large and the status of Latinas/os possibilities create resistance highlight hope while revealing struggles and injustice (Davila & Bradley, 2010). The potential to create spaces of resistance occurs when Latina/o students are given coursework that does not present a challenge and are often be remedial and not challenging (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Cammarota & Romero, 2006). As the literature outlines, there are various strategies and methods to employ theory and praxis to enact a drive for social justice in order to address existing social toxins through a relevant and interesting education. It is important to understand the potential of students to engage their lived experiences. This could be done through recognizing the existence of young people by engaging validation of their lived realities and that recognizing they

have the potential to act in changing them (Rodriguez, 2012). It is not only important to recognize the presence and realities of students, but ensure there employed through a lens that is most relevant to their historical significance. As creators and holders of their own knowledge, critical raced-gendered epistemologies offer people of color various ways of knowing and understanding realities based on their race and/or gender (Delgado Bernal, 2002). As she shares, Euro-American epistemology dominates formal educational curriculums and makes students feel that their experiential knowledge is not valued, omitted, or misrepresented.

Students of color in formal educational spaces do not foster their intellectual and analytical growth, nor integrate their experiential knowledge. As Ukpokodu makes it clear that our classrooms in the United States have become a cross-cultural reality (2009). Culturally relevant curriculums and pedagogies in public schools assist young people, in particular Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, in developing tools to not only examine but also address issues of power (Sleeter, 2002). There is an abundance of literature that looks at the significance of culturally relevant curriculums, pedagogies, and teaching. Gloria Ladson-Billings defines culturally relevant teaching as:

“a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (1995).

Similarly Gay shares that culturally responsive teaching is composed of the following five points:

(1) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, (2) including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, (3) demonstrating caring and building

earning communities, (4) communicating with ethnically diverse students, and (5) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction (2002).

The Culturally responsive approach/method is a collection of teaching practices organized in order to enhance the academic success of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Cheesman and De Pry, 2010; Gay 2002). Moreover, Sleeter expresses that “learning culturally responsive teaching as starting dialogue (between the teacher and students, the teacher and parents, and so forth) and with a teacher’s willingness to spend time as a learner in the community of his or her students” (Sleeter, 2010).

In the process of developing curriculum that is relevant or preparing teachers, it is of much important to prepare teachers not to essentialize students of color by what Montañó and Gonzalez (2008) describe as affirming the “otherness” of ethnic groups by including quasi-interesting nuances or cultural differences. Similarly Sleeter shares, that in order for pedagogy to be thoroughly responsive to the needs of culturally diverse students it must challenge the notion of being understood as a “cultural celebration.” Sleeter goes on to add that what this does is creates a separation of culture from academic instruction while failing to acknowledge issues of power and equity (Sleeter, 2001). Although, it is possible to successfully enact culturally relevant and responsive curriculums, pedagogies, and teaching as the Mexican American Studies program did in TUSD. Sleeter references Henderson and Kesson’s *Curriculum Wisdom: Educational Decisions in Democratic Societies* as urging us to take steps back from the technicalities of curriculum construction and challenge us to ask critical questions about the process that we seek; but in order to not only envision but enact a good life (Sleeter, 2010; Henderson and Kesson, 2004).

Villanueva in her piece “Teaching as a Healing Craft: Decolonizing the Classroom and Creating Spaces of Hopeful Resistance through Chicano-Indigenous Pedagogical Praxis” shares her experiences as an obligated educator to problematize knowledge construction. Moreover, sharing she shares participant-observation of MAS-Tucson educators and describes their use of barrio pedagogy as described by Romero, Arce, Cammarota (2009) and critically compassionate intellectualism. According to Villanueva, MAS Tucson educators have “most definitely sought to reclaim what counts as knowledge by integrating barrio pedagogy inclusive of Chicano-Indigenous frameworks, epistemologies, principles, and concepts (2013). Similarly, Cati V. De los Rios’ “A Curriculum of the Borderlands: High School Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies as Sitios y Lengua” draws from her experience teaching a yearlong Chican@/Latin@ studies course at Pomona High School to conduct a qualitative study. Through this study De los Rios seeks to provide some insight as to how students of color experience and benefit from a high school Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies course. At the same time, she shares the various stories of student’s yearning for relevant education, constructing a counter narrative of history, and providing them with tools to live every day life in borderland spaces (2013). The implications of De los Rios’ study shows that educational models that are relevant while invigorating a responsibility to self and community create spaces to re-humanize oneself and affirm the cultural and legacy of Mexicana/o, Chicana/o, and Latina/o students.

The Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) in Tucson, Arizona is a point of conversation discussed both in the literature and the counterstories. Cammarota and Romero (2006) bridge the conversation between Sleeter and Irizarry to engage the

educational experiences of Latina/o high school students in a way that fosters their experiential knowledge, develops intellectual tools, and resonates self-determination. Grounded in participatory action research, SJEP's curriculum has centered the students' cultural, social, and intellectual needs via state mandated social science requirements for juniors and seniors as well as providing supplementary advanced readings on Chicana/o Studies, CRT, and critical pedagogy (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). Moreover, Cammarota and Ginwright argue that youth development, reflective of their lived realities, must be conceptualized within a framework of societal transformation that includes their families, negotiation with societal oppressive environments with an understanding of social justice responses to inequalities in unique ways (2002). Through this lens, a social justice framework considers the layers of oppression youth face, as well as acknowledges the strategies to address the issues in their communities (Cammarota & Ginwright, 2002).

Much like Cammarota and Ginwright, critical pedagogy, authentic caring, and social justice curriculum must concurrently be implemented in classrooms to effectively prepare Latina/o students to engage in a democratic society (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). These three elements compose what Cammarota and Romero describe as critically compassionate intellectualism, fostering the liberation of not only Latina/o students, but also other students of color from silencing in schools. Romero, Arce, and Cammarota articulate components as a centerpiece of literature for the Mexican American Studies through barrio pedagogy. SJEP and the Mexican American/Raza studies along with a critically compassionate model were created to counter act racial injustice taking place within the educational system (Romero, Arce, Cammarota, 2009). Through a process of

recognizing the knowledge held and created by students of color in conjunction with curricula models that engage their realities and interest, seeds of consciousness are not planted and watered for germination.

This is simply speaking as to how these relevant educational models foster the development of critical consciousness. According to Ginwright and Cammarota, “critical consciousness can be described as awareness of how institutional, historical, and systematic forces limit and promote the life opportunities for particular groups” (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, 87). “Developing Critical Consciousness: Resistance Literature in a Chicano Literature Class” by prior Mexican American Studies teacher Curtis Acosta, specifies that the engagement of culturally relevant literature engaged in the transformative core of critical compassion, contributes to the development of critical consciousness. Acosta’s literature differs from some of the prior aforementioned literature on CRE because it emphasizes a framework centered on the indigenous intellectualism and teachings in relation to the literature course, student-teacher relationships, and experiential knowledge of students. In addition, the development of critical consciousness not only centers the experiential knowledge of students but also serves as challenges to racism, sexism, and social injustice. These consistent layers of oppression are vehicles that may influence urban adolescents’ critical consciousness by problematizing social toxins that they encounter in their environments (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006). Meaningful education, resonating information and context helped assist Asian American Students in understanding their lives historically and socially through conscientization (Osajima, 2007). The exposure to conscientization took place through a meaningful education process that manifested in a

transformative manner through leadership and organizing (Osajima, 2007)

In the literature discussing the development of critical consciousness for youth and students of color, the development of identity was interwoven. The understanding and formation of identity through social, political, and cultural lens not only influences identity formation but also establishes a foundation for how youth view themselves (Swanson, Beal Spencer, Dell'Angelo, Harpalani, Spencer, 2002). Urietta discuss identity as being relational and “defined from a cultural production perspective as people’s ever changing perception of who they are” (Urietta, 2007). Within the context of engaging youth and students of color, identity is a focal point of oppression intersections due to power and privilege of white heteronormative middle class men (Ginwright & James, 2002; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Albeit, the intersections of oppressed women, queer, people of color, and youth encounter through social inequalities and toxins are central to a shared identity in the fight for social change (Ginwright & James, 2002). The promotion of the theoretical development of critical consciousness and praxis with urban youth requires progression through self, as well as social, and global awareness (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Based on the model of Mexican American/Raza Studies in Tucson, students shared that the foundation of curriculum, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parent interactions had helped them develop social cultural, historical and for many of them for the first time an academic identity (Romero, Arce, Cammarota, 2009).

Paulo Freire (1987) shares that significance of dialogue as a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality, as they make and remake it. It is through this same dialogue that Friere states, “Dialogue is the sealing together of the teacher and the

students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object of study”. The literature in this section also spoke to the roles that teachers play in the praxis and pedagogy of youth and students of color in urban environments. According by Margarita Ines Berta-Avila (2004) various studies have demonstrated that a significant factor impacting the classroom experiences of Raza students are much in part due to what teachers they come in contact with. Moreover, Acuña (2000) writes Chicana/o high school students dealt with teachers that discriminated openly and wanted them to be removed from their teachings positions. Although the possibility of teaching with dignity and purpose exists and is much needed to foster the healthy conscientious and intellectual development of students and youth of color. Cammarota and Romero (2006) suggest that educators must remain attentive in order to avoid the continuation of failure and subordination of their students. Furthermore, Mexican Americans who see a political shift into identifying as Chicana/o activists would later transition as Chicana/o Activist educators in urban schools (Urietta, 2007). These last three articles speak to gaps that exist between students and educators but are reinforced with understanding the shift of activist to educators. This providing the potential for students of color to have a teacher who recognizes their students’ potential and lived experiences as well as encountering a teacher that resembles them.

So what exactly is a social justice educator? A social justice educator as defined by Mthethwa-Sommers (2013) as an educator that “interrogates the status quo and seeks to disrupt oppression by calling for action toward transformation of oppressive structures and practices.” Solorzano and Maddox (2002) suggest “educators need to find ways to identify the resources and strengths of people of color and place them at the center of

their research, curriculum, and teaching.” Duncan-Andrade (2005) states an interview with three teachers who shared that centering their instruction, curriculum, and student teacher relationships in a social justice grounded pedagogy is what strengthened their teaching. Kasarou, Picower, and Stovall (2010) state that programs for teacher education preparation have been established in apolitical positionalities although what is needed is teacher to take positions to teach for social justice. It is integral for teachers to develop skills and mindsets oriented in social justice to recognize and act on strengths and needs of their students in urban communities in which they teach. Teachers are also in a position where they are obligated to prepare children and communities to engage in the envisioning and creation of an anti-oppressive society (Francis & Roux, 2011). The literature speaks to the importance of preparing educators with the skills and tools they require to engage their students. However, the literature also spoke to specific tenets that would guide a transformative education through a social justice approach, driving the theory into practice. One such example includes the Social Justice Education Program in Cammarota’s work Social Justice Education in Schools Project in Carlisle, Jackson, and George (2007) work.

Popular culture integrated in learning as a pedagogical tool allows for diverse and effective ways to engage with urban youth of color. Popular culture embodies contradictions but also offers a significant pedagogical site that poses questions regarding the elements that compose and organize the basis of student subjectivity and experience (Giroux & Simon, 1988). Furthermore, popular culture serving as a tool in which to dominate the masses, it teaches us about race, class, gender and other forms of socially significant differences that normalize social relationships (Guy, 2007; Adorno, 1991;

Marcuse, 2002). The intersections of oppression in popular culture create spaces to deconstruct majoritarian narratives of society at large. As a result of popular cultures potential as a pedagogical tool and site of analysis, the learning of urban youth of color can be engaged to understand how their realities are constructed and maintained by music, news, fashion, movies, and our media forms. Moreover, Duncan-Andrade concisely defines youth popular culture in a broader sense that includes but not limited to: music, television, movies, video games, sports, Internet, text messaging, style, and language practices. It is through youth culture as a pedagogical scaffold, that youth culture has the potential to provide avenues for teachers to access knowledge and build relationships with their students as well as provide youth with broader societal valued knowledge (Duncan Andrade, 2004). It is in this scope that Hip Hop can become integrated as an avenue in which students can interrogate issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality to develop literacies in which to read the world. Hip Hop is rooted in urban youth and represents a voice of resistance in which Rappers view themselves as educators. As educators, Rappers view a portion of their efforts to raise critical consciousness while providing accurate and critical insights into urban communities (George, 1998; Rose, 1994; Morrell 2002).

Hip Hop's serves as a catalyst for change through pedagogy and praxis due to its historic and contemporary sociopolitical context. Furthermore, because of the layers within Hip Hop and the literature review's conceptual framework of CRT's five tenets, the review sought to examine literature that spoke to each of Hip Hop's element potential to demonstrate learning opportunities and transformational resistance. All of the literature for the most part speaks to innovative and critical ways in which Hip Hop engages youth

in understanding their realities as well as finding direction in their education. As stated by Petchauer (2009), Hip Hop has become relevant in education through teachers centering Rap in curricula with urban youth. He goes on to write that the creative process of Hip Hop intersects with identity formation, and more higher education institutions are engaging Hip Hop.

Land and Stovall (2009) explain Hip Hop as a international phenomenon centered in youth popular culture and that Hip Hop should be located in the approaches to make education relevant. In addition, they go on to write that Hip Hop as a social commentary and critique serves as a method in which young people of color express frustrations, desires, pain, triumph, oppression, and dreams. Land and Stovall go on to write that Hip Hop and education share a common intersection in with the relationship both have with race. Gosa (2011) references the work of Imani Perry's *Prophets of the Hood* and Tricia Rose's *The Hip Hop Wars* where they demonstrate that "Rap music provides discursive resources and space for individuals to deconstruct popular understandings of social identity and to create new narratives about inequality." Within the conversations of educational imagination, hope and Hip Hop's relationship to creating spaces that counter social toxins, exists opportunities to integrate Hip Hop as a tool for social justice in and out of the classroom with young people of color.

Samy Alim (2007) speaks to the potential that Hip Hop has to be integrated as a pedagogy and praxis when discussing language education. Critical Hip Hop Language pedagogies (CHHLP) are aimed both at the educator and student, as an innovative educational movement that is both relevant and corresponds with curricula requirements. Furthermore, Alim presents CHHLP consisting of several different pedagogies: "Real

Talk” Project, “Language of My Life” Project, “Hiphopography: The Ethnography of Hip Hop Culture and Communication,” and “Linguistic Profiling in the Classroom.” In seeking to promote the academic literacy amongst urban students, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) utilized Hip Hop as a way in which to establish a conversation amongst student’s lives that goes beyond racial divisions, while promoting literacy and critical consciousness. Drawing on a play on words, ill-literacies refers to the skill located in literacy as opposed to the lack there of and youth employ ill-literacies via Hip Hop to challenge dominant and static formations of language and culture relationships (Samy Alim, 2007). Stovall (2002) shares that the inclusion of Hip Hop personalizes and humanizes the educational experiences of African American and Latina/o youth. He goes onto write that the educational integration of Hip Hop contextualizes the potential to develop critical lenses that can be applied to the lives of students and bridge work that advocates for their critical understanding.

The possibilities and potential that Hip Hop offers to create transformative change via its implementation in education is deeply attested by Hill (2009) discussion on wounded healing. Hill explores wounded healing as a method in which to engage personal and collective storytelling to explore new culturally relevant praxis in the classroom. Furthermore, Hill applies wounded healing through Hip Hop lit (literature) where students encountered their lives intersecting, constructing ideological challenges, and establishes themselves as creators and holders of knowledge. Pulido (2009) argues that:

“Hip Hop music marks a space for youth to speak to relations of power and to challenge hegemonic discourses about Latina/o youth education and cultural deficiencies in ways they are not afforded within the spaces of many of their classrooms and society” (2009).

Pulido like many of the aforementioned literature contextualizes the work around Hip Hop and education in relation to the consequential inequalities of racism and its power structure. Criswell (2012) argues Hip Hop crosses racial boundaries and that academic work on Hip Hop as a tool to interpret racial inequalities can extend into other social inequalities such as class struggle. Although, what Criswell fails to substantiate his claim as to why and how class analysis is not interrogated or included.

Stavrias (2005) shares that Hip Hop as a youth lifestyle since its inception in the Bronx since the early 1970's has "evolved into a cultural and economic phenomenon of global proportions." Several pieces of literature examined also integrated conversations on Hip Hop and its transformative potential on a global scale. Pardue's (2007) work on "Hip-Hoppers" in Brazil examines how they engage their agency in an educational way that articulates positive identities. These "Hip-hoppers" in Brazil perceive themselves as agents of social change that push for more public inclusivity of socially warranted different realities and knowledge. Hip Hop in Australia posits many forms of indigenization that can be identified through the multifaceted and multidimensional Hip Hop scene (Mitchell, 2006). Armstead (2007) contextualizes the role of feminism and activism on a global scale by discussing the role of Hip Hop in Cuba. According to Armstead "Hip Hop has emerged on the island as a powerful form of political expression" and speaks to the significant role that Las Krudas have played in forging their presence as women in movement of culture predominantly fore fronted by men. Furthermore, Armstead argues Las Krudas "calls attention to the situation of Black women in a social and political context that denies existence of racism, sexism, status, and privilege."

In Tanzania, youth have been labeled as hooligans and prone to commit crimes because of notions that Hip Hop music is a negative influence. However, Perullo (2005) counters this notion by examining how Hip Hop, through lyrics, has become an outlet for Tanzanian urban youth to teach others about lack of jobs, corruption, class inequalities, AIDS, amidst other societal issues. El Alto, Bolivia is no stranger to Hip Hop culture and manifestations in education. In El Alto, youth who are deeply involved in Hip Hop culture have established roles as public educators with the tools they have readily available such as radios, street corners, culture centers, and social networks that they utilize to engage in public and popular education regarding prominent issues of justice and action (Ballivian & Herrera, 2012). In particular, Hishaam D Aidi's (2000) examination of Islamic Hip Hop contextualizes Hip Hop in a manner that reflects how social toxins that have inspired youth in urban communities to become heavily involved in Hip Hop as an outlet is very much reflected in the birth of Islamic Hip Hop. Contextualizing Hip Hop from a local to global context through this literature allows for a fuller interpretation of how to understand Hip Hop as a pedagogy that in practice can help students in the United States and the world to read their reality through a culture that transcend borders while offering a critical perspective on the inequalities and retention of identity.

The last component of literature the review examined and researched is that of pedagogy and the specific elements of Breaking, Deejaying, Emceeing, and Graffiti. Franco (2010) discusses the creation of meaningful educational models of history that engage students through Graffiti. Franco presents *Thinking Like a Historian* (TLH) could be used as a tool that integrates pedagogical and historiographical continuity. He goes

onto write that students participated in the creation of a Graffiti wall to facilitate engaged learning, although the article fails to address the correlation between the historical context of Graffiti as an element of Hip Hop, social inequalities, or the students' experiential knowledge. However, Graffiti can be interpreted as resistance discourse, with a pedagogy that can be applied to writing centers and how tutors engage their students. In assigned writing assignments, Graffiti is a positive outlet to express anger without resorting to violence and bridges classroom work with resistance discourse that constructs the writing center's identity (Cynthia Haynes-Burton, 1994). Avramidis and Drakopoulou (2012) examine the role of Graffiti in a different context when pedagogy is enacted through Graffiti crews in Greece. They argue that the reproduction of hierarchical values exists within Graffiti crews but teaching can potentially take place within that frame that offers critical understandings of power and constructs alternatives.

When examining literature discussing Emceeing or Rap as a pedagogy, Dimitriadis (2001) states that the efforts on behalf of artists to define Rap comes with implications including that of education. Thurman Bridges (2011) speaks on a qualitative student with ten Black male k-12 teachers that are identified as part of the Hip Hop generation and their use of the culture to address the needs of young black men. Bridges establishes three guiding principles of Hip Hop for urban educators including a commitment to self-awareness, call to service, and resistance to social injustices (328). Bridges draws on various Hip Hop lyrics from various MCs including Goodie Mob, Talib Kweli, KRS One to engage the three guiding principles of Hip Hop to establish a learning and reflective education that is important, transformative, and provides students with tools to resist pressures. With a historical context of students of color being silenced in

their educational environments, engaging the voice of students through Hip Hop has been very important to recognize and validate their lived experiences. As mentioned prior, Rap is a vehicle for both educators and youth to recognize the voice of students who have been marginalized and provide insight to informing a radical pedagogy (Glenn Paul, 2000). Throughout the search and examination of literature, gaps existed between the elements as potential pedagogies. Literature on specific elements and pedagogies was limited to Emceeing/Rapping and Graffiti with very little written on Deejaying and Breaking as educational pedagogies.

The literature in this section informs the theoretical framework in diverse ways. Through the various perspectives offered in the literature tell us several things. The literature pushes back on the deficit views of urban Chicana/o students that have become engrained in public education. It tells us that students contribute to their own self-defeating resistance as opposed to one that is transformational. At large, urban students of color encounter these deficits as part of policies for example that provide no solutions that address the roots of many social toxins in their communities. Consequently, we see this leading to tracking their outcomes into dropping out or the school to prison pipeline. Not only are positive options for students of color limited but school also becomes a place that that students do not wish to associate with. It becomes a place where learning is irrelevant and disregards the needs and desires of urban Chicana/o, Latina/o, and students of color to learn. When I say that learning becomes irrelevant, I mean that students have no interest in learning what is provided in the classroom for some of the various reasons the literature speaks of. The content lacks relevance to the lived experiences and knowledge of marginalized students. Moreover, the teachers lack the necessary

preparation or understanding as to how to work with a particular group of students who have historically been neglected. The literature although tells us that educational models, curriculum, and teaching that is relevant fosters students engagement in learning. Through this we understand that within this pocket created by engaged and relevant education like MAS, greater possibilities exist for students to build a critique of oppression and desire for social justice.

Moreover, the literatures shares on how Hip Hop applied as pedagogy provides for greater possibilities to engage urban students of color. Hip Hop's role in the lives of many students intersects with daily life on various levels from reading their world to developing their identity. Hip Hop as a lens to investigate the inequities in the environments of urban students and as a way to vocalize realities through Graffiti, Emceeing, Deejaying, or Breaking offers for positive forms of resistance that can be transformational for the student. Although what I would argue is that digging a bit deeper and structuring Hip Hop in culturally historic context in relation to various student of color experiences offers for a greater potential of transformational resistance to germinate. In addition coming full circle to the tenants of CRT where Hip Hop as a CRE within itself centered in the experiential knowledge of students of color can further unpack the intersections of oppression, challenge student of color deficit views, and explore the possibilities of Hip Hop as an agent of change and advocacy for communities of color.

Chicana/o and Latina/o Hip Hop Experiences

At the center of various conversations with other Hip Hop heads in the learning/community spaces I engage in is the role and place of Chicanas/os and/or Latinas/os in Hip Hop. What is being written and how are Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences being written into our out of a larger Hip Hop history, herstory, ourstory? Much of the literature speaks to the forging of African, African-American, and Latina/o particularly Puerto Rican relationships in the birth of Hip Hop in the Bronx in the late 1970's that was a direct response in creating something from nothing despite social toxins their communities were encountering (Rivera, 2002; Low 2011; Flores, 2000; Chang, 2007). However, Pulido (2011) research suggests a response to "the near invisibility of Latinas/os in the scholarly literature on Hip Hop music by contextualizing the experiences of the Mexican and Puerto Rican youth in Chicago."

Chicano Rap lyrics at the root demonstrate a "mestizaje/mulataje" encompassing Mexican, Chicana/o, African (American) and European (American) elements while drawing parallels with other cultural forms that were articulated through Chicano Nationalism (McFarland, 2006; Delgado, 2009). The intersection among Black and Brown culture is of much significance considering the overlap in historical oppression and marginalization. Interethnic zones are spaces in which young people of various ethnicities build, share, and learn their realities. McFarland contests that these interethnic zones include Rap music and Hip Hop culture. In this interethnic zone, McFarland shares that youth can find a place and Chicana/o youth draw much of their relationship with Hip Hop from African American culture and experiences. Moreover, Rodriguez argues "various strands of Chicano Rap are rhetorically and ideologically linked to a genealogy

of Chicano poetic consciousness stemming from the 1960's and 1970's that advocated cultural nationalism and *la familia* as potential keys for liberation" (Rodriguez, 2010). Viesca (2004) references the work of Rodriguez in emphasizing how Chicano nationalism is visible in contemporary "Chicano Rap" with a strong element of dominant masculinity such as Kid Frost's representation of "La Raza." In addition, Viesca goes on to write that the representation reproduces dominant notions of masculinity while making sexism susceptible.

Kelly (2004) seeks to foster the argument that a parallel exists between Hip Hop and Chicana/o culture and that brown Hip Hop seems to be coming into fruition on the West coast. The aforementioned literature draws a primary contextual analysis from a limited group of Rappers such as Kid Frost, Cypress Hill, Aztlan Underground, and Proper Dos to name a few. There are various gaps that are problematic for really understanding the role of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in Hip Hop culture. First and foremost, the discussions presented by the various literary references are very much centered around race and ethnicity but lack fully interrogating the role of Chicana/o women in Hip Hop culture. However, McFarland (2008) wrote one of the few pieces of literature that discusses issues of patriarchy and machismo in the male dominated arena of Chicano Hip Hop that perpetuates gendered violence. The perpetuation of misogyny is reinvigorated through what McFarland describes as the patriarchal dominance paradigm, which is:

"Examinations of dominant cultural trends in U.S. and Mexican American cultures reveal that our media, expressive cultures, popular culture help socialize young men, and to a lesser extent young women, into developing attitudes and a general worldview" (2008).

McFarland's approach to dissecting the Chicana/o and Latina/o Hip Hop experience, specifically with young brown men is important for several reasons. It speaks to a conversation of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in Hip Hop in various layers to transcend the aforementioned literature's discussion of identity and politics. It begins to identify issues that intersect with our racialized interpretations of Hip Hop and unpack issues of sexism that other literature on Chicanas/os in Hip Hop fails to do. Although in general the literature as a whole fails to acknowledge the discussion on sexuality in addressing issues of homophobia through examples of hyper masculine Rappers.

In reflection when having read and examined the literature on Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in Hip Hop culture, limitations and gaps were vast. What the literature fails to integrate is the role of Chicana and Latina women as active participants in Hip Hop culture let alone a broader conversation on sexuality that includes the LGBTQ community. Furthermore the majority of the limited literature only speaks of Rappers and MCs, one of the elements in Hip Hop and begs the question of what about Graffiti, Deejaying, or Breaking? In addition, the conversation of Hip Hop centered on Chicano nationalism and forging it as a central component to the identity and performance of aforementioned artists limits the scope of the amazing contemporary Hip Hop work of politicized Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. I am in agreement with Pulido that a limited scope on the documentation of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os exists and is problematic. Thus my work seeks to further inform the multidimensional and layered realities of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os within Hip Hop culture both in formal and informal educational spaces. Concluding that through this work we can begin to rupture what I refer to as the "Latin Rapper" dichotomy into the unpacking of (mis)informed notions of

the Chicana/o and Latina/o Hip Hop experience. Through this we can begin to understand Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in a Black cultural expression that prioritizes the voices of marginalized people of color in urban American dissect the daily contradictions that have contributed to the ill state of Hip Hop (Rose 1994; Rose, 2008).

I found it important to highlight literature that is particularly focused on the Chicana/o Experience for several reasons. First, although there is few and limited literature on the experience of Chicanas and Chicanos in Hip Hop what does exists offers an insight as to how identities are shaped in relation to the culture. A review of the literature on Chicanas and Chicanos in Hip Hop opens the door for documenting the experiences of Chicanas/os in Hip Hop and to understand the relationships within a socio-political and economic context. It helps to understand what Hip Hop means to Chicana/o history. In unpacking these various dimensions between Chicanas/os and Hip Hop we can further expound on the interethnic zone that McFarland (2006) discusses. Moreover, it helps to envision what Hip Hop means to the cultural traditions, politicization, and socialization of Chicanas/os in the United States.

I believe that by unpacking these various ideas that we can further contextualize the cultural relevance of Hip Hop to urban Chicana/o and Latina/o students. While in turn drawing in the interethnic zone as a way in which to bridge investigative learning and critical thinking between students of color. Hip Hop as a culturally relevant education model for Chicana/o and Latina/o Students further integrates the experiential knowledge of those students thus greater possibilities to understand racism and other forms of oppression. At the same time envisioning the potential that Hip Hop as an advocacy tool for the Chicana/o and Latina/o community just as Chicana/o Studies was designed to do.

Through this approach there is potential for transformational resistance to be engaged and nurtured despite majoritarian narratives that deem Chicana/o, Latina/o students of color deficit or denigrating American values if they were to be enrolled in programs like MAS.

Drawing Connections in the Literature

So what exactly is the string that draws through the literature to fundamentally connect back to the theoretical framework of transformational resistance? As mentioned prior, transformational resistance is composed of a student's level of awareness in having a critique of oppression and developing a desire for social justice. The literature contextualizes the inequitable circumstances that urban students of color encounter in their educational experiences and the impact of culturally relevant curriculums, including those based in popular culture such as Hip Hop. What this means for the research is that we can better understand the positive implications of an educational model that is relevant like that of MAS' CCI and how it fosters student's critique of oppression and desire for social justice. Moreover, what relationship that CCI may hold with the level of involvement that the alumni have with Hip Hop culture.

Grounded in CRT/LatCrit, the review of literature on culturally relevant education expounds on transformational resistance as a framework that is also grounded in centering race and intersecting with other forms of oppression by drawing on the experiential knowledge of students who developed a commitment for social justice. It is through culturally relevant education and Hip Hop that counterstories are created and dominant narratives are challenged by centralizing the experiences and knowledge of marginalized groups. The counterstories of the alumni bring to the forefront accounts of

the impact the CCI model had on their educational experience and reimagine their relationships with Hip Hop that can demonstrate a level of transformational resistance. In this (re)centering, greater possibilities for the development of transformational resistance amongst urban students of color, including the alumni from MAS, arise. Thus, forging for spaces in which Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences with Hip Hop culture become much more visible and build on different knowledge systems for and by urban youth and students.

Chapter Four: Research Method and Designs-Counterstory Critical Ethnography

In the case of Arizona and the conservative right's crusade to dismantle the Mexican American Studies program, the dominant narrative or majoritarian story is one that reflects a state and national wide anti-Mexican/migrant rhetoric and sentiment. Sentiments of exclusion, social warranty, privilege, and power are nothing new in the discrimination of those who do not contribute to perpetuating structures of white supremacy. Whether it is the logic and rhetoric of Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 and House Bill 2281 or The Great Repatriation of 1929 through 1935 (Gonzalez, 2009); brown bodies and knowledge are deemed disposable and threats by hetero white middle class males that compose dominant discourse or majoritarian stories via policy and enforcement. This chapter will focus on an overview of majoritarian and counter storytelling. As a method of research this will provide for a foundational understanding for the brief historical context regarding the policies to dismantle the Mexican American Studies program. With this context, the chapter will move into discussing the methodology of counterstorytelling to share the accounts of alumni who participated in the MAS courses and are involved with Hip Hop. Furthermore, outlining the design of a critical ethnography to gather the MAS' Alumni educational and Hip Hop counterstories in order to identify and analyze transformational resistance.

Research Design: Critical Ethnography

As mentioned previously in order to identify or fully understand the resistance of MAS alumni as transformational, it was necessary to understand the alumni's motivation and awareness; Thus for the purpose of this project's research questions the method of

counterstorytelling was applied in the recounting of the alumni's educational experiences and manifestation in Hip Hop. Counterstorytelling allowed for opportunities to identify transformational resistance by understanding the motivations and awareness of the MAS alumni while at the same time understanding how they potentially manifested in Hip Hop. This approach to the research as in collecting counterstories sought to conduct research that honors our systems of knowledge and worldviews as Chicanas/os (Wilson, 2009). For the purpose of this research, counterstories were collected through a critical ethnography. As defined by D. Soyini Madison, a critical ethnography:

Begins with an ethical responsibility to address process of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain. By 'ethical responsibility,' I mean a compelling sense of duty and commitment based on principles of human freedom and well-being and hence, a compassion for the suffering of living beings. The conditions for existence within a particular context are not as they could be for specific subjects; as a result, the researcher feels an ethical obligation to make a contribution toward changing those conditions toward greater freedom and equity...disrupts the status quo, and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control (2005).

Madison goes on to share various other components of a critical ethnography including positionality, dialogue/otherness, and theory/method. It is through the critical ethnography that I solidified my positionality as an advocate of the critical consciousness development via relevant education models like that of the Mexican American Studies Program. Moreover, my positionality intersects with the dialogues that took place during the counterstorytelling collection and critical ethnography to humanize my process as well as that of the alumni in this research through a Critical Race and Latina/o Critical Theory lens.

This qualitative and critical ethnographic study consisted of Patton/Spradley modeled interviews with four alumni of the MAS program including an initial and

debriefing group meeting. For the purpose of this study, these four alumni of the Mexican American Studies program who practice one or more of the elements of Hip Hop have been identified and will be interviewed over the course of a month in order to gain insight from their experiential knowledge of MAS and Hip Hop in order to develop a full understanding of their transformational resistance.

The interviews were all conducted in Tucson, Arizona in two parts; the educational and Hip Hop experiences of each of the five alumni. Concluding with a final group debrief in which information will be regarding the completion, presentation, and distribution of the study to the participants. All interviews with participants are to be recorded with an audio recorder, transcribed and analyzed by the researcher.

Research Methodology: Majoritarian and Counterstorytelling

Picture reflecting back in our understanding of how our realities are constructed based on stories and narratives are shared as well as documented. In addition, consider how Chicanas/os and Latinas/os are perceived in those majoritarian narratives that contribute to the constructs in our society. Moreover, how does this pan out in relation to Arizona's anti-mexican/immigrant crusade, policies, and the dismantling of the Mexican American Studies program? In order to thoroughly understand the research method and design, I took a brief look into storytelling and its significance and provide some insight within this chapter. Followed by a brief look into as how storytelling has become subject to dominance by master narratives and thus distinguishing stories from above and stories from below. I conclude by proceeding as to how counterstorytelling has become more

prevalent and important in reclaiming spaces, documenting stories, and combating systemic oppression seeking to marginalize Chicanas/os and Latinas/os.

Peralta (2010) stated that the tradition of storytelling is a way in which to convey a personal truth and/or perspective. Furthermore, it serves as a way in which dreams, hopes, aspirations, and beliefs travel while in turn creating understanding and community building. It is through storytelling that avenues and opportunities are established for marginalized voices to share experiential knowledge (Rodriguez, 2010). Rodriguez goes on to contest that for researchers, storytelling serves various functions including the creation of transformational spaces that are collective, self-knowledge construction, and a deeper understanding of race (2010). Similarly, Freire (2000) emphasized that through traditions and practice of storytelling that the experiences of oppressed and marginalized; societal ills are brought to light and create pathways for social change.

To tell and create stories holds much potential and historical significance for oppressed and marginalized people and serves as strategy and a method of cultural survival. In this very act, the experiential knowledge of marginalized communities is centralized. In this case we begin to further interrogate the role that storytelling and narratives and how they can be utilized. Delgado (1989) presented a pivotal understanding of narratives and stories when written in 1989. Delgado delineated through a legal lens the role of stories told and created by what he describes as out and in groups, or in other words dominant and excluded groups. Delgado describes out groups as those groups of people whose voices and perspectives have been marginalized and devalued. As a result, these out groups create and share self-cultivated stories within their group as what Delgado describes as “counter-reality” (Delgado, 1989). In this case we have the

majoritarian story developed and maintained by dominant groups and counter-realities expressed through counter stories by suppressed and marginalized groups of people.

In the form in which Delgado describes narrative and story construction and purpose, we see that the dominant group constructs what Montecinos would describe as the master narrative.

“The use of a master narrative to represent a group is bound to provide a very narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American, African-American, White, and so on...A master narrative essentializes and wipes out the complexities and richness of a group’s cultural life.” (Montecinos, 1995)

Montecinos thoroughly describes the relationship between people of color and storytelling. Similarly, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) reaffirm Montecinos interpretation of storytelling and perceptions of people of color by asserting that racism as an ideology that not only creates but also contributes to the maintenance and justification of a “master narrative” within storytelling that seems natural. This master narrative or majoritarian storytelling is one that focuses on recounting the experiences and perspectives of those that possess racial and social privilege (Yosso, 2006). Majoritarian stories rely on what she refer to as historically created and distributed stock room generalized stereotypes that attach certain characteristics or meanings to skin color or race (Yosso, 2006). Furthermore, these majoritarian narratives have been constructed through racialized assumptions drawing from long standing legacies of racism and white supremacy layering issues of race, gender, class, and other forms of privilege. Yosso goes onto to add that the beneficiaries of these majoritarian stories are middle to upper class heterosexual white men.

In the case of this research, the counterstories are the interviews conducted with the four MAS alumni as opposition to the arguments used by Tom Horne and other

conservatives to dismantle MAS. With the presence of dominating majoritarian stories, the counter reality as described by Delgado exists in order for marginalized groups to claim spaces with dignity while in turn challenging issues of racism. Groups that are oppressed have been and are aware on the potential that counterstories have as tools of survival and liberation (Delgado, 1989). They serve as forms in which to challenge wisdom that is received as well as offer possibilities in exploring an otherness or different reality as explained by Delgado. According to Solorzano and Bernal (2001), counterstories are tools in which to analyze as well as challenge majoritarian stories.

Solorzano and Bernal go on to share that:

“Counterstories serve several theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical functions, including the following: (a) They can build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice; (b) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center; (c) they can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing the possibilities beyond the ones they live and to show that they are not alone in their position; (d) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone; and (e) they can provide a context to understand and transform established belief systems” (Delgado, 1989; Lawson, 1995).

For the purpose of this research, the working definition for counterstorytelling as established by Solorzano and Yosso in their piece “Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research” is as follows:

“We define the counter-story as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e. those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform” (2002).

In addition to defining counterstories, Solorzano and Yosso distinguish three categories of counter narratives and/or stories: personal, other people’s, and composite stories or

narratives. For the purpose of this research, the category of other people's stories or narratives will be applied and is defined as follows:

“A narrative that tells another person's story can reveal experiences with and responses to racism and sexism as told in a third person voice. This type of counter-narrative usually offers biographical analysis of the experiences of a person of color, again in relation to U.S. institutions and in a sociohistorical context” (2002).

Yosso's (2006) work critically looks at the experiences of Chicanas and Chicanos in the educational pipeline and the effects of institutionalize racism within schools. It is through Yosso's research methodology of counterstorytelling that she humanizes the statistical realities of the Chicana/o educational pipeline. Moreover, Yosso refers to counterstorytelling as the reflections of people of color, their lived experiences. In turn, counterstorytelling also serves as a tool for developing critical consciousness about social and racial injustices. What is of great significance for this methodology such of counterstorytelling is that it does not necessarily seek to directly respond to majoritarian stories or convince people racism exist. Rather counterstories focused on documenting and bringing attention to those who resist and struggle against racism. Consequently, they strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance (Yosso, 2006, 10). The content and curriculum of the MAS program offered a counterstory to the majoritarian narrative of public education. The tradition's of which Hip Hop is historically rooted are counter-realities and critiques of social injustice and racism. Now Hip Hop's counterstory confronts mainstream Rap music that proliferates a dominant and majoritarian narrative of capitalism, privilege, sexism, and homophobia to name a few without really unpacking root issues.

MAS Alumni

As mentioned previously prior four alumni were interviewed as part of the critical ethnography to gather counterstories of their educational and Hip Hop experiences. Unfortunately because of certain limitations the fifth participant could not participate. Resulting in four two-part interviews with participants Turtle Kutz, Top Nax, Miss Wes, and The Mez/Mezo. Each alumni shared a bit of who they are prior to us discussing more in depth their experiences with MAS and Hip Hop.

Turtle Kutz: A 24-year-old male B-Boy [break dancer] who has lived in Tucson his whole life. Turtle Kutz began break dancing in fourth grade by attending classes with a friend at the Quincy Douglas Center. Coolio was one of the first Hip Hop artists that he learned of when he came across one of his tapes. He recently picked up learning to deejay and has tried Graffiti for a bit but focuses a lot of his energy on b-boying. Turtle Kutz attended Tucson Magnet High School from 2003 to 2007 and enrolled in MAS courses around 2005-2006.

Miss Wes: A 23-year-old Chicana of Mexican and Peruvian descent who was born and raised in Tucson. She is an up and coming DJ in Tucson who connected with the husband of one of her Mexican American Studies courses to learn how to spin. Miss Wes' relationship with Hip Hop stems from listening to Q-Tip in her friend's car and attending her first show to see the RZA of Wu-Tang Clan perform. Soon there after, working with the Unity Festival she became more exposed to Graffiti and Graffiti writers that would take her to local tunnels where Graffiti writers would throw up pieces in 2008. Eventually she would encounter break dancing later on. Miss Wes attended Tucson Magnet High School and was a part of MAS from 2006 to 2008.

Mez/Mezo: The Mezo in the Graffiti world and The Mez in the MC world is 22 year olds. He describes his identity as fluctuating from formerly identifying as a Chicano and Mexican because of his indigenous roots. On a philosophical level, he considers himself indigenous and despite colonization he acknowledges his relationship to the land in Tucson, Tlamanalco. He considers himself a Tlamanalco Nahuatl indigenous person that lives life as a masculine person. Mez/Mezo described his relationship with Hip Hop going as far back when he was five or six years old in the mid 90's and being around his cousins whose room was covered in tags and doodles. His brother and he got their first taste of music when their cousin's cd player broke and they asked if they could dub the Hip Hop cds on tape from a book of cds ranging from Wu-Tang Clan, the GZA, Cypress Hill. It was in high school that Mez/Mezo picked up on spray painting and freestyling a bit later towards the end of high school. The Mezo/Mez attended Tucson Magnet High School and was enrolled in MAS courses in 2007 or as he describes the earliest being 2006 when he was a junior.

Top Nax: Born and raised in Tucson to Mexican Parents, is a Chicano-Mexicano MC. He contextualized his identity as a Mexican raised in America thus composing two cultural aspects of his reality. Top Nax also described his identity comprising of being brown and proud but also a conscious human being because of his interest in viewing matters critically on all sides. His extensive relationship to Hip Hop goes as far back as images of Looney Tunes cartoon characters with a B-Boy/B-Girl style that spoke Hip Hop to him. Hip Hop was all around him whether it was his sister playing music, a Hip Hop mix tape as a gift from his Tia [aunt] a former B-girl, break dancing in his cousin's garage, learning to beat box from Razel's "If Your Mother Only Knew" track, or

freestyle sessions in Mez/Mezo's old shack. In between all that he described a brief stint with his curiosity in Deejaying and Graffiti. Top Nax attended Tucson Magnet High School and was enrolled in the MAS courses from 2007 to 2009.

Chapter Five: Research Findings and Discussion

This research conducted was a critical ethnography framed through counterstories to identify transformational resistance in the educational and Hip Hop experiences of four MAS alumni. Unfortunately because of certain limitations the fifth participant could not participate. Resulting in four two-part interviews with participants Turtle Kutz, Top Nax, Miss Wes, and The Mez/Mezo. Due to limitations of travel and participant commitments with daily responsibilities (i.e. work, family, etc.), interviews were all conducted in one week with one on one debriefs and updates via the Internet and phone conversations. The findings and data analysis not only inform the conversation surrounding transformational resistance but the CRT/LatCrit tenets it is grounded in by looking at race as central component intersected with other forms of oppression, challenging dominant ideology, social justice motivated, experiential knowledge, and interdisciplinary.

The research continued its focus on three central questions to identify transformational resistance via its characteristics of developing a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice. To review, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal contextualize transformational resistance through its two characteristics as follows:

“Refers to student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice. In other words, the student holds some level of awareness and critique of her or his oppressive conditions and structures of domination and must be at least somewhat motivated by a sense of social justice. With a deeper level of understanding and a social justice orientation, transformational resistance offers the greatest possibility for social change” (2001).

With this working definition on identifying the characteristics of transformational resistance we can demonstrate the findings and analyze the data. The research argues that through MAS’ CCI model, the cultural relevant curriculum of MAS engaged and

facilitated the transformational resistance of the alumni at various levels and reflects in some aspects of their involvement in Hip Hop culture. The first question asks: How do the educational experiences of Mexican American Studies alumni demonstrate characteristics of transformational resistance? The second question asks: How do alumni of the Mexican American Studies program manifest transformational resistance in the elements of hip-hop? The final question asks: How do the manifestations of transformational resistance via the experiences of the MAS alumni compose counter stories to a majoritarian narrative? It is through these questions that we can better understand the presence, development, and level of transformational resistance amongst each participant and potential correlations between their educational experience and participation in Hip Hop culture.

The course of this chapter will consist of providing an overview of the interview findings focused on the MAS educational and Hip Hop experiences of the alumni. Each section will include large excerpts of the interviews and brief analysis to demonstrate contextual examples of transformational resistance. The findings will be followed an analysis of the data where we further unpack and discuss the interviews to identify the levels of transformational resistance. Furthermore, discuss the relationships between the educational experiences in MAS to the alumni's involvement in Hip Hop culture. Finally concluding the chapter with a conclusion that covers limitations, reflections, and future research.

Findings: MAS Educational Experiences

The initial question for this thesis was to analyze the counterstories of the alumni and identify how their educational experiences in MAS courses demonstrated characteristics of transformational resistance. The findings suggest that the educational experiences of each alumni recounted a critique of oppression and a motivation for social justice initiated, engaged, and encouraged by the MAS courses in various manners. The positive impacts of the MAS student services model of CCI draws from the impact of a culturally relevant curriculum with a social justice emphasis. Transformational resistance draws inspiration from the pedagogical praxis of the teachers they engaged with in MAS courses. As a result of their experience in MAS these alumni demonstrate the development of a critique of oppression and commitment to social justice work. In several occasion the alumni draw intersections with what they learned in the MAS courses to their involvement in one of the elements of Hip Hop. For example, these elements of transformational resistance are demonstrated by all four alumni's post-graduation involvement with the MAS and University of Arizona's joint participatory research project known as the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP). The focus of this section is to provide a look into contextual examples of the alumni's experiences to demonstrate the process and role of transformational resistance in their educational experiences.

In looking over the alumni's counterstories, their educational experiences with the MAS curriculum reinforces the positive impacts of an education that is historically and culturally relevant that centers social justice. Moreover helps us to better understand the implications of a successful curriculum that works for Chicana/o and Latina/o students

and the correlation to the process and development critical consciousness and diverse forms of transformational resistance.

The interview with Graffiti artist and MC The Mez/Mezo took place on a Spring evening at the local Skrappy's Youth Collective center in the center of Tucson. Skrappy's is home to DJ and break dancing classes, Hip Hop/punk/Hardcore music concerts, and community events. Skrappy's paints a story with the Graffiti that covered the walls in and outside of the building. Mez/Mezo and I sat down and conducted both parts of the interview. We first discussed his educational experiences in the MAS program. During his time in MAS, Mez/Mezo took courses with various teachers including Maria Federico, Amy Rusk, Curtis Acosta, Jose Gonzalez, and briefly with Sean Arce. He expressed that it was a place that he knew offered what he been in search of. In his experience, Mez/Mezo stated that MAS offered him ways in which to gain a better understanding of oppression.

I mean like it's pretty much giving a name to everything you experience through out your life, you know what I mean. Its kinda like in a way, it kinda sucks that we have to learn all this college educational lingo to describe our own fucking lives in a profound way but that's pretty much what it was...it was learning about those terms and what they mean...like oppression or just what that even means to be oppressed...to have that lack of justice then to learn about it...that is when you just start seeing it everywhere...realize I've been this shit my whole life, I don't even need to read some of these books.

Mez/Mezo learned how to identify and label certain forms of oppression. He was able to identify oppression and injustices when encountering them and that they were much more identifiable because of learning ways in which to label them. He mentioned that through his experience he could write a book that shared his reality. Moreover, with this newly attained knowledge he was able to participate in dialogues with others on issues of oppression that he and others observe in the world.

So it's kind of like that and being real full of the energy and young and you are seeing it everywhere and you have this confidence about your knowledge and shit...and you know your stuff...and you could see it out in the world, you could talk to people able to, argue, discuss about it and umm I don't know it gives you a drive you know, it's like you can't know it and not try to do something about it, you know what I mean?

Through his experience Mez/Mezo recounts of a reinvigoration that MAS provided him, namely previously hidden knowledge that helped him to better read the world. Specifically of this he was encouraged to share, critique, unpack knowledge and ideas with others who engaged in similar conversations or shared similar experiences. It also attests to an understanding of knowledge as a sort of socio-political responsibility to change the world. In order for knowledge that one acquires to be effectively used, it is not simply a matter of knowing, one must also take action. The sense of responsibility and motivation for one to act highlight the impact of transformational resistance's characteristics of developing a critique of oppression and desire for social justice.

A transformation through self-critique is also present in our dialogue about Mez's /Mezo's experiences in MAS. He shared that through MAS he gained a better understanding of the consequences certain actions have. As such, and that as a person he learned he had options. Moreover, it was the combination of the new knowledge Mez/Mezo building a desire through knowledge acquired via MAS courses and learning that he had options, which led him to build a desire to find ways in which to apply his desire and knowledge. Thus demonstrating the impact of transformational resistance extending beyond just gaining knowledge but searching in ways to apply it.

I started getting involved after I graduated just because I didn't want to end...there were some people real into it and once they graduated they didn't have a connection to shit, so they kinda just like [dropped off]

To Mez/Mezo, like the other alumni, found that his place to apply his knowledge and desire was by becoming involved with the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP). SJEP is played a crucial role in the critical consciousness development of MAS by centering the funds of knowledge where Participatory Action Research becomes the source of learning and knowing (Cammarota & Romero, 2009). He knew that he wanted more and was more motivated after seeing peers who had graduated and participated in MAS became involved in SJEP, culturally relevant curriculum situated in Chicana/o Studies.

I saw Tito and Turtle Kutz, they were working with SJEP and they were already older than me, *I wanna do what these guys are doing...they seem like they are doing pretty damn good.* And so I just wanted to be involved and you get to build relationships with people who have those kind of interest and I don't know...it builds that like damn let's do something with this knowledge that we know and try to do some good and that is kinda how it worked.

His involvement with SJEP after graduating demonstrates a relationship between engaging a student with culturally relevant curriculum, developing critical consciousness, identifying oppression including self-oppression, and a desire for social justice.

Mez/Mezo elaborated on the various ways he became involved in his community in order to understand ways in which to apply his knowledge. He was involved with SJEP, non-profit organizations, Hip Hop workshops, gardening, ceremony and U.N.I.D.O.S. Through navigating these different spaces of organizing and social justice work, Mez/Mezo expressed the various ways in which these venues either offered him ways in which to thoroughly apply his knowledge and which venues had limitations. Through SJEP they worked with various high schools and students doing mentorship and organized creative political projects that were action oriented.

It was dope...it was a golden time...a lot of learning about ourselves you know, connecting building relationships...did a lot of retreats and went on a lot of trips together...and that stuff is pretty critical when you are building movements and

stuff like that...not that its perfect, ever going to be perfect but that stuff is critical....so I did a lot of that and then started trying to find my way into the community to see how I could keep doing this kind of work.

SJEP offered Mez/Mezo a critical insight into the importance of the movement and community building. It also helped to build a deeper understanding in his motivation for social justice. He learned that social justice work is not easy and not completely perfect. In fact, he was also dissatisfied with the non-profit industrial complex after his involvement in a non-profit. In a sense through the process of being involved served as a learning moment that seemed to encourage him to keep his fire lit despite wanting to return to old habits, as he would describe. Moreover his drive to continue being involved translated into what he described as spiritual work through indigenous ceremony that exemplifies working with oneself but also building community and relationships in a different way with others involved in ceremony.

Mez/Mezo concluded his conversation described through his process of being involved in these different venues of community work he learned that he has come to a point where he wants to see results. To be more specific, he knew that you can't always look for results, rather his reflection expressed more of something that was tangible and relatable to people he worked with.

Sometimes I'm at a point were I want to see like, not that I am obsessed with seeing results because when you are in the movement, like you just can't always just think about the results and shit but at the same time I know that if I got to this nana's house and plant a fuckin' garden and shit and help her out and do this and that...she is going to grow vegetables and its just something that works. You know what I mean? And like at this point in my life of being involved for me and shit and for me fuckin' like that is the kinda shit I need right now. You know what I mean like, shit that is going to work right then and there. On a more fuckin' bigger level for longer term results...but right now my energy needs to be like that. So I have gone through a whole spectrum keeping but it s that same shit. It's that same drive. Like I need to do something and shit.

Although Mez/Mezo described that at times he hit moments in his life where he was not necessarily involved with anything specific and took a break, his motivation still existed because he knew that the responsibility to act on his knowledge was still very much with him.

In analyzing the conversation with Mez/Mezo, we can see his experiences resonated in a development of a critique of oppression. As a result, Mez/Mezo's critical consciousness was engaged different parts of his life by MAS' CRE. Moreover, this level of awareness expressed by Mez/Mezo corresponded with his motivation to engage his knowledge in an applicable way after graduating from high school. As mentioned, Mez/Mezo exemplified a desire for social justice that was explored in various arenas. His experiences demonstrated a level of transformational resistance that engaged both an education through MAS that was engaging and as will be demonstrated our conversation regarding his Hip Hop experiences.

Miss Wes and I met at this recent spring's Unity Festival at Tucson High organized by a collective of high school students inspired to continue in celebration of Consuelo Aguilar's life. After the Hip Hop fest of break dancing, Graffiti walls, Hip Hop performances from the likes of Detroit MC Invincible we walked over to Skrappy's Youth collective center to sit down and talk about Miss Wes' education experiences in MAS. In our dialogue, she shared that during her enrollment in MAS she went through a process of self-learning by learning about history that reflected her owns through such things as literature, Hip Hop, and community organizing. Moreover, when reflecting back to her time in the MAS courses she vividly described it as place that encouraged positive affirmations through Mayan indigenous teachings.

I think of all the time I think about like or talk about my experience a lot it has to do a lot about love there the whole philosophy of In Lak Ech, tu eres mi otro yo and like so yeah it is a very loving place and healthy environment.

In a sense Miss Wes' reflection of her educational environment is one that resonates a critique of oppression within itself. This meaning that the educational experiences of Chicanas/os have long been places of historical trauma and assimilation. Her experiences pose an oppositional contrast to the historical experiences and further expose what the educational experiences of Chicanas/os lacked. Furthermore demonstrating a correlation between the issues prevalent in Chicana/o and Latina/o communities transcending into the classroom. Miss Wes' experience demonstrates that in creating healthy learning environments in our schools for Chicana/o and Latina/o students, we create pathways for these students to engage in creating healthier communities. Thus, creating safe alternatives to the social toxins that are unhealthy for a person and inhibit youth development (Garbarino, 1999).

Similarly to Mez/Mezo, MAS contributed to Miss Wes' knowledge in identifying and naming different forms of oppression. She gave an example as if she encountered certain types of oppression for example racism, she would be able to identify it and label it. In turn, she stated that this ability to understand and identify oppression around her created motivated her to go out and organize with her peers and what she described in hopes of "bringing down the system."

Yeah, the intersection of things. You can't watch a certain movie with your friends or dance to certain song when you are out or cuz you know its like dehumanizing or degrading. Yeah it definitely changed a lot how you see things and even with like your parents, family and traditions...the catholic religion and the macho stuff. So definitely, it changed a lot.

Miss Wes shared that the MAS courses played a significant role in her own critique. For Miss Wes, MAS came at a point in her life when she was trying to understand her reality. This allowed her to reflect on her own privileges of wanting certain material things. Furthermore, beyond just wanting the latest gadget, her level of awareness of her own privileges extended into understanding the implications of where these products came from such as sweat shops as she mentioned.

What this exemplifies is a level of awareness from the gaining knowledge on how to name certain forms of oppression through critical thinking engaged in her MAS courses. Miss Wes' knowledge to put a name to issues as a result of responsibility to the knowledge gained in MAS courses also let her know the importance of challenging these issues. Within this excerpt we see both the presence of developing a critique of oppression that resulted in a desire for social justice.

In understanding the implications of diverse forms of oppression affecting various communities, I think Miss Wes speaks to drawing intersections between the realities of various people and how that demonstrates a level of awareness.

I think knowing the system and sharing each others stories and stuff like, I would never be around like a Graffiti person but somehow we like have the same stories and we share the same thing and then you see the different struggles going on in other places and you are like oh yeah we went through that or we are going through that. Kinda the same thing as learning like the Chicanos history and the same that is happening in the 1960's is happening right now. So being able to connect those stories together and then learning all the terms or systems of oppression made it more umm more clear.

Her experiences demonstrates how MAS created opportunities for diverse students to engage in a critical learning environment that connected dots between someone like Miss Wes and a Graffiti artists through learning to identify and analyzing oppression. Moreover, drawing intersections with course content that was culturally relevant. The

building of compassion in the classroom by teachers is something deeply internalized by the students as she shared that in her experiences drawing intersections with their teachers as well was important. She shared that these opportunities provided her avenues in which to build relationships with peers like the Graffiti artists she mentioned, teachers were no different.

That is much needed and I feel everyone should go through that and that is the main reason why we fought. Being so close to our teachers too, this was their lifestyle this what they wanted to do....we were obligated to do that...to like protect them too...and continue the fight and umm and very much like a family

Miss Wes's experiences further interrogated the relevance of public education in demonstrating how a culturally relevant education challenges individualism by being able to bring it home and include family in education. Deficit perspectives of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os and education argue that parents do not care in their children's education. Rather, Miss Wes recounts bringing her educational experience home argued:

A lot at home, I have a little sister right and she is 14 and back then she was around 8 or 9. Just growing up with her teaching her a lot of the stuff and also my little brother. It was a lot that I brought home. Then with my mom too. Like it was funny, it was my senior year and we had just finished reading Devil's Highway and I gave my mom the book and I passed it down to her and she read it all and fell in love with it. Same thing with Sherman Alexie, because a lot in our house we are book nerds like we read a lot of books and comes a lot with my mom and dad. So we would always trade books so yeah it was really neat to see that she was reading the same books that I was reading in high school and that we were able to talk about it.

In her experience Miss Wes shatters this deficit notion regarding the involvement or knowledge of Chicana/o and Latina/o families in their children's education. It demonstrates the responsibility of knowledge as shared by Mez/Mezo to holding oneself accountable for the knowledge gained and applying it in an effective manner. In this case Miss Wes does this with her younger sister and brother.

Miss Wes' internalized a process of critical consciousness gained through her participation in the MAS courses. This translated into her engaging a self-critique that results that moved her from an individualist role to more of a collective one by involving her family in her education. This level of awareness resulted in her desire to continue being involved in matters of social justice after graduating. She continued her involvement by joining SJEP at the University of Arizona. In this experience, she recounts the ways they engaged participatory research tools to further analyze social inequalities and create paths to create change.

Through SJEP we got to travel a lot too and we would go different places and share. All the things we learned and our research too. The previous year's research we would just like put it on to our PowerPoint presentation and the new stuff we have learned and with that it was a little bit more not directed towards ethnic studies in a way. We did the whole how many liquor stores are on the block in the hood and how many grocery stores there are, nice good ones not like food city. And the difference in comparing the demographics of Tucson. We would do the credit like the loans and the check cashing. So we did a documentary about that and how just poor people are like getting poorer and poorer and there are no solutions. So yeah we did a lot of other different things. Like the later years we really focused on ethnic studies, when it was really under attack and umm that is when we put more energy towards that so yeah is kind of like how we shared ethnic studies and like through out the community.

Her experience demonstrates how her educational experience translated into addressing issues present in her community in a creative manner. This new understandings would come around full circle, for she would later use the tools and knowledge initially gained through MAS and apply them in the SJEP. She would also have to use these tools of transformative resistance to defend the program when it came under attack.

In looking over her educational experience in MAS, Miss Wes shared various accounts that spoke to a level of transformational resistance. The relevance of her education corresponded with her internalization of a process of critical thinking and

investigation. Moreover, it did not end with simply critical thinking but involved a desire for social justice that translated into familial learning and creative projects that interrogated issues in her community of Tucson.

It was funny, I remember one time, Acosta said once you finish these classes, you are gonna be that guy that were your friends are gonna be...because we are critically conscious and shit... you are gonna be that guy when your friends are like this is dope this is dope this and that maybe on some music shit...and then you are gonna be that one guy that is always like man fuck that shit....i'll tell you why! That's this this and this and that! And it was true man, it happened! Not because he said but because like I started building my own opinions around that shit so you know if they were listening to the jam, on like the radio, and it's just wack. I would tell them that shit is wack.

The above is an excerpt taken from the interview conducted with MC Top Nax. In a very humorous tone he retold the “disclaimer” story that teacher Curtis Acosta shared with him, as he began to delve into his critical consciousness. The “disclaimer” story spoke to a time in one’s life where previously hidden knowledge would be brought to light. In that moment, the light bulb turns on. An individual thinks “something is not right” and a pushback ensues. Much is the case for Top Nax as Acosta’s joke, would reflect a real life situation for Top Nax. It demonstrates the moment where Top Nax’s critical thinking was vocalized through opinions developed by his critical consciousness. Top Nax and I met on a Saturday morning at Revolutionary Grounds, a local coffee shop, to sit down and talk about his educational experiences as a former student in the MAS program. Top Nax would humorously, but vividly recount his time in MAS courses at Tucson High. He recalled the first time he walked into an MAS classroom and felt a sense of inspiration and empowerment by the images of Martin Luther King and Dolores Huerta on the walls. He saw strong images of strong-minded people with solid souls that he aspired to learn about but never had the opportunity to do so. MAS would offer him

those opportunities. MAS also offered him with an educational experience that validated his process as a writer. Through encouragement from Curtis Acosta, he learned the process of writing. Top Nax would begin to unpack his past educational experience as one that he could not relate to and had made him feel like an outcast.

He described his experience as one in MAS was positive and helped him in learning more about himself and others. It also provided him with an opportunity to learn how to handle certain situations. He illustrates this in how MAS helped him identify oppression including his own. Top Nax said that he remembers himself being an angry person but didn't know why exactly and through MAS he was able to identify the root cause and label his anger.

Once I took these classes they definitely helped me. They definitely opened my eyes; I was finally labeling certain shit. I know they say it's bad to label, but it is also good to know what the fuck is surrounding you. That is pretty much what they did, they opened up my eyes. To like the system and how it works.

He contextualizes that through literature in his MAS courses he found stories that were similar to his experiences that helped him in his personal process to understand himself better. Very similar to the aforementioned counterstories of Mez/Mezo and Miss Wes, Top Nax engaged in a process of critical consciousness beginning with himself being invigorated by the culturally relevant content in his MAS courses. He mentioned in our dialogue that the courses definitely related and "hit home" when reading stories about "brown guys or girls jus going through life and a bunch of us where brown."

In this process of self-learning Top Nax internalized a profound understanding of responsibility in having knowledge acquired in his time in the MAS courses. He expressed that he felt like he would be more vocal because of what he learned in MAS, which provided him with a base to build from. It broke a barrier in which youth's

capacity or knowledge is underestimated as Top Nax exemplifies when his parents were surprised at his interest in different topics and use of new vocabulary. In addition, Top Nax engaged in more conversations with adults. He recognized the need to share his newly acquired wisdom as a responsibility of acquiring knowledge. One way in which Top Nax did so is by becoming involved with SJEP after graduating from high school.

When I started working with them [SJEP], I started realizing like damn that's what it's all about man. Like yeah it's cool to have all this knowledge and shit and it's cool to know your rights and things like that but you have to give it out to, you just can't keep it for yourself. If the only person you are helping is yourself than that's greedy. You need to help everyone else around you so I started working with SJEP.

In applying his knowledge and desire for social justice through efforts like SJEP, Top Nax posed a critique for himself and others. This critique offers the challenge for those who acquire knowledge like that gained from MAS' culturally relevant content, to challenge mainstream notions of conformity and individualism. Demonstrating another example on a level of awareness that intersects a critique of oppression while engaging a desire for social justice.

Top Nax expressed that as part of this process he came to learn that he enjoyed being involved with people who would work towards creating movement. One aspect that he was motivated to participate in was with his family. Movement building engaged by his level of awareness helped him understand how important it is to have family be a part of that process just as Miss Wes experienced.

I mean also started doing shit more with like my family too. Like I realized that's important too. I mean I've always know family was important right but like I started doing more for my family. Meaning if I'm gonna be out here doing stuff I'm not only going to do it for my community but also gonna do it for my family and those it to like justify the hardwork they did. I'm gonna have to put it down you know what I'm saying...Hell yea man! [Family is] Definitely a part of that community man and like also you know I have some people in my family that

were undocumented so I was all into that movement to man just like. Hell yeah, part of the community just as much as I am so I'm gonna throw it down.

In this process we see a level of transformational resistance that extends into the family by means of the student, in this case Top Nax built an understanding that as part of the critical consciousness learned through MAS that family is an integral part to movement building and matters of social justice.

What resonated about our conversation regarding his experiences in MAS and finding avenues to apply what he learned was that Top Nax felt like he finally saw was himself. Something that said he had never seen throughout his whole educational experience. He best described it as a reflection through a mirror.

I think these classes are important because not a lot of people get a mirror held up to them. They go through life trying to coast without seeing what they are becoming or seeing who they are. So, even just like reflecting on the map, the whole fuckin' world so like I was like shit man. In my opinion that's why it's important cuz it holds up a mirror to you and like it reflects outward. So I think that's why it's important, people need to know that man and like people trying to get rid of it that's nuts to me, cuz they see it! They see that shit, they see that it's a powerful thing to know yourself and know where you are going and like where you could be and where you could plug into, you know. So if you do that you can move all kinds of shit so that is why they tried to get rid of it I think.

This mirror represents various things when considering its relationship to transformational resistance. The mirror and reflection as referred to by Top Nax serves as space of reflection for self-critique, self-learning, and accountability to the knowledge one gains by being a part of MAS. Furthermore, he explains that it is a difficult process that one under goes and at times people lack understanding of the importance of self reflection or don't necessarily have opportunities to do so like MAS has offered him in his learning process. Specifically he connects the reflection of the mirror with those who oppose the program's existence because they see the positive impact it has for students

like Top Nax. He describes this as something powerful to know yourself and your life purpose and this is what disrupts the majoritarian narrative that demonizes the MAS program.

In reflecting on the conversation with Top Nax about his education experience he spoke from a place where you could feel how much of an impact that MAS had on a once angry youth turned Hip Hop MC. His process in developing his critical consciousness is partly due to what MAS offered him when he expressed feeling marginalized throughout his education. As result, MAS provided him with knowledge that would create pathways of critical thinking, investigative learning, and knowledge application in social justice work such as SJEP.

Turtle Kutz and I met up on one of the evenings of quick day visit to Tucson. I had expected to meet with the alumni and provide them with information on the project. We sat at his dining room table talking about Hip Hop. He shared many of his experiences with Hip Hop. He shared with me a documentary on a local b-boy who had visited his family's country of origin Iran and a relationship he built with a Japanese b-boy that came to the states and lived with him for a while. It didn't seem as if we would begin going through the interview, but that night Turtle Kutz shared with me a bit about his experiences in the MAS program.

Turtle Kutz described his first experiences with teachers Curtis Acosta, Sean Arce, and Jose Gonzalez as powerful learning moments that put him on a path of self-learning. In an initial experience, during a class with Sean Arce he was asked to draw a pyramid on the board. Once drawn, Arce questioned his pyramids shape and asked him about a step pyramid. Turtle Kutz unaware of why he didn't draw one with steps would

come to learn that those are the one's his ancestors built. Learning through historical references shared in class by Arce's government class, Turtle Kutz saw that as a moment where his critical thinking was engaged as he described how it opened up his eyes a little bit more. Turtle Kutz continued sharing about his experiences in the classroom in particular one during his junior year of high school with teacher Curtis Acosta.

In Junior year we looked at a lot literature stories that I remember in Curtis's class that related a lot to sexual violence and domestic violence. You know stuff like where women were being oppressed and stuff like that. That kinda keyed into me a little bit because then when I went to the government class and stuff like that we had to write a poem and one of my lines was mainly about homies like kinda like gang banging and being in the streets and shit but kinda like relating to women being oppressed but it wasn't said like that. It was said like "bitches and girls" like "guys always trying to go for bitches, bitches going for girls." I dunno it was a weird poem and I wasn't too educated, but it was raw also. Kinda helped me out in realize in how I would say or how I would act towards like females.

He expressed that MAS helped him better understand his surroundings and he cites the "I am Poem" he wrote in Gonzalez's class as a specific example that reflected who he was and that he was not a random fictional story or movie. He describes it as a moment in which he used his own words leading to self-reflection. The poem, as he described it, was a pivotal moment in his identity development. These specific examples validate Turtle Kutz's engagement with his teachers and relevant content that would begin a process of development for Turtle Kutz, whereby he was given the tools for critiquing oppression. The aforementioned excerpt demonstrates a self-critique where issues of gendered violence were presented and personalized as he began to reflect on his own actions.

In our conversation, he connected his critical thinking process to analyzing the conditions that composed his surroundings. He discussed matters of gangs, violence, lack of motivation, loss of friends being a part of his life and that because of MAS he was able to better understand that he himself had options. He began to examine both the positive

and negative effects of his choices. He describes this process as a difficult one when you are submerged in the “hood” and try to go against the grain.

It was just kind of like it happened over the two years I guess. I’m saying it from now but back then I wasn’t really. I dunno, like it didn’t hit until senior year. That is when I started realizing. Yo I kind of have an option here not just being in the neighborhood doing the same thing over but trying to other stuff like that...Made me think more...don’t know kind of like if I keep doing the same thing. I don’t know it helped me think more about homies that would be stuck doing the same thing; get home from school everybody is just chillin not doing much. Nobody is doing homework or studying or anything like that. It made me think more about like trying to get high school finished and over with and shit like that.

Although he did share that it was difficult getting through high School, Turtle Kutz still engaged a critique of the issues surrounding him. Turtle Kutz, clear on the possible implications of his previous life’s destination, chose to go the opposite direction. He described that his peers lacked motivation and continued to be a part of the same issues that he had begun to understand a bit better. As a result, Turtle Kutz shared that he was motivated to finishing school with better grades, became more passionate, and that found his work more interesting. When considering the critique of oppression, Turtle Kutz like the other alumni before him questioned and challenged himself. This speaks to the larger scope to the transformation that begins with the students through an education model that is relevant and social justice oriented as MAS is.

His educational experience would then later transcend into involvement with SJEP. He describes his involvement in the following excerpt.

After I just graduated, mainly just helped out with the SJEP and made some documentaries and so after that I mean that kinda helped high light that you are doing this for a reason and its for another message or another answer or solution, or solutions to a problem. When I graduated you know, you have the ability to be creative with anything. Writing, video editing, stuff like that so anything you do should have a good message to it at least and so then that is kind of like what carried over was this like. A lot of days now thought people just do things to do it and kind of just goes no where and it makes the next person do the same thing I

guess. It made me realize what you do causes a ripple effect. Be more intentional with whatever you are doing and creating and like that. That's what kind of stuck to me the most, if you are going to be helping a group of people trying to organize, like I don't know a neighborhood event, you just don't want to have them waste their time or anybody's...you want to make it worthwhile, more effective if possible.

Turtle Kutz shared the significance of being involved with social justice work after graduating. He expressed that it is necessary to be involved and being creative. In this process of being involved setting intentions and working on effectiveness is something that greatly resonates with his learning process in movement and community building. It demonstrates that his educational experiences provided him with knowledge necessary to engage in social justice work and to create positive change. In order for this to happen, Turtle Kutz emphasized the importance of having knowledge and understanding how to apply it. The application of social justice concepts to real life situations provide a contextual example as to how Turtle Kutz exemplifies transformational resistance through a desire to create effective change that will be long lasting. Moreover, draws intersections with the passion and critical thinking he acquired through his involvement with MAS. He concluded discussing his involvement in MAS. He concluded by discussing his involvement in MAS as on that motivated him to be more involved. Doors opened for him to become involved with youth groups to retreats, he welcomed those opportunities more willingly he said. In turn reflecting on his initial challenges inspired by a self critique of doing the opposite of what his peers was doing and explore the options that MAS presented him.

Findings: Hip Hop and Community Experiences

This section takes a look at the counterstories collected in the second part of interviews with Turtle Kutz, Miss Wes, Top Nax, and The Mez/Mezo. The second set of interviews particularly focused on the experiences of each alumnus in relation to Hip Hop and community. The purpose of this is to answer the research question: How do alumni of the Mexican American Studies program manifest transformational resistance in the elements of Hip Hop? Furthermore, unpacking their experiences in order to better identify the presence of transformational resistance and possible correlations with their educational experiences. By tapping into the potential manifestations of transformational resistance via Hip Hop's elements of Graffiti, Deejaying, Emceeing, and Breakdancing, we can establish how Hip Hop is a culturally relevant pedagogy. This establishment is constructed by the counterstories of Chicanas/os and exemplifies the relevance of Hip Hop in their lives, how it correlates with cultures, and the positive contributions to community. Thus, creating for possibilities to apply Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy with a social justice focus.

For example, it was important to know the role Hip Hop played in the lives of each alumni when they enrolled in the MAS program. In an effort to provide a smooth transition from the first to the second interview, I asked them to describe a bit of their encounters with Hip Hop in or out of the classroom. All of the alumni shared of how Hip Hop was used in the classroom by literature teacher Curtis Acosta. With the exception of a few who encountered a bit of Hip Hop with Maria Federico and Jose Gonzalez. They expressed how Curtis Acosta would incorporate Hip Hop into the curriculum by reviewing the lyrics of artists like Queen Latifah, Rakim, Notorious B.I.G. Kanye West, and Common, and Aztlan Underground. The alumni expressed that Curtis Acosta would

use Hip Hop with a twist in order to teach the students about literary devices, media analysis, and poetry structures. Turtle Kutz shared that they would take the lyrics to songs and deconstruct poetry patterns, make comparison to speeches, and look for certain concepts like rhetorical devices. Moreover, Mez/Mezo remembers that Curtis Acosta nurtured the understanding that students had of Hip Hop. Through this he described Mr. Acosta's connections to social justice, movements, and literacy. Mez/Mezo shared the examples how Acosta would use literacy to teach elements of poetry such as rhythm as well as ethos and pathos. Similarly, Miss Wes expressed a similar experience with Acosta's use of Hip Hop connected to learning about poetic devices. Top Nax recalled learning about literary concepts such as braggadocio and its comparison to MCs who would brag while Rapping. Moreover, in his government class with Jose Gonzalez they discussed Hip Hop's lyrical influence on society and comparing them to powerful movement speeches.

Each alumnus had intersecting experiences with Hip Hop in their educational experience, which would later transcend beyond the classroom in potential manifestations of transformational resistance. The findings suggest that several of the experiences in the counterstories demonstrate a level of awareness and desire for social justice. In sitting down with each one, we talked about the relationships of MAS to their Hip Hop experiences to how Hip Hop as become a potential asset to vocalize realities and become more involved their community.

Mez/ Mezo and I continued our conversation from the first interview on his educational experiences to discussing the role of Hip Hop in his life. We began with delving into talking about the potential relationships of MAS, his knowledge and its

relationship to Hip Hop. He began by sharing that MAS helped him in better understanding his knowledge and relationship to Hip Hop. Furthermore, he spoke of using Hip Hop as a tool with knowledge acquired from MAS courses could be used to organize or outreach. He also expressed that even before they were tools, Hip Hop at its root it has always been used to identify and label oppression or anything related to social justice.

For me the knowledge that I have gained in MAS n shit and the way I take knowledge; I have to get to the root of the truth, that's part of the shit that we learned and shit. That's part of the stuff we learned. Yeah man, so I dig deep man, like it's hard for me. Its hard for me to say *you shouldn't listen to that shit fuckin kids, now this is some good and this is some bad shit, you shouldn't listen to this.* I can't do that, I need to be *like this is the reality we live in...this is how fuckin'...how the reality is....this is why...all these things that have gone in history and people think or act this way...as men, this is why these people do this...so,* like that knowledge makes me understand that...I can't even have these conversations with some of these regular folks.

What Mez/Mezo reflects on here is critical to how MAS helped him develop his relationship and experience with Hip Hop. Through the process of critical thinking and learning how to label and identify different forms of oppression, Mez/Mezo found a desire for social justice. Today, he offers the same to youth when discussing Hip Hop. Just as MAS did not impose ideals, Mez/Mezo refers back to the teaching of seeking the root of the truth and shares that same process with youth in unpacking their understanding of Hip Hop. In a sense it has developed his understanding of the importance of Hip Hop in its raw element, and not having a dichotomy to explain what is acceptable or not. He uses the specific example of good and bad Graffiti or Rap. In this, Mez/Mezo explains a critical insight into the importance of Hip Hop being relatable and accessible to people and that it is important to investigate them by reading between the lines to understand the significance of something like a tag on the street and a mural.

Mez/Mezo presents an important point as to the significance of keeping in mind the importance of reality in Hip Hop culture and not creating a distinction of what is acceptable and what is not. In this a critique arises the limitations that one may encounter when considering the role of Hip Hop as way to create change and engage students or community members. When talking about how Hip Hop can serve as an important tool to vocalize realities, he agreed about it being a tool and emphasized that he is really prominent on raw Hip Hop.

I love movement Hip Hop and I love artists that spit about that kind of shit but at the same time at least for like in my experiences. It is effective for us, for people who already know that shit you know what I mean? I like the raw shit because I know some of my homies are going to fuckin' dig it. And it might be fuckin' some shit might be encoded in their that they don't even know and shit. They are gonna be like hell yeah...that shit is sick as fuck. That is kinda how I realized shit too, I listened to Wu-Tang my whole life and shit; I listened to Gang Starr for years and it wasn't until I started learning about shit that I was like damn these foo's have been talking about Islam and shit those whole time and shit you know. This shit is based on Islam and all this shit man, all these principles. Even sayin' peace and shit, it fuckin' comes back to that Islam...and I started relating Islam to a lot of indigenous shit....so it was tight as fuck...but you know what I meant, I'm bumpin' that my whole life and shit...

Mez/Mezo speaks to the importance of having an interpretation and use of Hip Hop that is accessible to everyone. Mez/Mezo's interpretation speaks to is the limitations and accessibility of using a specific type of Hip Hop to try and reach a certain group of people who wouldn't normally be exposed to it. It creates an understanding of the diverse levels of awareness that encompass Chicana/o and Latina/o communities and that transformational resistance can take place in various forms. Moreover it resonates how Hip Hop in its raw essence as realist pedagogy creates greater possibilities for transformational resistance.

Mez/Mezo translated this approach into his desire to continue doing work and fulfill the responsibility acquired in his MAS courses. His first involvement with community using Hip Hop was participating in Hip Hop workshops. It was part of the work he expressed as important, in that Hip Hop is an outlet that people need to see and experience. And, the community's involvement is also important. What greatly resonated in this part of our conversation is how Mez/Mezo assumed a greater interpretation of himself as an educator.

I did, Hip Hop was workshops probably [community wise]. I could talk all day about fuckin' Hip Hop and like I don't know, I barely started to admit it to myself but like I'm a good teacher and shit. I could fuckin' talk to kids man, I love doing it. Drop some knowledge in way that they are gonna like talking about it, it's not just gonna be me like fuckin' throwin' a bunch a shit at them. I'm good at it, so I started doing that, I fucking loved it. Talkin' to kids about Hip Hop. The differences between the shit that they are hearing and the shit that is out there, you know just counter shit. I started like more and more to stray away from completely bashing everything to like completely bashing radio shit or non conscious shit because like sometimes it turns kids off and shit so like I just started to present them fuckin' it is what is kinda thing and this is what this kind leads to and represents and this is what this kinda leads to and represents. Kinda just putting that out there in a way. I love doing that and once you are kinda like out in the community as a Hip Hop guy. I kinda naturally just out there that I am providing that service. If you guys need a mural come and talk to me. I did a lot of Graffiti workshops with people who are having groups, maybe like a summer group or if they are working with some kids and they wanna expose them to Graffiti . I'm one of the go to persons in the community for that and I love that I am accessible in that way.

The excerpt demonstrates Mez/Mezo's building a passion for applying his knowledge in working with youth. It presents how it is important for him to engage the students in learning by not imposing rather by providing them with opportunities to develop critical thinking based on their own level of awareness. It challenges the assumption that a critique or understanding of oppression manifests in a specific way. He demonstrates how

he has internalized what he learned from MAS and applies it to doing work around Hip Hop to create change with youth by helping them in developing critical consciousness.

On a warm Saturday afternoon, Miss Wes and I met up at Revolutionary Grounds to catch up and talk about her experiences with Hip Hop and community. She shared about her Deejaying experiences, in various spaces. She discussed the challenges she faced, in that women Deejaying were a rare sight. People were not use to seeing a woman behind the turntables in Tucson's highly male dominated scene. In her journey to become more involved with Deejaying, she has learned more about herself and about what it takes to get people moving in a room. Initially she wanted to have her experience told through her music. As such, she continues to explore the endless possibilities of music while mixing and scratching. In this process of learning who she is as a DJ, she recalls in that initial drive to share who she is through the music she plays. She shared that MAS offered her an opportunity to become involved with Deejaying because of the fact that one of her teacher's husband was a DJ and was very accessible in helping her learn. She felt that MAS offered her the opportunity to learn how to DJ but it was ultimately her decision to want to pursue it. Although Miss Wes offers significant insight into the relationship between MAS, Hip Hop, and community work in the following excerpt.

Its kinda like a whole little community and I think we can hold each other accountable of the things that we do, so I think...I don't know...teaching l little kids too of like what ethnic studies means through art.

Miss Wes elaborated on how MAS provided her with opportunities to connect with others who had similar stories. As a result, community building would come about and that she saw the importance of connecting youth with culturally relevant education via the arts.

During our conversation, Miss Wes spoke about how her involvement has indirectly created spaces for young women. She shares the moments in which she would be Deejaying and local young women and girls would approach her.

But even there at the center at Srkappy's or Rebelarte Collective like I'll be there messing around and there are little girls that come up and they are. Like you know if it was a dude Deejaying they wouldn't be coming up to me or like trying to scratch or like trying talk to you or stuff like that so like. I get a lot of those. A lot of little girls coming up and asking what are you doing and I let them play around with it or even like the little girls Justice or community members daughters coming up trying to scratch. I was like playing at an event and Justice comes up and she is trying to scratch next to me and stuff like that. I acknowledge that. I feel like I am kind of giving out that opportunity like you can do this to.

As mentioned previously, Miss Wes presented a critique of the male dominated Hip Hop spaces in Tucson. Through her presence, she forges a space not only for herself but also other young women and girls who are motivated to participate when seeing Miss Wes. There is a relationship with the opportunities MAS offered her to learn and practice her Deejaying. As result, her active drive to learn on her own created more opportunities for other young women and girls to rupture gender binaries while developing a level of awareness, self-empowerment, and Deejaying knowledge. Although she didn't necessarily see herself as a role model, because of her own critique that she makes mistakes, but that she is that much more conscious and aware of young women and girls approaching her.

Before meeting with Miss Wes, I sat down with Top Nax that same Saturday before I met with Miss Wes. He provided a detailed account of his Hip Hop experiences and how they transcended into some of the community work he did. He strongly describes himself as someone who doesn't see Hip Hop as a tool, rather he lives Hip Hop in everything he does. His detailed account of Hip Hop even included an impromptu

freestyle cypher as we ran into some U.N.I.D.O.S. students, one of which had a ukulele. We began by talking about the relationship between his MAS experience and relationship to Hip Hop. Top Nax said that it shaped his whole experience with Hip Hop because it made him more of a critical person. As he described it, MAS placed him on a never-ending quest for knowledge and provided structure on how to take in information. Thus speaking to critically thinking about the implications of issues surrounding him. It helped him to understand to differentiate between the intentions of people involved in Hip Hop. He did not have the specific label for the type of MC he had become, such as “conscious MC”, rather that he was a conscious human being that uses music as the avenue for him to reflect that consciousness.

Top Nax elaborated that Hip Hop is a form he uses which to tell his story as reflected by his reality. It is the also a means by which he strongly shares his sense of love as part of what he described as his Hip Hop agenda. It is a place for him to challenge others who come into his circles and attempt to promote “false shit” as he would describe it. He shared a level of awareness he possesses, to write music that helped him in his process of what he sees, the importance of Hip Hop himself and those around him. It speaks to MAS serving as a mirror that reflects his critique of oppression, desire for social justice, and identity as an MC. As he sees it, it is the method he used, to create. Similar to Mez/Mezo’s critique of categorizing Hip Hop, Top Nax explains that Hip Hop should be real and not gimmicky. In addition, MCs should not write within one realm such as movement Hip Hop to target a specific audience because it kills the truth in Hip Hop.

I like listening to music where fools are talking for real and shit. I see that as more, where they are showing they are a conscious human being not a conscious

artists or performer. That's what I think MAS has showed me. At least, it kinda put it in perspective like there are some important as shit you know that people need to hear and maybe Hip Hop isn't the way to do it. That's why I say speeches is the way to go but I see the importance of it man...and so I just do me...I don't do it.

The above excerpt reminds me of the importance of stories and represents how literature in MAS classes that reflected his experiences. Top Nax seeks that same approach from his Hip Hop to relate as a conscious human being. Moreover that Hip Hop is one avenue to apply a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice, but not always the perfect fit depending on the circumstances.

Initially, during our first conversation, Top Nax shared that upon graduation from high school, teacher Curtis Acosta encouraged fellow alumni Turtle Kutz, Mez/Mezo, and himself to return to those same classrooms and do Hip Hop presentations. In the presentations he described that they would talk about Hip Hop's elements sometimes leading to a freestyle sessions with the students.

Some kids were getting down, they loved that shit. For some reason MAS and Hip Hop was like hand in hand, like almost the same thing. Ist's almost like MAS is like the formal Hip Hop, this is how. Yeah in the classroom. That's what we did, we would just go and teach, our aspects of Hip Hop, what we think is Hip Hop and what we think is not Hip Hop. So it was dope man, that's how we encountered and gave back to those classes with Hip Hop involved which was dope man, we had fun.

His experience demonstrates the initial steps that he and others had taken to engage students in gaining the same knowledge he had acquired through MAS using the same spaces, he had used as a student. Further acknowledging the intersections that exist between the Hip Hop and the culturally relevant courses with a social justice focus. It also resonates with prior points in the chapter that emphasize a responsibility to use knowledge and create effective change.

Top Nax emphasized that Hip Hop is a movement within itself and that he just picked up on it and expanded with his own experiences and knowledge. Top Nax continued the Hip Hop workshops for youth beyond the MAS classrooms with Turtle Kutz, Mez/Mezo, and several other members of the Hip Hop community. These former alumni would go out to local community centers in Tucson.

We would just really talk about Hip Hop, we would teach them the four elements and then fifth element, which to me is beat boxing n shit. So we would just talk to them, what's Hip Hop. We would ask them what they thought Hip Hop was, what they think it is. We would be like yeah well that's part of it this and this. So, you know we would do just a little demonstration and give it back. We really just did it, we weren't trying to educate anyone older because they can learn it with themselves, we were just trying to go and educate the kids about it. Just show some love cuz music is love and Hip Hop is love and with more, its unstoppable you know what I'm saying. So we were just trying to spread it out, know what I'm saying? Rather than like the poisonous shit you'd be hearing like on the radio, just brainwash shit, we are trying to break that brainwash like MAS broke the whole educational brainwash on us you know.

Very similar to what Top Nax experienced in the MAS classrooms, the workshops sponsored by the group of Hip Hop heads conducting the workshops would focus on providing youth a level of awareness regarding Hip Hop. The workshops were framed in a way which youth would learn about Hip Hop but at the same time engage a process of develop critical thinking. Drawing correlations from MAS and the educational experiences, they sought to translate that with the youth in relation to Hip Hop and their experiences with it. It demonstrates a level of awareness on the implications of Hip Hop and its use in Chicana/o and Latina/o communities just as Top Nax did in Jose Gonzalez's government course.

Mez/Mezo and Miss Wes spoke to the role of an informal educator role. They explained that they felt a responsibility to share knowledge of Hip Hop. This method became a tool to communicate the critical thinking that they acquired in the classroom.

Top Nax shared a similar experience as he recollected on developing ideas of what seems to be a pedagogical tool to share the history of Hip Hop with the youth. He described the use of Rapping to describe the history of Hip Hop by then including certain elements of the rhymes to provide youth with a demonstration of Deejaying or break dancing.

I have this tight as vision man, we are gonna do the whole workshop in form of the song...I was like I started writing, check it out...it should be like...we started writing to that Tribe Called Quest "Check the Rhyme" [hums beat out]..that shit man, just start explaining the history of it at the beginning and then introducing each element as we go along....I would be flowing and talk where it came from...that whole Bronx Kool Herc Shit..

In this example provided by Top Nax, he along with the other facilitator of the work shop take on the role of public educators by working with what they have available. In a sense developing curriculum by using a song by Hip Hop group A Tribe Called Quest, to apply historical knowledge of Hip Hop. He integrated the elements various ways.

once upon a time
not too long ago
there was a culture that was born
now its four decades old"
DJ Kool Herc, a real smooth brotha
and truly down to earth"
loaded up the speakers in the back of his car
and drove down every street and boulevard
and what it all took place out his house
he brought the sounds, got everybody
to gather around and ready to
get down, get down on it
grabbin' the one's and two's
and straight flaunted
you see he took one record and took another
started mixing two and created one musical number

Then that's when the DJ comes in and we stop flowing...and that fool is gonna be scratchin' and shit...then we come back in:

Top Nax expanded on the actual praxis of the approach he is envisioned, as a public educator by integrating rhymes and eventually each element of Hip Hop.

anyways he started loopin the breaks
and people started moving their arms, legs, and head

Then that's when the b-boys and b-girls get down, that's when they do their demonstration and we stop and the DJS he is mixing it, he's gotta be mixing the breaks while they are getting down...and just like that we are gonna be slowly introducing it...that's what we are gonna be doing in the future now. But we still wanna do that, that's how we give back...at least that's how I give back through all those workshops.

This excerpt demonstrates the use of literary devices gained in the MAS classroom as well the knowledge about Hip Hop history used to engage students in an interactive way. It develops a level of awareness through Top Nax's transformational resistance process nurtured by MAS. Furthermore, it represents his desire to continue social justice work by participating in forging spaces for youth to learn of Hip Hop in a positive manner.

In our conversation regarding his experiences with Hip Hop, he shared a great deal of how Hip Hop is his way of life. Every aspect of the counterstory Top Nax offered reflected a deep and long relationship with the elements of Hip Hop. He drew connections within the framework of MAS' culturally relevant curriculum and social justice emphasis to continue developing his critical thinking. As a result his critical thinking would make the reflection in the mirror clearer that Hip Hop serves the same purpose, as the curriculum and experience in MAS had. Transformational resistance, at its own level, is demonstrated in the positive contribution it has had on Top Nax as a student and in his community involvement, post high school graduation.

Turtle Kutz and I met later on that week at Revolutionary Grounds after his work shift. He expressed that MAS helped him with how to effectively use Hip Hop as an outreach tool.

MAS and school [provided] kinda like the whole outreach tool. You have the power, knowledge, and skill; you should use it and apply it to its best practices. So, doing the workshops and stuff. When the homie Nate took off from Skrappy's it was like a fit for trying to keep it open because it was a necessity to like the neighborhood that have little homies that want to learn how to break but don't know how or they practice and have that will but don't have good direction. Kinda like what MAS taught you that people need that direction. If you don't already know it why have somebody else get lost when you know the road. Graffiti too, people just kind of put their names kinda selfish, why not put something out there that has a message or open other peoples eyes or makes them think twice because most of the time people, I don't know. It's already gotten to the point where people don't read Graffiti because they are so upset about it, they'll just erase it and not care what it says. They'll take a picture and document it though.

In this excerpt, Turtle Kutz draws parallels between the role that MAS and Hip Hop has in potentially offering youth of color positive opportunities. As a result, providing those same options that Turtle Kutz mentioned in our first interview resonates the intersections of MAS and Hip Hop to create pathways for youth to interrogate their surroundings and establish a level of awareness that leads them to understanding the consequences of certain actions. It demonstrated how Turtle Kutz internalized this learning moment from MAS and seeks to apply through outreach to other youth, using Hip Hop.

As we continued the conversation, Turtle Kutz shared counterstories about his involvement with the Hip Hop in the community, post high school. He continued to find avenues outside of high school to apply his knowledge. One example was applying his organizational skills in the dance community. He recounted how at first, it was difficult to involve youth. In addition, attempts at making Hip Hop culture visible in events like park jams played a role as people draw an interest in outreach efforts. He described how people developed an interest, they asked for information for where to learn Breakdancing. These inquiries offered him and other Breakdancers an opportunity to refer them to Skrappy's. Turtle Kutz also shared about his participation in the community Hip Hop

workshops that he did in collaboration with Top Nax Mez/Mezo, and other members of the Tucson Hip Hop community.

Also in the last summer we did like a whole bunch of workshops with the parks and recs here in Tucson. Had that it was pretty cool, I said we reached a good 500 kids almost because each location had like anywhere from 10 and under, some where 13, they called it teen days or whatever but they were younger kids so we had about a good 40 to 50, some had a 100, in like a center... because we would end up going to boys and girls clubs, community centers, parks and recs, or kid co-centers.

Workshops that they would host would last one to two hours and would draw the interest of at least 10 to 20 youth. His example of participating in the workshops with fellow alumni also demonstrates how Turtle Kutz's level that awareness that developed through MAS motivated him to continue doing the work from knowledge gained in the courses. The work with SJEP like the others demonstrates the continued motivation for involvement in social justice work that forges learning spaces for youth in their communities. Hip Hop reflects what he had learned in MAS and represents the opportunities that youth have available to them to improve themselves through Hip Hop workshops. The creation and maintenance of positive spaces is something that is reflected in the importance of hosting the Hip Hop workshops or having people want to learn from being exposed to Breaking in public parks or community centers.

When concluding our conversation about his experiences with Hip Hop and community, Turtle Kutz saw the impact of community involvement and in applying Hip Hop as a tool for outreach to youth who may not know they have options.

This past weekend too, at the Unity Fest cuz I was supposed to break with these little kids that were there but they were there before me but they were just waiting for me and I guess they knew the homie but they were all surprised that he was there and then he started talking to them and they were like "yeah turtle has been helping us dance, he's changed our live.this and that" I was like what? They told Chucho. I talked to him later and he was telling me about it. Kinda made me

realize how important that is, I didn't really think I did but I guess did. Their two brothers out of 6, kinda tough for them trying to stay positive.

The impact as described by the youth Turtle Kutz describes speaks volumes on the manifestations of transformational resistance taking place in the work he does with Hip Hop and youth. The critique he constructed about his surroundings and his desire to make a change for himself and his community led him to become involved in work like SJEP and conducting Hip Hop workshops. As a result we see the impact of MAS on Hip Hop reflected in Turtle Kutz through the affirmations of the positive impact he is having with youth in his community.

When asking all of the alumni how they felt about Hip Hop as a tool for resistance and knowledge preservation/creation in their community; powerful conceptualizations of the role Hip Hop has had in their lives and of others were shared. Turtle Kutz expressed that it shares a positive message in different forms whether it is Graffiti, Emceeing, Rapping, making a cd or mix tape. For him it is an outlet that is positive and he acknowledges that it is not only a tool, but within itself Hip Hop is resistance. Miss Wes draws inspiration from the female Emcees who are self determined. Moreover, she sees it as an important way to reach out to youth and get them involved at Skrappy's where they can learn about the elements and history of Hip Hop. Even if they do not like any of the older Hip Hop artists like Guru, she said, as long as they have that exposure it makes a difference. Top Nax was upfront in stating that it is not a tool but rather a way of life. He describes it as a culture, a way that someone lives and if you want to live a counterculture that fights the system, Hip Hop is a good way to do it. He now sees himself as living through Hip Hop and is moving in that direction to change the world. These counterstories raised questions, what if Hip Hop and its elements ceased to exist?

Mez/Mezo historically reflected on the roots of Hip Hop coming from oppression. In agreement with Top Nax, people abuse Hip Hop like many other things in the world but his imagination lit up when he shared the scenario of the world ending. He said if everything else were gone, that Hip Hop would have to survive. He shares his reflection on the survival and sacredness of cultural traditions on the following excerpt.

I'm thinking damn. What if you really want to watch a movie or listen to a fuckin' song? You won't be able to; it will be gone. I'm thinking it would have to survive, people will start beatboxing and people be like *yo let me hear that gang starr song shit*. Then you would have a whole fuckin' cypher singing that song just so you could hear it and fuckin' it just made me trip out on everything like that. It made me trip out on ceremony and singing and song and the drum and I just started thinking how important that kind of shit is... What I mean is that like those songs would become sacred man and like fuck to be able to hear [a] fuckin' Wu-tang song and then like imagining not having that you know what I mean? But imagine having that when you don't have that. So like it becomes sacred. We would carry them and shit. We would make more songs and it would be like the *tradicion* [tradition]. It's the songs we are carrying and still inventing.

Mez/Mezo describes Hip Hop in a powerful way, in that it intersects with culture, traditions, and survival. Hip Hop would be carried on as ancestral knowledge by community members who honor and value its worth. In a sense it reflects the same responsibility to knowledge that he had described as part of his educational experience in MAS. It demonstrates humanization and validation of one's knowledge and history that reflects a sense of resistance.

We invent songs all the time, but still that same spirit, same shit man and I thought about that with Hip Hop and how it would become that man like *danza* you know what I mean? Breakin would be that much more special. It would be precious n shit. So it just made me like, I remember coming up with that and trippin the fuck out and being like hell yeah this shit is tight. It kinda just made me want to hold onto it that much more and that much tighter you know what I mean...But I know that a lot of people that come from that lineage of Hip Hop would keep that shit and that would be it's own lineage of culture and so like how things would be carried. Just the same as everything else, Hip Hop is just a repeat what we used to have; the drum, the fuckin' dance, the movements, the tongue

and shit...your expression, your art...that's your flowers....that's your shit. That's my profound ending.

He speaks of Hip Hop in profound sense that highlights it as a part of a cultural legacy of traditional wealth handed down by our ancestors in the form of song and dance. That Hip Hop in a sense is nothing new to us, it just a different form in which our ancestral traditions are communicated. The explanation by Mez/Mezo represents a deeper look into the Chicana/o and Indigenous relationship that one holds to valuable knowledge. Hip Hop in the form as he explained it has to survive as does the knowledge acquired from MAS.

Data Analysis: Identifying Transformational Resistance

After reviewing the findings from the interviews with the MAS alumni, the findings suggest several things. First, the findings demonstrate that through a curriculum that is culturally relevant and social justice oriented, the MAS model of Critical Compassionate Intellectualism had a positive impact on the alumni. This positive impact is exemplified in the manifestations of transformational resistance in the alumni's educational and Hip Hop experiences. Their MAS educational experience introduced and fostered the alumni's critiques of oppression and desires for social justice. Although the levels of awareness and involvement in social justice matters varied for each alumnus, the participants demonstrated that transformational resistance was present and looked differently for each one. Although in certain instances the desire for social justice for the participants manifested in similar ways such as being involved with the Social Justice Education Project or participating in Hip Hop workshops at local Tucson community centers.

The findings in the interviews are the alumni's educational experiences present strong correlations between their MAS educational experiences and the characteristics of transformational resistance. Each alumni offered diverse counterstories on their levels of awareness, but all found intersections with how they began to develop or understand their critical consciousness as a result of being involved in MAS courses. This critical consciousness for the alumni helped them hold a mirror to themselves as, Top Nax shared. The reflection of this mirror provided a space of reflection to begin unpacking the intersections of oppression that they have encountered and at times internalized. Through this unpacking and understanding of self they were able to better understand, label, and identify certain issues in their communities. This led to each of them to develop a desire for involvement in social justice work, and each of them found diverse venues to continue this work after graduating from high school. The findings demonstrate that all of the alumni found a space to continue this work via the Social Justice Education Project. Overall, what this implies is that the MAS student services model of CCI has positive results in engaging their students via culturally relevant curriculums that are social justice centered. The results are that students undergo a critical process of growth and find a passion for social justice, thus further demonstrating the possibilities of transformational resistance to take place.

The manifestations of transformational resistance would take place in various forms and at various levels, but as the evidence demonstrates--they were engaged and nurtured throughout the participation of the alumni in MAS. The impact would be something that they would internalize and in turn, they would see the importance of their acquired knowledge and use it as a tool to give back and create positive change in their

communities. For many of them, Hip Hop was an avenue to do that. The alumni spoke about the instructional practices of teachers like Curtis Acosta and Jose Gonzalez, who brought Hip Hop into the classroom and connected both worlds. Moreover what it would do is further unpack the relationships and understandings that Miss Wes, Top Nax, Turtle Kutz, and Mez/Mezo had of Hip Hop. Their critical consciousness and level of awareness would transcend far beyond the classroom and into the social justice work that each and everyone became involved with, particularly Hip Hop for some.

What this means for the first two research questions is that Hip Hop could be classified as a form in which transformational resistance manifested for the alumni even after graduation. They took the knowledge from one specific area and made it that much more relevant to their lived experiences. Whether they were Graffiti writers, MCees, DeeJays, or Breakers; Hip Hop became a way in which to continue reflecting their quest for knowledge, social justice, and personal growth. It also speaks to the larger picture on how transformational resistance even within Hip Hop just does not take on one form, but could take on various forms that reach different types of youth in various circumstances. Whether they are dealing with issues of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia to name a few, Hip Hop offers opportunities to engage critical thinking and greater possibilities to create positive change for youth. What made Hip Hop that much more of a powerful tool was a mirror into their ancestry via culturally relevant curriculum and the opportunities to create a better world.

Reflecting on the counterstories of the MAS alumni on their Hip Hop and community experiences, there are various intersections between the impact of MAS' curriculum, critical consciousness, and a desire for social justice. As McLaren (1993)

stated that manifestations of transformational resistance can look differently in its manifestations. The findings affirm the transformational resistance manifest in the understanding, relationships, practice, and use of Hip Hop for the alumni. Although the manifestations of transformational resistance varied for each one, they shared similarities in their level of awareness and application of knowledge in work to better their communities. Whether it is being behind a pair of turntables and leaving a long lasting impression on a young girl or sharing the reflection through a mirror of Hip Hop inspired by MAS; the alumni's Hip Hop and community experiences manifested transformational resistance that was engaged or further developed by MAS' student services model. The transformational resistance in this case is that we see a positive impact of culturally relevant curriculum with a social justice emphasis that impacted the lives of Miss Wes, Turtle Kutz, Top Nax, and Mez/Mezo to continue and share the knowledge acquired in the classroom via Hip Hop and community building.

The core of transformational resistance lies in the tenets of Critical Race Theory and Latina/o Critical Theory was used in this research to ground it as a framework. In analyzing the findings, the experiences of the alumni draw on these tenets to further demonstrate a deeper understanding of transformational resistance. In the midst of Arizona's anti-(im)migrant/Mexican sentiment, the positionality of each alumni's racial and ethnic background in relation to the positive impacts that MAS has had on their lives informs their critiques of oppression and desires for social justice. This is as a result of MAS centering their experiences as Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in the curriculum that investigating the world through race is a critical aspect of their educational experience as well as their involvement in Hip Hop. Moreover, the understanding of intersections

within race and other forms of oppression is present in their educational and Hip Hop experiences. Something that is briefly touched upon by Miss Wes and Turtle Kutz is in the intersections with issues of gender. Miss Wes shares how the Tucson Hip Hop scene mostly consists of males while Turtle Kutz recalls class activities around gendered violence in his MAS classes that helped him better understand the effects of his actions and what he says as a male.

The experiences of the alumni demonstrate how both their experiences in MAS and Hip Hop greatly centralize their knowledge as one that is valid. Through this validation as students to Hip Hop MCees, DeeJays, Graffiti writers, or B-Boys/B-Girls a critical understanding of their realities is constructed. One clear example of this is Top Nax's experience in his first in class writing assignment where for the first time he felt that his writing process was validated based on his own capacity to learn and write what he could or read stories of people like him. The collection of the alumni's counterstories in the critical ethnography serves as a documentation of their experiential knowledge drawing on their lived experiences through MAS and Hip Hop. Thus, further contributing to existing work by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal to draw from oral history data and counterstorytelling to analyze Chicana and Chicano school resistance (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1989).

Furthermore, through this CRT and LatCrit lens of transformational resistance, the focus on Hip Hop and educational experiences draws on grounding in a perspective that is interdisciplinary. This helps to better contextualize the levels of transformational resistance in the experiences of the alumni and interpret the various ways that critiques of oppression and desires for social justice manifest for the alumni whether it is reading a

banned book or behind a mic and reciting lyrics that reflect their reality. Each alumnus developed a sense of commitment for social justice via long standing relationships with Hip Hop culture and their positive experience with MAS; it is just that the commitment of each alumni manifested in various ways. Manifestations including community gardening, brief periods with the non-profit world, Hip Hop workshops, indigenous ceremony, or simply being visibly present in spaces that impact youth's perception of their role and positionality in the world.

The last tenet of CRT and LatCrit that grounds transformational resistance is a challenge to dominant ideology. As discussed in the previous chapters, the dominant narrative or majoritarian story of Arizona is one of anti-(im)migrant/Mexican sentiment. MAS was seen as a threat to the status quo because of not only its success in the academic lives of its students but also because it challenged deficit frameworks, self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in society. Thus taking us back to the research question of how do the manifestations of transformational resistance via the experiences of the MAS alumni compose counter stories to a majoritarian narrative? The manifestations of transformational resistance as demonstrated in the findings compose counterstories that challenge the majoritarian narrative of delegitimizing and dehumanizing the knowledge encapsulated by each student who was profoundly impacted by MAS in a transformative manner. These variant levels of transformational resistance forge counter spaces of oppositional knowledge and consciousness that dispels the conservative's crusade and rhetoric that lead to the dismantling of the program.

Gathering the stories of MAS' positive impact on students and transcendence into Hip Hop greatly challenges the assumptions initially introduced by Tom Horne and other

right wing politicians. The counterstories of the alumni offer stories of personal transformations that inspired them to want to share with the world because of a healthy, loving, and compassionate learning environments they participated in through MAS. Their counterstories demonstrate that they were much more engaged with their educational experiences because it was relevant. The findings show that they were not indoctrinated with a sense of individualism or denigration of American values. Rather, they learned the importance of critical thinking and became positive contributors in their communities via social justice work such as SJEP or Hip Hop workshops. The findings of Tom Horne demonstrate logic of reverse racism through the lens of a white hetero male, as critiqued in the methodology section because of the role they have in composing and maintaining narratives of power. The counterstories demonstrate that the MAS courses did not promote the overthrow of U.S. government, the resentment towards a race or group of people, or advocate ethnic solidarity. Rather the counterstories here tell us of empowering educational experiences through a relevant curriculum that inspired students to share their knowledge and growth with their families and communities through different methods including Hip Hop culture.

When considering the literature presented in Chapter Three, the findings draw intersections and build upon some of the ideas presented. The manifestations of transformational resistance in the counterstories of Top Nax, Turtle Kutz, Miss Wes, and The Mez/Mezo as a result of their involvement in MAS dispels deficit perspectives of urban youth of color as perpetrators of unhealthy environments. Rather MAS provided an avenue to understand their realities and challenge historically being “othered” in inequitable educational experiences. The mirror, as mentioned by Top Nax in his

counterstory and Davila and Bradley in the literature, that further create possibilities of revealing injustice, struggle, and foster resistance. The culturally relevant curriculum of MAS developed those tools of critiquing oppression and desire for social justice that compose transformational resistance as addressed by Ginwright. At its core, MAS and its CCI model were created to counter racial injustice within the educational system (Romero, Arce, Cammarota, 2009). Thus attesting to its threat to the status quo as it created organic intellectuals that investigated and desired to challenge the inequalities that comprised their lives and environments both in and out of the classroom. Moreover the relationship that Hip Hop and educational experiences share in the counterstories further illustrate the potential of Hip Hop as a space in and out of the classroom to interrogate power and deficit views of Chicana/o and Latina/o youth.

Building on Existing work and Expanding Data Analysis of Transformational Resistance

The counterstories of the alumni draw several intersections with the literature written about CRE and the Chicana/o Experience with Hip Hop. Furthermore, these intersections help to inform both the analysis of transformational resistance in the counterstories but also contribute to building on existing work. As mentioned previously, the success of the students who were a part of MAS is measured in various ways including high graduation rates, high-standardized scores, and high enrollment in institutions of higher learning. The counterstories of these alumni are evidence that much success grew from the positive impacts of MAS's CCI model, particularly in the way that it transformed the students' lives. Both of these positive attributes evolving from participation in the MAS program challenged deficit notions of Chicana/o and Latina/o

students. Moreover, they expand on the literature that challenges ideas of urban students of color as problems with not positive contributions. The findings in the counterstories demystify deficits. In fact, the alumni shared that they found a healthy learning environment in the MAS program, in contrast to their previous educational environment that had “othered” them. Their positive contributions were demonstrated in how they engaged their level of awareness with community work such as SJEP, Hip Hop workshops, or gardening to name a few. This was cultivated and nurtured by the CCI’s CRE and social justice focus of MAS.

The CCI model informs us that it was not designed to fix students as some deficit approaches to teaching discussed in the literature to do so. Rather it prepared students for real life situations through what Acosta shares as culturally relevant literature and critical compassion that engages the students’ critical consciousness. Through this approach the findings compliment CRE literature that says that students must be engaged in the educational process as holders and creators of knowledge. In turn, this knowledge can be applied in ways to address social toxins in their environments. When positive options are limited, MAS created spaces for marginalized students when the public education system has failed to educate Chicanas/os. Moreover, as Davila and Bradley (2010) explained mirroring of schools and society at large, MAS created opportunities for transformational resistance to grow while highlighting hope and revealing the struggles of everyday life for students in MAS courses. MAS through its CCI model provided students ways to develop and apply critical investigative learning tools to unpack issues of power as discussed by Sleeter (2002). At the same time challenged the notion that CRE should be celebratory by pushing back for to be more critical and active in creating change.

Through a framework of social transformation, we see MAS' impact through the alumni's counterstories as they recount the impact that the courses had on their own transformation as well how that reflected in their community, family, and Hip Hop (Camarota & Ginwright, 2002).

The Hip Hop counterstories of the alumni unpack a bit more of the existing literature on Hip Hop and portrays how Hip Hop can be used as an educational tool to visualize the Chicana/o experience with Hip Hop. The alumni recounted several encounters with Hip Hop in the classroom and expand on its significance by contributing more of their own experiences outside the classroom. The experiences of the alumni occurred both in formal and informal educational spaces and demonstrated the importance of Hip Hop as a voice rooted in the realities urban students and is representative of resistance (Morrell, 2002). Moreover, it speaks to the level of transformational resistance fostered by MAS in the lives of the alumni and the various ways the knowledge attained in MAS continued to reappear in their continued involvement with Hip Hop. What resonated with me in the same piece by Morrell and the counterstories was how in various forms some of the alumni demonstrated roles as educators in working with youth using Hip Hop. Public educators as described by Ballivian and Herrera (2012), in this case, understand their realities through critical consciousness as evidenced by the alumni's desire for social justice worked with what they had readily available to them.

In many ways the counterstories serve as challenges to majoritarian ideologies and narratives, the involvement in Hip Hop and relationship that the alumni drew from their experience in MAS foster social commentaries. Students deconstructed social

identities including their own and created spaces that at times were not available to them in classrooms or society (Gosa, 2011; Land & Stovall, 2009; Pulido, 2009). Both of these are great contributors to the diverse levels of transformational resistance exemplified by the alumni in their counterstories. The counterstories of the alumni's experiences with Hip Hop help us in understanding how Hip Hop can be interpreted as a CRE model where the educational experiences of students of color are humanized just as MAS has done through its CCI model (Stovall, 2002).

Taking the findings around full circle back to the CCI model of MAS as discussed in Chapter Two, the counterstories pose a challenge to the myth of HB 2281 and the conservative rhetoric that manifested its creation, passing, and implementation. The CCI model and MAS as whole demonstrated the transformative impact of the program on students that in the eyes of conservatives posed a threat to their power in the midst of a demographic shift in the United States. CCI contributed to the development of awareness for students of color in MAS classrooms through a CRE and social justice approach. What was at stake was power and a challenge to the status quo in Arizona with students not only rupturing the educational pipeline but finding a voice centered by the MAS curriculum that developed positive attitudes and encouraged cross-cultural exchange and community building. The myth of HB 2281 and the attack on MAS took a curriculum centered in critical thinking, community service, critical consciousness, and social transformation with an approach that was culturally and historically relevant with a social justice centered approach and misconstrued it under the fear mongering anti-(im)migrant/Mexican rhetoric. The development and nurturing of transformational resistance became a threat to the maintenance of power. My findings in the counterstories

support my argument that the MAS CCI model engaged and fostered levels of transformational resistance for the alumni. In addition, transformational resistance did exist in the Hip Hop experiences of the alumni but all varied or manifested in several ways. My findings support existing work on the positive impacts of CRE in addition further document the work and experiences in relation to the MAS program. The insight into the experiences of the alumni further informs developing literature on the Chicana/o Hip Hop experience. In turn helps us to further understand the potential for future work expanding on Hip Hop as CRE through cultural customs, traditions, and history of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. This documentation serves as evidence of counterstories that pose a challenge to Arizona's and the national dominant narrative of historical exclusion and othering of Chicanas/os, Latinas/os, Mexicans, Indigenas, and people of color in the United States.

Further Research and Implications

This is a study primarily focused on the educational and Hip Hop experiences of MAS alumni in Tucson and will contribute to existing work and literature. However, it is important to note certain limitations. As a result of waiting for approval of my human subjects, my research plans to conduct interviews and meet with the research participants was limited. Unfortunately, I felt what would have better contextualized the counter narrative in this research and would have been more engaged and participatory research in spaces where the alumni were involved with Hip Hop culture. Limitations also included attempting to have a wider range of time to meet with the participants to have conducted group introduction to the work as well as debriefing, but arrangements were

made to provide all the necessary information to the participants prior to interviews being conducted based on their availability. While the focus of this thesis project was on Chicana/o and Latina/o educational experiences and involvement with Hip Hop, it is not a complete insight to this area. Rather it serves as an introduction to bridging the areas of education and Hip Hop culture and potential intersections with fostering transformational resistance for Chicana/o students.

This research has helped to better understand in which direction I would like to continue similar research. Influenced by Marcos Pizarro's piece "Searching for Curanderas: A Quest to Revive Chicana/o Studies," I am interested in continuing research in exploring diverse ways to contribute, expand, and challenge the pedagogy of Chicana/o Studies as an educator. I wonder the extent to which Chicana/o Studies leaves long standing impacts on our students in a transformative manner. I am first and foremost interested in documenting the Chicana/o Knowledge Systems within the elements of Hip Hop. Furthermore, I would like to investigate the manifestations of transformational resistance between urban Chicana/o and Latina/o students at public universities enrolled in Chicana/o Studies programs through counterstorytelling. Through this approach, in the future I would like to focus on bridging transformational resistance and Hip Hop as a pedagogy and praxis for curriculum in Chicana/o Studies curriculum and instruction for working with Chicana/o and Latina/o Students in higher education.

Conclusion

“Today, especially colored by my experiences in Arizona, I see Raza Studies as a discipline that combines the concept of creation-resistance. One cannot exist without the other. Mirroring the roots of the Chicano Movement, this discipline has traditionally been viewed as being anchored in a pedagogy of resistance. When it functioned in its ideal state, the discipline was at the service of this movement and community.” (Rodriguez 2013)

When I reflect on the completion of this thesis project, I think of the significance of the project. That significance takes me back to the title of the thesis and specifically “dignity’s elements”. I draw back to my experiences with culturally relevant education and Hip Hop that was uplifting, critical, and spoke truth to my reality. To me, those experiences humanized me and helped me understand my value as the son of Mexican immigrant parents. This extends beyond myself and to those who struggled before so that we could forge spaces of cultural affirmation, resistance, and community building in and out of the classroom. It is because of this that I had the opportunity to sit in Mr. Soza’s class in high school, go to college, and graduate with a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Chicana and Chicano Studies. What this has taught me is the grave importance and transformation that takes place a student in educational classes that provided a mirror to hold up to ourselves. It is in that moment of reflection that we see our rostro [face] with dignity and love.

MAS was that mirror for Top Nax, Miss Wes, Turtle Kutz, and The Mez/Mezo. The same impact that Chicana and Chicano studies had on me in providing education with dignity, MAS has provided the same for the participants in this project. Although it was only four people that were interviewed, the impact of MAS on their lives and education attests transformation in the lives of countless other students who were once a part of this program. The element of dignity takes shape in the transformational resistance

sparked and kept lit by MAS, Hip Hop, and community/movement building for the participants in various unique ways. Although Arizona's conservative right has dismantled MAS, the counterstories are living testaments to that the teachings and experiences take shape and form in various forms but live in the hearts of the students, teachers, and community in seeing reflections in others [In Lak'Ech] and seeking the root of the truth [Panche Be]. The dignity in education that reflects our living ancestry, roots, culture, and lives is one that resonates that our existence is a form of resistance.

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Appendix A
Dignity's Elements: Mexican American Studies' Transformational Resistance and
Hip Hop Manifestations through Chicana/o Counterstorytelling
First Interview

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and Introduction:

Good afternoon. Thank you once again for taking the time to participate in this project and today's interview. Before we commence the interview session, I'd like to provide you with an opportunity to review some of the details previously discussed in our first initial group meeting.

Purpose of the first interview:

As we discussed in the initial group meeting, the individual group meetings will consist of two separate individual interviews ranging from two and two and half hours. Today's interview will focus on discussing a set of questions pertaining to your experience as a student within the Mexican American Studies program.

Confidentiality:

Any information you are sharing with me today will be used for the purposes of this research study only. You will be by a pseudonym in order to protect your privacy. Today's session will be audio-recorded. In addition, I will also be taking notes of the conversation. At one point, the audio recordings may be transcribed for the project's analysis. All recorded audio files, transcribed files, and notes will be stored securely in my password protected external hard drive and lap top. All files will be stored indefinitely upon the completion of this project. Only the researcher, Bryant Partida, identified on the Consent Form will have access to all files and notes.

Informed Consent:

This notice provides a summary of information discussed prior in the Consent form you have read and signed. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any questions or discuss anything you are not comfortable or feel safe about. At any time you are able to skip a question and will not encounter penalties for answering or not answering. In addition you may also ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time without any consequence. You may also withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any time and cease to further participate in this project. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your consent to participate in this project.

Identification and contact information of principal investigator:

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project, the details of the study, or any other concerns please contact Bryant Partida at his email address: (omitted for thesis). You may also contact Bryant Partida via telephone at (omitted for thesis).

Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns before we begin the interview?

II. Interview Session Part I:

a. Interview Questions Theme 1: Mexican American Studies
Educational Experience

1. Could you please share your name (&Hip Hop identity), age, how long you have resided in Tucson?
2. How would you describe your identity? For example ethnic, cultural, political, gender, sexual? Preferred Pronouns?
3. How would you describe your experience in the Mexican American Studies Program? Including what high school and how long you participated in MAS.
4. Could you describe how MAS helped you better understand your lived experiences and social justice while challenging different forms of oppression? How you see your community and the world?
5. In your opinion, why was MAS important to you and your community? After graduating, could you share how you have applied what was learned in MAS?
6. At any point in your participation in the MAS program, did you encounter Hip Hop in or out of the classroom. If so, please elaborate on some of those encounters?

III. Post Interview Debrief and Conclusion:

Thank you once again for participating in the interview session today. I appreciate you taking your time to participate in this project and sharing your experiences. Just to reemphasize that what you have shared today with me is confidential. Finally I would like to provide you all with an opportunity to ask any questions that you have about the process. Are there any questions before we conclude? Before ending the interview session today, I'd like to take some time right now and schedule our second interview. Once again thank you and I look forward to our second interview.

Appendix B
Dignity's Elements: Mexican American Studies' Transformational Resistance and
Hip Hop Manifestations through Chicana/o Counterstorytelling
Second Interview

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and Introduction:

Good afternoon. Thank you once again for taking the time to participate in this project and today's interview. Before we commence the interview session, I'd like to provide you with an opportunity to review some of the details previously discussed in our first initial group meeting.

Purpose of the second interview:

As we discussed in the initial group meeting, the individual group meetings will consist of two separate individual interviews ranging from two and two and half hours. Today's interview will focus on discussing a set of questions pertaining to your experience and relationship with Hip Hop and community.

Confidentiality:

Any information you are sharing with me today will be used for the purposes of this research study only. You will be by a pseudonym in order to protect your privacy. Today's session will be audio-recorded. In addition, I will also be taking notes of the conversation. At one point, the audio recordings may be transcribed for the project's analysis. All recorded audio files, transcribed files, and notes will be stored securely in my password protected external hard drive and lap top. All files will be stored indefinitely upon the completion of this project. Only the researcher, Bryant Partida, identified on the Consent Form will have access to all files and notes.

Informed Consent:

This notice provides a summary of information discussed prior in the Consent form you have read and signed. Your participation in this project is voluntary and you are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any questions or discuss anything you are not comfortable or feel safe about. At any time you are able to skip a question and will not encounter penalties for answering or not answering. In addition you may also ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time without any consequence. You may also withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any time and cease to further participate in this project. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your consent to participate in this project.

Identification and contact information of principal investigator:

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project, the details of the study, or any other concerns please contact Bryant Partida at his email address: (omitted for thesis). You may also contact Bryant Partida via telephone at (omitted for thesis).

Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns before we begin the interview?

II. Interview Session Part I:

a. Interview Questions Theme 2: Hip Hop and Community

1. What is your first recollection of an encounter with Hip Hop culture? (Artists, Graffiti piece etc.)
2. What is your relationship to Hip Hop? Which element of Hip Hop have you connected to the most in practice?
3. Could you describe do you practice Hip Hop in your community? I.e. recording, performance, community gatherings, workshops, organizing, knowledge/movement building?
4. Could you describe how your educational experience in MAS has shaped your knowledge and your relationship to Hip Hop?
5. Has Hip Hop come to be an important tool of vocalizing realities? If so, how and what?
6. Do you feel Hip Hop is an important tool for resistance and knowledge preservation/creation in your community? Yes or no? Why?

III. Post Interview Debrief and Conclusion:

Thank you once again for participating in the interview session today. I appreciate you taking your time to participate in this project and sharing your experiences. Just to reemphasize that what you have shared today with me is confidential. Finally I would like to provide you all with an opportunity to ask any questions that you have about the process. Are there any questions before we conclude? Before ending the interview session today, I'd like to take some time right now and check in with your availability for our group debriefing.

Once again thank you and I look forward to our group debriefing.