2019

Understanding the Politics of Knowledge and How It Unfolds in the United States: The Mexican American Studies Program, and the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson AZ

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Understanding the Politics of Knowledge and How it Unfolds in the United States: The Mexican American Studies Program, and the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson AZ

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Curriculum and Instruction)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2019

Date of final oral examination: 5/17/2019

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank several individuals and organizations that directly and indirectly helped to shape and transform this body of work. This process was truly transformative, and I am forever grateful and blessed to have a supportive family and community that believed in my Dream. As a child, I was taught to dream, even if it meant facing adversity. My mother, Flavia Facio Rodriguez, taught us how to dream by example, and who my siblings and I are today is completely a result of her hope and dreaming. We stand on the aspirations and visions of our mother.

To my mother, your hope and self-determination will be talked about for generations to come—I'll make sure of that. I would also like to acknowledge my siblings, Sergio, Marisela, Hector, and Armando, whose strength, lessons, and drive I carried throughout my entire graduate career. You all were the example I strived to be as a brother, son, and overall human being. I carry a little of every single one of you in my heart and mind, and I hope to make you proud in all I do. To my father, equally, thank you for your support and example, I hope to be as fit and musically talented as you are one day.

To Esmeralda and Camilia Valentina, this work is dedicated to you. This work was written thinking about Camila Valentina's future. Camila, know that your father and mother will will always fight for a world where who you are matters, and who your ancestors were also matter. Our hope is that we continue to build a more just world for you and your generation. We love you Camila Valentina. To Esmeralda, I could not have done any of this without you. Your strength and spirit motivated me throughout this entire project, and I am eternally grateful to you. I truly appreciated your patience and brilliance during the long discussions, breakdowns, and

breakthroughs. You are my rock, and I am fortunate to confront life with you at my side. You walked with me every step of the way, and together we jumped through every hurdle—thank you for always backing me up. My joys and accomplishments are yours as well, and I am extremely blessed that our spirits found each other. Te quiero!

Equally, I would like to thank the Friday seminar, who saw countless drafts and revisions of this dissertation, and who equally helped in its theoretical conceptualization. I would like to acknowledge my committee listed above, as well as, a special recognition to my advisor Michael W. Apple for his insight, guidance, and mentorship, both the Santa Ana, CA in me and the Paterson, NJ in him, often connected in ways that were useful and profound for me. Likewise, I would like to acknowledge the Leadership Institute—specifically, Seema Kapani for her guidance and mentorship: I owe so much of my reflection to your mirrors. Thank you for creating space for my growth and humanization. I will always pass it forward. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the Xicanx Institute for Teaching and Organizing (XITO) in Tucson, AZ for opening up their homes and hearts to me. I will always be in awe of how you all live in justice and lead by example. I hope to carry and strive with you all the responsibility and commitment to make this world a better place for our children and communities.

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ABSTRACT

The increasingly diverse demographics can no longer submit to the old paradigms and Eurocentric views behind westernized conceptions of learning and instruction (Grande, 2015). Scholars point to disengagement of marginalized communities of color from the schooling environment and express concerns over national curricula as being non-relevant to the historical and social-cultural realities of these communities in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). Within this paradigm, notions of success are often measured by cognitive benchmarks like grades, GPA, graduation rates, and standardized test scores. By 2044, more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group, and, specifically, the Latino/a/Hispanic population is projected to increase from 55 million in 2014 to 119 million in 2060, an increase of 115% (Colby & Ortman, 2015). The role that hegemony and ideology play in the production and reproduction of national curriculums, as well as expectations for national standards, are explored in this dissertation. The social-cultural, political, economic, and historical complexities of education and its perceived purpose to secure upward mobility and in-group identities are explored in this analysis. The nation's educational standards consistently reinforce and maintain a specific status quo as defined by western Eurocentric ideals, values, and principles (Apple, 2000). Where then do Indigenous and (im)migrant ideals, values, and principles fit when the state is conceptualizing inclusive education for all? The Ethnic Studies Ban of the Mexican American Studies Program (MAS) at Tucson Unified School District in Arizona is the topic of this dissertation. This ban, as demonstrated by legislation HB 2281, which outlawed the award-winning MAS program in 2010, is a clear example of how hegemony imposes westernized ideals and delegitimizes indigenous values and forms of education (Cambium Learning, 2011). The

achievements and counter hegemonic pedagogy of the MAS program and how official knowledge has controlled the curriculum to reproduce a default dominant narrative are explored in this dissertation (Apple, 1993, 2000).

CHAPTER 1

On May 11, 2010, House Bill 2281, the Ethnic Studies Ban, was signed by then acting Arizona Governor, Jan Brewer. This bill was designed to specifically eliminate the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). This bill clearly demonized and prohibited the MAS program from being taught in the TUSD's K-12 schools. Tom Horne, the creator of the bill and former State Superintendent of Arizona, filed this legislation specifically targeting the elimination of the MAS program, his reasoning was based on saying that the program was biased, and one sided, Horne equally argued the program taught students resentment and hate speech (Palos et al., 2011).

Up until this bill was passed by the State of Arizona, the MAS program had been recognized nationally for being an award-winning program whose curricular design and pedagogical approach specifically closed in on the achievement gap, thus enhancing marginalized students' performance on standardized testing and state evaluation (Cambium Learning, 2011). Prior to HB 2281, the TUSD had benefited from the success of the MAS program. Ultimately, the MAS program fostered the development of critical consciousness, promoted social and educational transformation, and advocated for critical race pedagogy of authentic caring (Valenzuela, 1999). Likewise, students learned from a critical curriculum designed for college-level courses (Cabrera, Milem, & Marx 2012; Cambium Learning, 2011).

The MAS program had proven to benefit its student participants by demonstrating an increase in test scores, and higher graduation rates amongst Mexican American, Chicana/o, Latina/o, Hispanic minorities (Cambium Learning, 2011). Studies carried out by the TUSD on March 7, 2011 show that students who took MAS courses performed above non-MAS students

in standardized AIMS reading and writing tests (Brummer & Rusk, 2011). The intention of this audit, on behalf of the then Acting Superintendent, Dr. John Pedicone, was to demonstrate that the MAS program was acting against the premise of HB 2281. Both Tom Horne and Dr. Pedicone wanted to find the MAS program out of compliance with the recently passed HB 2281 (Brummer & Rusk, 2011).

The following outcomes demonstrated in the Cambium Curriculum Audit on behalf of the Tucson Unified School District determined effectively, the program was in compliance with HB 2281. The audit further evidenced the program was actually graduating students at a much higher percentage than those students not enrolled in MASD. The following quotes were taken from the Cambium Curriculum Audit (Cambium Learning, 2011):

- "There is a positive measurable difference between MASD and the non-MASD comparison group of students. Data indicates that the graduation rate of students in the MASD program is higher than those not in the program" (Cambium Learning, 2011, p. 49).
- "Juniors taking a MAS course are more likely than their peers to pass the reading and writing AIMS subject test if they had previously failed those tests in their sophomore year" (Cambium Learning, 2011, p. 49).
- "High school juniors taking a MASD course are more likely to pass the reading and writing portion of the AIMS subject tests if they had previously failed those subtests in their sophomore year. Consequently, high school seniors enrolled in a MASD course are more likely to graduate than their peers" (Cambium Learning, 2011, p. 49).

Although this audit positively favored the MAS program, Tom Horne, and his new State Education Superintendent, John Huppenthal, created their own independent audit and inconsequentially moved to deem the MAS program in violation of HB 2281 (Astor, 2017). The State of Arizona held 10% of the Tucson district's funding, roughly $15 million, until the MAS program was effectively removed from the district (Astor, 2017). The TUSD held 53,500 students in its district; 60% of these students were Chicana/o, Latina/o, and/or Hispanic-identified. The removal of the MAS program was drastic for all of those students who saw themselves reflected in the MAS program curriculum.

This bill caused turmoil among the students and teachers who participated and benefitted from the MAS program, as the bill had essentially demonized Mexican American Studies as anti-American and had portrayed both the teachers and students as extreme radicals (Brummer & Rusk, 2011. HB 2281 (2010) specifically accused the MAS program for

> (a) promoting the overthrow of the U.S. government, (b) promoting resentment toward a race or class of people, (c) purposely designing curricula primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group, and (d) specifically advocating ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals. (p. 1)

The MAS program and its community suffered immensely since the passing of HB 2281. The MAS curriculum was censored and even the books used in the program were banned. Books such as *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, *Drown* by Junot Diaz, *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare, *The Devil's Highway* by Luis Urrea, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie, *Feminism Is for Everyone* by bell hooks, *A Place to Stand* by Jimmy Santiago Baca, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldua, *Like Water for*

Chocolate, by Laura Esquivel, *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, *Los Tucsonenses: The Mexican Community in Tucson, 1854-1941* by Thomas Sheridan, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire, *Occupied America* by Rodolfo Acuña, and *Bless Me Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya were some of the books that could not be read or discussed in the MAS program due to HB 2281. As I developed a consciousness and engaged my own process of identity and context in my college years, these books told a narrative that I truly understood and experienced. I saw myself reflected in this literature. It was because of these books that I decided to embrace the world of education.

The students were devastated, and with them, the national Mexican American community as well. Many students took to the streets in protest and lobbied their TUSD officials to challenge the law rather than align with its implications. Student coalitions formed, such as United Nondiscriminatory Individuals Demanding Our Studies (UNIDOS). These students were both current students and alumni from the MAS program. This group acted autonomously and strategically advocating for their right to education. UNIDOS did teach-ins, engaged the community, and participated in direct action-taking over the school board meeting in symbolism, declaring themselves the new school board. Students were heard chanting in marches with phrases such as, “When education is under attack, what do you do? Fight back”! The students fought back exhaustively for their education and with them their local and national community as well (Acosta, 2013; Cammarota, 2012). Esperanza, one of the former MAS students, narrated:

> April 26th was when a group of student activist chained themselves to the school board in order to postpone the vote to make MAS an elective. If [MAS courses] were an elective, [students] would be able to take the classes that they actually need and [the MAS

> program] would have died out. So, they [student] were trying to postpone it [board vote], and it [student action] worked. But then the following meeting on May 3rd it [board meeting] was filled with swat teams and policemen, and security guards. My friend's mom was being yanked by her hair, she was kicked in the ribs, and my friend was thrown by her hair across the parking lot. The police were very brutal to people that I know and care about, yet nothing was said about them, yet we are the ones who are trying to overthrow people and be mean.

The teachers of the MAS program were persecuted, harassed, fired, and censored, both inside and out of the classrooms. Community members fought alongside their students in support for the MAS program and, through the years, the supporters of the MAS program were met with invalidation and denial (Acosta & Mir, 2012; Cammarota, 2012). Many of the teacher's faced unemployment, fear, and instability as to the future of the MAS program. Many of the students protested daily, gave their entire energy to the injustice of the law, and fought in defense of their education. The narratives that still exist given the impact of HB 2281 are strongly felt in the collective consciousness of the Tucson community. The heaviness and exhaustive undertones of community stories still echo deeply in Tucson. Former MAS Teacher, Andres, narrated how the State of Arizona further harassed the teachers:

> [The State of Arizona] be in our classroom, everything from being in our classroom to police following us around. From the confiscation of home computers, that type of surveillance, coming into our houses with supinas to death threats. We all have families we all have children, so that was pretty scary in that sense, but we knew what we were up against.

Andres's narrative is shared throughout this dissertation; the impact and repression of the State of Arizona affected the entire community of Tucson. One can only imagine the turmoil and stress that existed with the students, teachers, and community of the MAS program. To process the severity of HB 2281, and to realize that your history, perspective, and identity are in opposition and against the law, is incomprehensible. The fact that, for 7 years, HB 2281 was in effect—the Mexican American history and context was officially against the law—demonstrates the scary possibilities embraced in the United States.

Just recently, HB 2281 was nullified with a declaration that the law was designed with racial animus against the MAS program. Judge Wallace A. Tashima, 2017 declared, "The court is convinced that decisions regarding the MAS program were motivated by a desire to advance a political agenda by capitalizing on race-based fears" (Astor, 2017, para. 3). The judge further stated that HB 2281 infringed on the First and Fourteenth Amendment rights of students. Although this decision was just and long-awaited, the damage and violence it created in the lives of students, families, and teachers of the Tucson community is still very must present and sensitive. So much has been left unsaid about all of the events, happenings, and specifics that occurred over the past 7 years. Nevertheless, what is worth stating is an acknowledgement to the short-sighted and ignorant nature of the State of Arizona for allowing such racist and dehumanizing policies to exist in its State. A court decision on what to do moving forward now that HB 2281 is no longer in effect is still currently pending (Astor, 2017). All that is left in these unfortunate series of events are the narratives and stories that give context, depth, and perspective to the impact of racialized policy and the unforgiving, divisive, and alienating power of systemic dominance. This dissertation will focus on the narratives and story lines of the

students, their families, and the communities that experienced and endured the devastating blow of HB 2281.

The Study

This dissertation examines the Ethnic Studies Ban of the former MAS program at the TUSD in Arizona. This ban, as demonstrated by legislation HB 2281, which outlawed the MAS program in 2010, is a clear example of how the State of Arizona used official knowledge to reinforce specific ideals, values, and principles in the Arizona educational system (Apple, 1993, 2000). HB 2281 further exemplified how the State of Arizona used its power to delegitimize the MAS program by portraying the MAS program as anti-American and separatist (Cabrera et al., 2012; Cambium Learning, 2011). The MAS program has also been awarded for its innovative ability to address the educational debt and effectively to close in on the achievement gap common in the U.S. educational system (Cabrera, Milem, Jaquette & Marx, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2006). The MAS program also includes in its curricular and pedagogical design a critical perspective on U.S. history, while centering teaching and learning in an Indigenous epistemology (Grande, 2015).

The Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ is a clear example as to how racialized forms play out systemically and individually in the national educational system. This study is situated at the intersection of a national struggle for official knowledge and the formation of identity for Mexican and Indigenous communities in the United States (Acosta, 2013; Acuña, 2011; Arce, 2015). The following theoretical questions drive the purpose for this study. Although these questions are not my research questions, they theoretically determine the lens through which this study will be interpreted. The theoretical inquiry is as follows: How is knowledge constructed in

the state and therefore implemented in our school systems and society? How does specific content knowledge become "official" and/or "unofficial"? Finally, what then happens when the histories and/or *her*stories[1] in the United States contradict and fall outside of the official story/narrative? (Apple, 2000, 2004). These questions have been questions asked continuously by marginalized and oppressed communities throughout the history of the United States. The struggle for knowledge and identity between the Tucson community, the State of Arizona, and the TUSD allow for this study to get a closer look at the impact and limitations of mainstream education.

Education then becomes a politically contested arena in the United States where perspective, narrative, and history become key struggles toward validating the Mexican American and Chicanx experience in the United States. The Ethnic Studies discipline in the United States helps to situate and decontextualize the colonial lens of U.S. education while introducing a critical perspective to mainstream curricula. Nonetheless, the Ethnic Studies discipline is still not perceived as official knowledge in the country, yet it exists within the confines of alternative and critical education. The United States has a long history of oppressing difference and only incorporating into the fabric of an "American"[2] identity those events and traits in history and society that validate mainstream values, principles, and ideals (Four Arrows

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[1] Herstory is history written from a feminist perspective, emphasizing the role of women, or told from a woman's point of view. It is a neologism coined as a pun with the word "history," as part of a feminist critique of conventional historiography, which in their opinion is traditionally written as "his story," i.e., from the masculine point of view (Herstory, 2017)

[2] For indigenous-based communities, there is an active recognition of the Americas to be a continent and not another word that means people are from the United States. When people from the United States identify themselves as "American," they are erasing a complexity of diversity that exist across the Americas.

et al., 2013; Grande, 2015). The State of Arizona becomes an example of how legislation can be used to suppress critical education, unofficial knowledge, and the Mexican immigrant identity.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research project:

1. What does the banning of the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program at Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) via HB 2281 highlight and reveal about the politics of knowledge in the United States and its historical, cultural, and political relationship to Indigenous epistemologies?
2. Likewise, what was it about the TUSD MAS program and its curriculum that positioned the program outside of what is considered an official narrative by the State of Arizona?
3. Finally, how do the MAS teachers, student alumni, and activist allies interpret what happened with the MAS curriculum and Ethnic Studies Ban, or HB 2281?

My study looked at the politics of knowledge as they effectively played out in Tucson, AZ. I was interested in how a law such as HB 2281 could be recognized as official by the state and how/what content knowledge could be recognized as unofficial in the state. The Ethnic Studies Ban, or HB 2281, in Tucson is a powerful example of the struggle, tension, and fight for what was considered a valid curriculum in Arizona. I was interested in the relationship between culture, dominant ideology, and hegemony, as this relationship permeates and dictates common ideals, values, and norms that produce and reproduce dominant narratives. Such dominant narratives, in the case of Tucson, AZ, support laws such as HB 2281 (Apple, 2004). I was further interested in analyzing the power relations in the state and contextualizing these relations in a

specific and untold historical context regarding conceptions of identity, indigeneity, autonomy, self-determination, and narrative. I was and continue to be deeply interested in the MAS program's structure, curriculum, history, pedagogy, and its Indigenous epistemological framework that contextualizes the counter hegemonic ideological base in which the teachers and students engage. I drew on the Critical Theoretical Tradition and Cultural Studies, as I feel these bodies of literature best lend themselves to analytical and critical frameworks that interpret the complex economic, political, and cultural dynamics in Tucson, AZ.

These statements are guiding themes that express how I interpreted and analyzed the data collected:

- The state imposes official content knowledge to further develop specific values in systems of education.
- There is a cultural and ideological clash between the Eurocentric and Western approach to educational policies and an Indigenous worldview for education and identity formation.
- The study demonstrates how Indigenous education informs identity formation and self-determination for marginalized youth.
- The study attempts to situate historically how educational policies in relationship to assimilative practices have denied and criminalized intentionally marginalized communities, culture, ideologies, values, and principles.
- The ban is perpetuating historical practices.

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

The increasingly diverse demographics of the nation can no longer submit to the old paradigms and Eurocentric views behind the national pedagogical conceptions of learning and instruction (Sleeter, 2011). Educators, scholars, and critics point to the disengagement of poor, marginalized communities of color from the schooling environment and express concerns over national and local curricula as being nonrelevant to the social, cultural, and historical realities of these communities in the United States (Apple, 2004; Four Arrows et al., 2013; Grande, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Higher numbers of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youth are disproportionately impacted and disengaged by a curriculum that inadvertently biases and favors a dominant and Eurocentric perspective in its curricula and pedagogy (Sleeter, 2011).

By 2044, more than half of all Americans are projected to belong to a minority group, and, specifically, the Latina/o population is projected to increase from 55 million in 2014 to 119 million in 2060, an increase of 115% (Colby & Ortman, 2015). Understanding the correlation between student achievement and the development of culturally relevant pedagogy, given this racial demographic shift, is vital when examining the politics of knowledge as they unfold in schools and communities across the United States (Apple, 1993).

It is important to understand the cultural, economic, and political implications such a conservative legislature is promoting across the country. It is also imperative that we begin to pay attention to the racialized policies accusing schools, districts, and universities as being one-sided, anti-American, and critical of U.S. history (HB 2281, 2010). It is alarming to see that what these conservative policies promote is a deliberate disregard of the critical narratives often not represented in mainstream education (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Historical and Racial Context

The history of racial tensions in the United States, and therefore the Mexican community, is long, extensive, and complex. The diversity of narratives that exist in the Mexican community point to a historical process whose root is based in colonization, racial identity, and economic survival (Acuña, 2011). The Mexican identity is complex in language, geography, and culture, yet is often simplified to a national identity defined by demarcated borders and colonial imposition. The political lines currently known to outline the countries of Mexico and the United States are arbitrary lines defined by a colonial project whose roots date back to a colonial paradigm imposed by European rule over the Americas (Acuña, 2011; Galeano, 1973; J. Gonzáles, 2000). The racialization of borders, nationality, and ethnicity are a product of a historical trajectory shaped by the politics of identity and knowledge.

Apple (2004) proposes that a set of assumed values and principles defined as official knowledge permeate the identity of the United States. He points to education and schools as spaces where official knowledge is reproduced and implemented. National curricula and pedagogy operate on a set of assumed forms of knowledge that are constituted as good, merit-based, and academically rigorous, while judging other forms of knowledge as bad, backward, and senseless. In the following passage, Apple (1993) points to how official knowledge functions in education:

> Education is deeply implicated in the politics of culture. The curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the text and classrooms of a nation. It is always a part of a selective tradition, someone's selection, some groups' vision of legitimate knowledge. It is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic

> conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organize and disorganize a people. As I argue in Ideology and Curriculum, the decision to define some groups' knowledge as the most legitimate, as of official knowledge, while other groups' knowledge hardly sees the light of day, says something extremely important about who has power in society. (p. 1)

When evaluating the relationship between the United States and Mexico, specifically situating an ideological perspective on borders, nationality, and ethnicity, there is an official historical positioning where the enforcement of borders becomes common sense. To the individuals born and raised within these boarders, the existence of borders become common knowledge, an official knowledge, that demarcate identity and nationality (Acuña, 2011; Apple, 2004). Official narratives developed by the country justify the division of land and identity as needed for safety, security, and national cohesion. Borders become synonymous with identity and all identification that exist in difference to the dominant identity, is pushed to assimilate and acculturate into a single national identity (Apple, 2004).

The border, nationality, and ethnicity become legal representations of a colonial project that reinforce a dominant U.S. identity (Acuña, 2011; Arce, 2015; Dugan, Ylimaki, & Bennett, 2012). The tensions that exist today related to racism, fear, and immigration, between Mexico and the United States, are demonstrations and portrayals of resistance and oppression toward difference. The Mexican experience and history in the United States then becomes evidence of a struggle where identity is culturally, politically, and economically contested. Furthermore, the national U.S. curricula taught in the public-school system mirrors a colonial paradigm where the Mexican history and identity, although intertwined in the U.S. context, is considered irrelevant and unimportant (Acosta, 2013; Arce, 2015).

It is here where the politics of knowledge set a backdrop for the politics of identity. The Mexican identity as viewed from the lens of a colonial paradigm is often misunderstood (Acuña, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). The colonial categorization to describe someone from a Mexican background in the United States is often simplified to language—"Hispanic" and/or "Latino," which are direct links to an imposed "Latin" origin. The source of the beginning of the Mexican identity is often simplified to a Eurocentric past, an official knowledge overlooking and leaving out an Indigenous, Black, and mixed-ethnic identity. Colonization attempts to categorize the Mexican identity within the parameters of an official narrative. To recognize the Mexican community as geographically and historically Indigenous to the Americas, specifically North America, is to reconsider the idea of borders and—more specifically, in the United States—to reconsider national policy on an "illegal" or "immigration" identity (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000).

Arizona in Context

The anti-im(migrant)[3] and anti-Mexican racialized political climate in the United States, specifically in the State of Arizona, has harmed many individuals and families (Acosta & Mir, 2012; Cammarota, 2012). Targeted legislation, such as HB 2281 and SB 2010 enforced in the State of Arizona, is producing an atmosphere of fear, hate, and blame. Scapegoating rhetoric toward Mexican im(migrant) communities is the bedrock for the political leadership of the State (Palos et al., 2011; Romero, Arce, & Cammarota, 2009). Due to a conservative state government, the Arizona political leadership has campaigned politically and has won elections on an anti-

[3] There is a movement in the United States that is now separating the word "migrant" from the word immigrant. The movement is making a statement that humans have the right to migrate anywhere they choose as has been done for prior to the existence of borders. The movement critiques the word immigrant as it implies movement of people into a destination country of which they are not natives

Mexican and "illegal immigration" platform (SB 1070, 2010). Arizona's political climate cannot be understood unless we contextualize the historical backdrop of Arizona's ethnic and cultural population, as well as its geographic past. Arizona's racialized legislation specifically cannot be isolated as a state issue. We must recognize that the anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican legislation imposed in Arizona acts in concert with a national and historical sentiment that is anti-immigrant (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000).

The proximity of the United States to the Mexican border encourages a conservative messaging of protection and safety against "invaders." In 2010, Arizona was the epicenter of SB 1070, also known as the "Show Me Your Papers Law." In SB 1070, law enforcement was given full authority to question any individual who deemed to be perceived as undocumented. Individuals were targeted base on assumption of "legal" status and would be arrested until proven otherwise. Individuals in the state needed to carry identification and/or proof of residency or citizenship. This law proves erroneous when understanding the history of the Southwest where Arizona is currently located.

Arizona used to be Mexican territory that was forfeited over to the United States post defeat of the Mexican American War over a land dispute of the territories of Texas and New Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe signed in 1848 ended a vicious war motivated by the United States Manifest Destiny ideology[4] (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000). The majority of the Mexican families currently living in the State of Arizona are original families whose ancestry is

[4] In the 19th century, manifest destiny was a widely held belief in the United States that its settlers were destined to expand across North America. The belief justified mass killing and removal of Indigenous communities across the United States. The Belief was justified as a God-given right to expand westward.

indigenous and mestizo. These native Arizonans lived and migrated back and forth throughout the region before borders and before it became Mexican or U.S. territory (Acuña, 2011).

There is a push toward making sure the White dominant identity of the state is not lost. During the last three decades, Arizona's Latinx population has increased at a rate of 1 in every 2 people. The percentage of Latinxs living in Arizona has increased 16% from 2000, while the White population has declined from 75% in 1980 to 58% in 2008. A rapid increase of foreign-born Latinx[5] immigrant populations from 18% to 33% in 2008 has further diversified Arizona, causing fear of a disappearing White identity. Fear among the White majority has sparked an anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiment across the state (Saenz, 2010; see Figure 1).

The fear expressed in the State of Arizona about the demographic trends reflected in Figure 1 has intensified an anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican movement. In response to the demographic shift, White and conservative actors and their supportive communities have been vocal locally and nationally scapegoating immigrants and Mexicans for a deteriorating economic, cultural, and social system. Conservative politicians and their communities have launched a series of racialized policies, such as SB 1070 and HB 2281, specifically targeting the Mexican and immigrant populations of the state. Politicians such as Tom Horne, John Huppenthal, and the notorious Sheriff Arpario have all ran and won their political campaigns on an anti-immigrant and Mexican sentiment. The political climate and demographic trends of Arizona have not only shaped and impacted the everyday experiences of immigrants and Mexicans, but also is playing a significant role in the development of educational policy and

[5] The term Latinx is a recent term to attempts to include the gender and sexual orientation identities into the Latinx diaspora. The term has brought up active discussion on the inclusivity of gender and sexual orientation yet the continued denial of it Eurocentric origin.

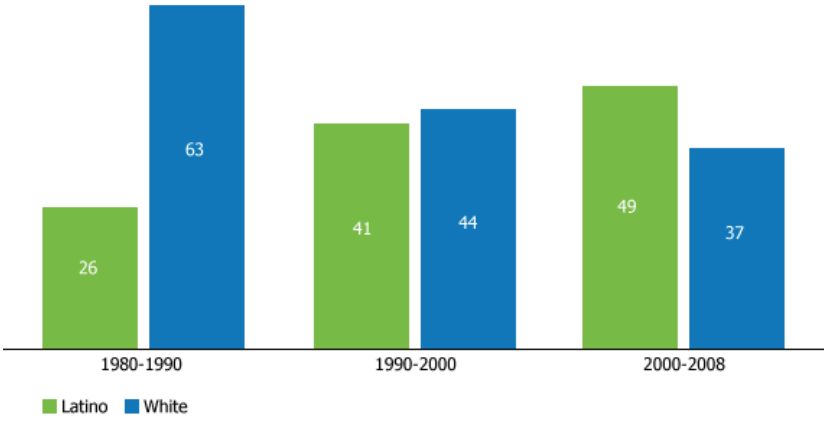

Figure 1. Percentage of Arizona population change due to Latinx and White population growth. Adapted from "Demographic Trends in the 20st Century," by F. Hobbs and N. Stoops, 2000, and "American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

practices in Arizona's public schools. HB 2281 was developed strategically by targeting the MAS program—the racialized legislation was not created in isolation; rather, it worked in tandem with a larger political effort to invalidate the grassroots foundations, heritage, and success of the MAS program.

It is crucial to consider the cultural and geographic history of Arizona, making visible the fact that the lands, which conservative and White communities now claim to be White and English-only, were once Mexico. There exists the need to understand the history of Arizona in an Indigenous and Mexican context, demonstrating that Arizona has a deep and rich past and legacy that should be celebrated and highlighted rather than demonized and outlawed. Specifically, in the history of Arizona, the MAS program rests upon a generational effort of collectivity and historical memory and of community coming together to better the educational systems for their children. The history and herstory of the MAS program truly was the outcome of a democratic and united effort on behalf of Indigenous, Mexican, and Black communities of Tucson, AZ to establish relevant and inclusive schools and education for the entire Tucson community.

History of the Mexican American Studies Program

The beginning of what we know as the MAS program started in 1998; nevertheless, its foundation and historical context began in 1951 in response to a desegregation order that was filed against the TUSD prior to the historic landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*. The desegregation order was in response to African American and Mexican American parents claiming that the district's ethnic makeup promoted segregation and discrimination among the Tucson community (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). The organization of African American and Mexican American parents not only integrated the TUSD in the fall of 1951, but also were able to get federal funding approved for bilingual education in the district (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012).

The African American and Mexican American families had concerns that even though the schools were intergraded, the use of Spanish was still forcibly forbidden from being used in classrooms and on playgrounds. The parents also disapproved of their children being placed in special education or grouped based on language, perceived ability, and/or identity. These continual aggressions and overt responses to the integration of schools, on behalf of the TUSD, angered parents consistently (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). Although the TUSD received consistent pressure from the African American and Mexican American parents on the mistreatment and biased approach to education based in race, the TUSD only addressed what was legally required.

The 1960s and 1970s across the country was an important time of resistance and education, where injustice and inequality were addressed based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Universities were important spaces where discussions and learning happened. The

Ethnic Studies Movement came out of the Civil Rights Movement, and students led the country in reflection on and criticism of the ethnic identity valued in our educational system (Acuña, 2011). Tucson was no different, as they too participated locally, and in 1981, the TUSD created four magnet schools in the inner city with the purpose of recruiting both White and minority students to the barrios. During this time, and with the influence of the Civil Rights Movement, the TUSD also created the African American Studies Program, offering courses in Black history and culture.

Although African American Studies was created in the TUSD in the 1980s, the voices of Mexican American, Native American, and Asian American parents, however, were still not heard. In 1974, two families, the Mendozas, a Mexican American family, and the Fishers, an African American family, filed separate lawsuits against the district for unfair treatment and continued segregation of the Tucson schools. In 1975, both families joined forces and continued their case against the TUSD. When the case went to trial in 1977, it was ruled that the TUSD had acted with segregative intent and failed to effectively integrate their TUSD schools (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012).

While the Fisher-Mendoza case was being waged, Mexican American and Native American students also filed a civil lawsuit in federal district court to address the impoverished facilities used to serve minority neighborhoods and the lack of rigorous curriculum and programs for minority students and English language learners (ELLs). The case was filed in 1987 and the TUSD and the Office of Civil Right (OCR) reached an agreement in 1994 known as the Alvarez-Jasso Consent Decree. This decree led to a series of progressive programs for ELLs, bilingual students, and ESL students. Teachers were also given holistic training to best serve this

population. The facilities and curricular materials were improved, and a budget increase was allocated for all affected schools (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012).

The Consent Decree led to an effective program for bilingual education, and the needs of ELLs were a priority in the district. The effective programing in bilingual education and its approach toward ELL students still, however, excluded multicultural education. The TUSD administration decided to include Hispanic Studies as an additional component to the Bilingual Education Program; nonetheless, for budgetary reasons, the Hispanic Studies component was void of a budget and financial allocation (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012).

In 1997, a group of Mexican American parents from the district filed a lawsuit against the TUSD saying it failed to adequately fund and maintain the Hispanic Studies Department. The parents organized the Tucson community and advocated for a Mexican American Studies (MAS) program that would directly serve the needs of its Mexican American student population. Until this time, both the African American Studies and Native American Studies departments were already in existence, and the community's perception was that the curriculum of those Ethnic Studies departments enhanced the academic achievement of their students. The community also justified that the MAS department was needed to serve 26,600, or 42%, of the Hispanic population in the TUSD. The lawsuit's purpose, on behalf of the parents, was to implement a comprehensive MAS department that would have a full budget allocation ready to support the hiring of administration, teachers, and staff (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). As the lawsuit to implement a MAS department gained momentum, the TUSD, under pressure, set up a committee to gain public input on the areas of bilingual education, multicultural education, and Hispanic studies.

After a long process of evaluations on the Bilingual Education and Hispanic Studies department, the TUSD created a diverse and inclusive community committee made up of parents, teachers, union leaders, administrators, university professors, and students. The community committee was given 1 year to develop and create the foundation and beginnings of the MAS program. The committee was dedicated and diligent to the task and truly incorporated the input and critique of the larger Tucson community. In public meetings organized by the committee, participants ranged in attendance with 500 to 600 people expressing their opinions and critiques of the program. More than 95% of all speakers at public hearings were in support of the implementation of the MAS program (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012).

In the spring of 1998, the community committee submitted their report to the TUSD school board and recommended that the board implement the MAS department in the district's K-12 grades. The district then moved to hire the MAS program director, set aside an appropriate budget for the program, and allocate funding for full-time positions. Since then, the MAS program grew and became one of the leading academic and culturally relevant programs in the nation. Given the historical importance and significance of the MAS program to the Tucson community, HB 2281 deeply hurt the Mexican American and Indigenous community. The constant invalidation and attacks being waged on the MAS program by actors such as Tom Horne and John Huppenthal attempted to invalidate and erase the historical memory still very much present in Tucson (Horne, 2007; HB 2281, 2010).

Critical Education, Ethnic Studies, and the Limitations of the State of Arizona

The HB 2281 rested heavily upon a colonial paradigm that de-legitimized the MAS program as anti-American, extremist, and indoctrinating. Prior to the ban, the MAS program had

been nationally awarded and recognized academically as one of the only programs across the nation that had successfully closed in on the achievement gap through an Ethnic Studies discipline (Cabrera et al., 2012; Romero et al., 2009). The MAS program was successful in its ability to engage underrepresented and disengaged students through a critical curriculum designed for college-level courses (Cabrera et al., 2012; Sleeter, 2011; TUSD, 2011).

The MAS program curriculum rested upon a generative process that addressed the cultural, social, and academic needs of Mexican American students. The program's collaboration with the University of Arizona, Tucson, through an initiative called the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), and exposed students from the MAS program to college-level research opportunities, mentorship, and research collaborations through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). The SJEP program prepared junior and senior high school students with their social science requirements for graduation and college acceptance. Students co-created culturally relevant curriculum with other college students and focused on issues of race and racism (Romero, 2008). The MAS program students also engaged academically and tested high in the State of Arizona standardized reading, writing, and math AIMS test.

In the MAS program, students were also taught to be critical, self-reflective, and civically engaged in an Indigenous model of education. The following pedagogical approaches were key in the MAS program:

1. Center the student's experience within critical reflection;
2. Allow the student to engage, educate, and process their personal experiences in comparison to their social, political, and economic environments;

3. Motivate students to engage in action, based on what they have learned and/or unlearned, and
4. Creates space for self and social evaluation.

The four areas of learning are reflective of the MAS program curricular and pedagogical approach. The four approaches were based off of an Indigenous epistemology that was foundational in the MAS program (Arce, 2015). These four principles reflect what are known as the Four Tezcatlipocas, a set of Uto-Nahuatl-based values embedded in the Nahui Ollin,[6] the center diagram of the Mexica Sun Stone (Arce, 2015). The Four Tezcatlipocas are still embraced and practiced by many Indigenous communities of Central and South America, as well as Indigenous communities of the United States. The goal and purpose of the MAS curriculum was to demonstrate the importance of a reflective and relevant environment by which youth and community could engage, participate, and promote human flourishing (Acosta, 2013).

The MAS program continuously demonstrated increased test scores and higher graduation rates among Mexican American, Chicanx, and Latinx minorities. Several independent evaluations of the MAS program concluded that the program did effectively close in on the achievement gap and has successfully proven academic and personal achievement through culturally relevant pedagogy. All of the research conducted on the MAS program from its inception until today overwhelmingly shows positive measurable outcomes praising its accomplishments (Cabrera et al., 2012; Cambium Learning, 2011; Sleeter, 2011). The banning of

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[6] The Nahui Ollin is a diagram found at the center of the ancient Mexica sunstone, also known as the Aztec Calendar. Many Indigenous communities across the Americas still embrace the principles of the Nahui Ollin. The Nahui Ollin was a code of values and principles that taught communities how to be more balanced and equitable human beings. The nahui ollin taught critical reflection, self-education, will power to act, and self-transformation/ evaluation through analogy, nature, and story. The MAS pedagogy followed these values.

the MAS program in the TUSD was not in response to lack of academic rigor or failure to meet standards, as reported by state officials (Horne, 2007). The banning of the MAS program specifically addressed a clash in values/ideology central to the preferred identity and worldview desired in the United States.

The Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson points to a clash of values, a cultural war of two conflicting worldviews. Policies demonstrating these trends have been on the rise across the country. Denver, CO was recently in the news because students began to protest in defense of their first amendment rights after a conservative school board proposed a curriculum-review committee that would promote patriotism, respect for authority, and free enterprise. Not only were these the values being promoted, but the proposed curriculum review also discouraged any form of education that would support or condone civic engagement and/or disorder (Healy, 2014). In Oklahoma, a bill was passed to ban Advanced Placement U.S. History courses. The Oklahoma legislative committee believed that the courses teach only "what is bad about America" (Rampell, 2015, para. 4) and characterize the United States as a "nation of oppressors and exploiters" (para. 4). HB 2281 was not isolated legislation independent of a joint effort to influence educational policy across the country. HB 2281 was an intentional and direct attack attempting to suppress difference and, at the same time, erase the historical memory, values, and principles embraced by Indigenous and Mexican communities in Tucson (Arce, 2015).

Indigenous Epistemology in the MAS Program

Why would a program such as the MAS program, given its proven record to academically and socially close in on the achievement gap, be a program outlawed by the State of Arizona? Much of the critique in educational research on national achievement data shows an

inability to close in on the academic and social disparities of minority and marginalized communities, specifically the Mexican, Chicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous populations (Cabrera et al., 2012; Cambium Learning, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2006. The complexity behind identifying factors that cause an achievement gap and developing an approach toward addressing the achievement gap is wide and complex. It is imperative to understand ideologically, systemically, and racially the underpinnings of such outcomes and proposals. We must understand how power and education intersect when looking at knowledge, most importantly asking whose knowledge is being used when measuring student achievement and building effective curriculum (Apple, 2004).

One of the reasons I was drawn to the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, Arizona was the MAS program's ability to embrace an Indigenous epistemology unapologetically while providing an academic platform that demonstrated statistically high outcomes (Cabrera et al., 2012; Cambium Learning, 2011; Sleeter, 2011). I had seen a revival of activism and a process of decolonization from many of the southwest communities, yet was impressed with the MAS approach. The MAS program's ability to be critical and loving in the context of a dominant and hostile environment allowed me to see why youth in their communities gravitated and succeeded in their programing. I was intrigued by an Indigenous approach toward learning and understanding identity, history, and nature. I learned through the MAS curriculum that learning also requires a process of unlearning and examining socialized patterns and dominant frameworks that require critique and reflection when learning about our histories, environments, and identities (Arce, 2015). I became increasingly interested in the Ethnic Studies struggle over knowledge and began to pay attention to how the students of the MAS program were well

equipped and well versed in the discipline and history of Black, Indigenous, Asian, and Chicanx studies. The MAS students also carried a sense of responsibility and reflection toward the land, their communities, and even their oppressors (Arce, 2015).

What was impressive about the MAS program was how their Indigenous frameworks permeated throughout the curriculum. It was also impressive to see how the teachers of the MAS program demonstrated in their teaching style the values and principles reflected in an Indigenous approach to education (Acosta, 2013; Four Arrows et al., 2013). It was evident that students lived an Indigenous worldview—not only in their formal education, but in their daily lives. Ultimately, what was powerful about the curriculum and pedagogy of the MAS program was that it extended beyond the classroom. Students and teachers lived, worked, and organized in the communities of the students. The curriculum that was being conceptualized and designed included participation and reflected the Mexican, Chicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous experience.

One of the ways the Indigenous epistemology was used in the MAS program can be seen in how one of the MAS teachers would open his classroom with an Indigenous pedagogical principle vital to the MAS program. The classroom would recite together, out loud, a poem by Luís Valdez, regarded as the father of Chicanx theater and a playwright, writer, film director, and founder of El Teatro Campesino, a farm workers' theater troupe. The poem reflects an Indigenous Mayan concept called *In Lak Ech,* which directly translates to mean, "I am you, and you are me." This concept calls into question the notion of individuality as perceived in a Western conceptualization (Arce, 2015; Grande, 2015). The concept asks the reader to consider themselves through the lens of collectivity, solidarity, and reciprocity when understanding

themselves. The concept asks that we see ourselves through the worldview of someone else, and likewise asks someone else to see themselves through our worldview (Arce, 2015).

The concept of *In Lak Ech* challenges a Western conception of individuality. The concept consciously engages self-reflection, acknowledges difference, and considers recognition and validation of different worldviews (Acosta & Mir, 2012). The following poem, and the work of Luís Valdez, were outlawed and prohibited from being used in the TUSD Ethnic Studies curriculum and courses. The poem is in both Spanish and English, demonstrating Luís Valdez's bilingual approach, representing a duality to language and culture in the Chicanx Indigenous identity.

Tú eres mi otro yo. You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti, If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo. I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto, If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo. I love and respect myself.

Luís Valdez

"Pensamiento Serpentino"

The *In Lak Ech* value in Luís Valdez's poem reflected one of the primary teachings of the MAS program. Beyond the student's academic abilities, students learned self-reflection, reciprocity, and enacted these values in their work and activism. Students organized teach-ins, discussions, and strategized a defense for the MAS program from the premise of *In Lak Ech*. Students pushed themselves to practice *In Lak Ech* with many of the program's accusers. In one of the documentaries most circulated about the Ethnics Studies Ban, "Precious Knowledge" by Dos Vatos Film, one of the students approached one of the primary legislators, John Huppenthal, the Arizona State Superintendent of Public Instruction, of that time. The student's sincere

demeanor and humility were captured on film as she approached the Superintendent, individually thanking him for agreeing to visit their classes. She expressed to the Superintendent that it meant a lot to her that he was there and was able to see how they learn (Palos et al., 2011). It was powerful to see the practice of how students embraced and transcended the dissonance of a narrow policy that deemed to homogenize the MAS program curriculum back into a curriculum accepted and recognized by White, mainstream standards of education (Apple, 2000; Arce, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The Ethnic Studies Ban HB 2281 had already been introduced, and, up until that time, none of the state officials and/or the legislators of the law had agreed to visit the program and see for themselves what they were organizing against (Palos et al., 2011).

The Indigenous principle of *In Lak Ech* is only one of many Indigenous values the MAS program used as the foundation of their pedagogy and curriculum. The program used another Mayan value called *Panche Be* that translates to "seek the root of truth" and also borrowed from the Mexica humanizing principles of the Nahui Ollin (Arce, 2015). The Nahui Ollin is a symbol that can be found at the center of the Aztec Calender, or better known to Indigenous peoples of Mexico as the Sun Stone. Epistemologically, the Nahui Ollin goes beyond an artistic symbol of nature and proposes a value system and approach toward becoming better human beings (Arce, 2015). To summarize, the four values called the Tezcatlipocas encompass an ethical map guiding people to be more equitable, accountable, and aware when engaging with others in society. The four Tezcatlipocas promote self-reflection, education, action, will power, and transformation (Arce, 2015). The MAS program built their curriculum on these principles, motivating students to consistently and intentionally better themselves through education, self-reflection, and action.

The students of the MAS program questioned everything, especially history and dominant norms inconsistent with their narratives and lived experiences.

Many of the aforementioned values promote critical and reflective scholarship, yet embrace action and transformation. For the MAS program, the community was the center of education, and identity was developed in context with their social, economic, political, and natural environments. The individual is also very important in the pedagogy of MAS; however, the conception of the individual is not absent of other people's experiences (Four Arrows et al., 2013). For many Indigenous communities, the concept of kinship or relations goes beyond familial connections to a real association between all living things, be it nature, land, people, and/or animals (Grande, 2015). Actions by individuals can impact others and their surroundings. For example, polluting has a real effect on the quality of water and air, and, in effect, pollution may cause harm to animals or other people engaging those affected elements. For Indigenous communities, individuals are involved in a circular relational process where the actions and dealings of individuals may affect others and, in turn, also affect the acting people. Students in the MAS program were taught that they too participated in a circular relational process that they could influence, and therefore understood the following example. If I lived near a lake where fishing was active, and I too liked to fish, yet I engaged with the lake carelessly by dumping car oil or garbage or other polluting substances into the lake, in time, the fish, the water, the fishing community, and myself would be affected by my actions (Four Arrows et al., 2013). Students in the MAS program understood that their impact and participation carries results and consequences, and this perspective gave them agency and awareness. The State of Arizona, however, saw otherwise, as the state critiqued the MAS program, arguing that what was being

taught was in-group solidarity, sedition, hate speech, and an anti-American perspective that challenged the status quo.

The Nahui Ollin, Four Tezcatlipocas as Pedagogy, and the Tensions of the State of Arizona

The Ethnic Studies Ban, HB 2281, specifically targeted the MAS program at the TUSD. All other Ethnic Studies programs in the TUSD were left alone. HB 2281 specifically targeted the pedagogy and curriculum of the MAS program as illegal and anti-American in the State of Arizona (HB 2281, 2010). There seemed to be a full effort to ban the program for teaching values that taught collectivity and cooperation over individuality and competitiveness. What was astonishing in the campaign against the MAS program was a strategy to demonize the program for its different approach toward education and its intentional embrace of an Indigenous epistemology and worldview. However, exploring and understanding some of the specific teachings and lessons that reflected an Indigenous epistemology and worldview is crucial to understanding the tie between the cultural and pedagogical context. The following section is a detailed description of the four Tezcatlipocas and how the MAS program taught and implemented these values and principles into the MAS program curriculum. Nonetheless, the following values and principles were resisted and positioned by the State of Arizona as indoctrinating students with an anti-American perspective.

The four Tezcatlipocas include: (a) Tezcatlipoca, meaning critical self-reflection; (b) Quetzalcoatl, meaning precious knowledge; (c) Huitzilopochtli, meaning willpower and/or will to act; and (d) Xipe Totec, meaning transformation. Each principle written in the Nahuatl language also embraces imagery from nature for guidance and metaphor (Arce, 2015). For example, the principle of Tezcatlipoca is represented as a smoking mirror. Students in the MAS

program understood that self-reflection was often a difficult task, very similar to when someone attempts to look at themselves in the mirror, yet it becomes difficult to truly see themselves as a whole due to the smoke in between themselves and the mirror. Very similarly, the process of self-reflection is difficult, and the task is to work through the smoke by being honest about one's reflections and perceptions.

The Quetzalcoatl principle is represented by feathered-serpent imagery. This principle approaches knowledge from both a macro and micro perspective. The serpent understands the micro perspective, as it moves through nature up close, on its belly, feeling, touching, and tasting, and developing a micro perspective of the world (Arce, 2015). The feathers represent characteristics of an eagle—a macro perspective and a bird's eye view to the world. The combination of both perspectives and context represent Precious Knowledge, a full perspective of both macro and micro understandings.

The Huitzilopochtli principle is represented as a hummingbird. The Mexica studied nature and its patterns and truly respected the abilities of hummingbirds. The multidimensional spherical motion observed in hummingbirds represents Mexica willpower. Willpower is also understood by the MAS program as determination and resiliency to defy expectations and challenges. Finally, the Xipe-Totec principle embodies springtime, a time in our season when transformation occurs and where changes in our environment are visible and appreciative. Transformation was easier to see in the springtime. During this season, the flowers bloom, and all that withered during the winter comes alive and transforms (Arce, 2015).

As I describe each Tezcatlipoca principle, I am reminded of the effectiveness and impact these principles and values had and are still having upon the students and communities of the

MAS program. Nonetheless, I am reminded that the four Tezcatlipocas were taught and embraced in an educational system designed to suppress difference and promote sameness in a Protestant, White, and male context (Apple, 2004). For many, the aforementioned principles and values are seen as foreign, abstract, or threatening. To embrace metaphorical imagery, as in the examples to follow, could be perceived as worshiping "false idols" or "witchcraft" in a Christian context and therefore sinning. To understand knowledge in relationship to a snake and eagle imagery could be shocking given the dominant perspectives and histories of the United States.

Given Arizona's anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican cultural and political sentiment, the four Tezcatlipocas as pedagogical values and principles drastically challenged mainstream values of individuality, competitiveness, Christianity, and land association. The principles outlined here were heavily criticized and used as a rallying cry within the legal challenges from the State of Arizona. HB 2281 specifically targeted the MAS program in Tucson, AZ to vilify and invalidate the credibility and academic and cultural effectiveness of a program founded in an Indigenous perspective. More will be said, throughout this dissertation, on the State of Arizona's tensions related to the Indigenous epistemology of the MAS program. Nonetheless, the MAS program was a holistic and relevant program. Its curriculum and pedagogy inspired students personally and academically. The following section highlights the pedagogical approach in greater depth.

Pedagogical Approaches to the MAS Program

The MAS program curriculum incorporated text, histories, and value systems that spoke to the social conditions and historical realities of the Mexican, Chicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. In addition to the *In Lak Ech* value system, the program embraced an Indigenous pedagogy that grounded the program in a humanizing project. Similar to how Paulo Freire

conceptualizes teaching and learning as a humanizing process, the MAS program incorporated Uto-Aztecan/Nahuatl base knowledge as a foundation for learning and unlearning.

The former MAS program in Tucson, AZ was one of the leading Ethnic Studies programs in the United States (Cabrera et al., 2014). The MAS program's academic tract record consistently produced high graduation rates and test scores among Mexican, Chicanx, Latinx, and immigrant high school students in Tucson, AZ (Cabrera et al., 2014). The curriculum and pedagogy of the MAS program specifically contextualized the students' narratives and historical realities. The curriculum and pedagogy of the MAS program incorporated an approach that was threefold. The program's commitment to culturally relevant pedagogy, its ability to develop critical curriculum that incorporated Paulo Freire's conception of critical consciousness, and its epistemological Indigenous foundation toward education made the MAS program effective and relevant toward the needs of students and community. The program's ability to design a curriculum that incorporated the students' narratives and history, while engaging in social justice, self-reflection, and critical thinking, demonstrated a program both academically and socially strong (Cabrera et al., 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The program's capacity to achieve a 97% graduation rate and a college matriculation rate 193% higher than the national average shows the academic success of the program. Students who enrolled in the Ethnic Studies courses at TUSD were more likely to pass the AIMS standardized test. Likewise, students enrolled in the Ethnic Studies courses outscored their White counterparts who did not partake in the Ethnic Studies courses (Cambium Learning, 2011; Milem & Jaquette, 2014; Sleeter, 2011). To understand the importance of these testing measurements, we must understand the national trend in low test scores, primarily for minority

and marginalized communities. Specifically, for the Mexican, Chicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, there is a substantial college enrollment gap between Latinos and all other groups among 18- to 24-year-olds. Ladson-Billings (2006) alluded to this gap as reflective of an academic disparity between minority and marginalized communities and their White counterparts. Ladson-Billings referred to this gap as an achievement debt emphasizing a structural critique of racial and educational inequality that is intentional by design.

The Chapters to Follow

The following chapters will give a critical and narrative account of the ways in which power influences and imposes upon the lives of people in the context of mainstream education. This dissertation is organized into six chapters, each developing critically the nuanced ways in which HB 2281 as a policy impacted and culturally invalidated the history and experiences of the Mexican American/Indigenous communities of Tucson, AZ. The following section will introduce and briefly describe each chapter in this dissertation.

Chapter 2 defines and demonstrates how dynamic and complex concepts such as ideology, culture, and hegemony play out in our society, and more specifically, the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ. The chapter demonstrates the complexities and nuanced impositions by hegemony and how politics of common sense favor a dominant identity and perspective. The chapter rests upon the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Raymond Williams (1977) as a lens by which hegemony, ideology, and culture can be interpreted and defined. The chapter examines theoretically the economic, political, and sociocultural context of the Ethnic Studies Ban and also shows how Apple's (2006) critique of the "Conservative Alliance" is operating in Tucson, AZ. The chapter challenges and questions the assumed notions of mainstream education, while

theoretically interpreting how power influences and imposes a set of values, ideals, principals, and identities as the norm in our society.

In Chapter 3, I posit why narrative inquiry and participant observation as a methodology is important when engaging people's lives and perspectives, while still being equitable and just within scholarship. In this chapter, I approach narrative inquiry using a scholar-activist model to determine researcher positionality, insights on data collection, and participation. The chapter is honest and transparent about my positionality and involvement in the local and national movement in defense of the MAS program. Narrative is used in this chapter to display the intersections and accounts engaged by the author and the MAS program community when collecting and documenting data.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I display the powerful voices of the participants. In these two chapters—Findings and Analysis and Participants' Final Reflections on Mexican American Studies—the voices of students, teachers, administrators, and community members are featured and amplified giving a narrative account of the perspectives, beliefs, and feelings on the banning of the MAS program. In these chapters, participants share through their quotes, thoughts, and interpretations on the MAS program curriculum, pedagogy, and experiences regarding HB 2281. In these two chapters, I give an insightful and meaningful perspective on the ways power and dominance push up against people's lives when they are different and counter to mainstream society. This chapter is organized into findings that are supported academically and evidenced via the participants' voices. The following findings encompass the themes and collective voices of the MAS program study participants: (a) evidence of self-determination and a strong sense of control over their own life, (b) demonstration of a strong sense of identity formation, (c)

challenging the traditional notion of success, (d) a demonstrated clash of cultural values and defense of a specific way of life, (e) the emotional and social impact of HB 2281, and (f) political and social tensions: the dust left by HB 2281.

Finally, Chapter 6—Reflections and Recommendations—wraps up with what was learned and processed in the study. In this chapter, I give reflections and recommendations to policymakers and youth practitioners on the importance of a culturally relevant and critical curriculum and pedagogy. I also offer recommendations that propose an analysis on how to interpret and develop just and equitable policy/programing in mainstream education and community educational spaces.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND A CRITICAL READING OF THE IDEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE ATTACKS ON MAS

Power and Education: Cultural Wars and the Culture of Common Sense

Throughout this chapter, I describe the theoretical concepts that give context to my dissertation. To best make meaning of each theoretical concept, I give cogent examples from the reality of Tucson to contextualize and situate theoretically our understanding of the Ethnic Studies struggle. The examples used in this chapter are useful when interpreting the tensions, assumptions, and racial dynamics that play out systemically in Tucson, AZ. The Ethnic Studies struggle in Tucson, AZ becomes an important case study on how injustice and power become common sense.

In this chapter, I plan to understand the relationship, as played out in society, on how hegemony, ideology, and culture interrelate. I look at the Ethnic Studies struggle in the State of Arizona as a real example of the tensions contested by dominant ideology. All three concepts of hegemony, ideology, and culture are defined and explained together throughout the chapter. In developing this chapter, it proved difficult to separate each concept individually and analyze it without referencing or also analyzing the other. Hegemony seemed to be the overarching theme in which ideology and culture exist; therefore, in this paper, hegemony is sprinkled throughout (Williams, 1977). I would also like to include that these three concepts are extremely important and very powerful, and to give each one of these terms complete and thorough clarity would prove to be more than what this chapter calls for. Williams (1977) described in five lines what I am about to present through this chapter:

> For "hegemony" is a concept which at once includes and goes beyond two powerful earlier concepts: that of "culture" as a "whole social process," in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of "ideology," in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest. (p. 108)

In this chapter, I explore theoretically "how" and "why" the MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy in Tucson, AZ was banned and accused of being anti-American (Horne, 2007; HB 2281, 2010). Through the lens of Raymond Williams and Antonio Gramsci's conceptions of hegemony, ideology, and culture, I demonstrate in this chapter how such social dynamics impacted the MAS program. I look toward Apple's (2006) conceptualizations of power and education, specifically looking at his work on the Conservative Alliance and how specific elements of this alliance strategically came together to ban the MAS program (Apple, 1993, 2006; HB 2281, 2010). I show how the MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy was specifically targeted for being an Indigenous educational project, and how the Conservative Alliance used common sense and mainstream rationale to position the MAS program outside of what is considered "normal" education.

Situating Mainstream Education

> Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation? They will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it. (Freire, 1970, p. 45)

Inherent at the beginning of the educational aims throughout the history of the United States is a historical cultural war that has favored a specific set of values, worldview, and identity. In this quote, Freire describes the account of those in society who historically and socially have fallen on the unfavored side of history. In many ways, Freire captures a specific narrative and oppression whose lived experience can only be contextualized by those whose values, knowledge, and worldview inherently oppose dominant culture and ideology (Grande, 2015).

Freire (1970) further pointed to the praxis of a quest specifically yielding caution that liberation will not happen through chance or through the system. To achieve liberation, Freire acknowledged a fight, a struggle per se, to achieve recognition. Nevertheless, from whom and/or what are oppressed communities liberating themselves, and why is there a necessity to fight for such liberation? The history of mainstream education shares part of its narrative to be a mechanism for social control and order. Schools in the United States were created to construct a common knowledge and perspective, solidifying a common ideology and culture of the land (Kaestle & Foner, 1983). The imposition of a specific ideology and culture still permeates today through pressures and expectations reinforced and promoted via the processes of hegemony.

Toward the beginning of the century, schools were used to consolidate and solidify a national identity. The proximity to the other, whether it be a Black, Indigenous, or an immigrant identity, threatened the European establishment. Schools were used to teach a Protestant and Anglo American identity that centered the English language, capitalism, and a common set of values, such as individualism. Those communities whose language, values, and ideals differed from the European ideal were met with violence, death, isolation, or assimilation (Apple, 1993; Kaestle & Foner, 1983).

Many of the Indigenous communities, up until their exchange with colonialism, engaged very differently to the Anglo American way. Their understanding of religion, spirituality, and relationship to the land and the economy were all ideologies that conflicted with the European way of life. The Indigenous communities valued sustainability and engaged upon the land in ways that protected resources, and they believed in sharing and the distribution of resources versus the accumulation and explicit promotion of competition (Adamson & Klinger, 2008). They also believe in kinship usage rights over land versus property ownership rights. The goal for Indigenous communities was to be in balance with the land: To take more than what was needed was to abuse and waste resources, and to take more for use in profit was irrational, as there were plenty of resources for everyone (Adamson & Klinger, 2008). Hedges (2012) further amplified the ideological conflict that exists between Indigenous communities and the colonialist:

> The war on the Native Americans, like the wars waged by colonialist around the globe, was waged to eradicate not only a people but a competing ethic. The older form of human community was antithetical and hostile to capitalism, the primacy of the technological state and the demands of empire. (p. 1)

The process of schooling for communities of color, throughout the history of the United States, meant accepting a new culture and new ideologies while rejecting and denying their own. At the beginning of 1887 and through the 1900, the United States established Native American boarding schools specifically designed to Americanize Indigenous children by eliminating the competing ethic described by Hedges (2012) and assimilating them into U.S. society. Captain Richard H. Pratt was one of the founders of these schools and was also responsible for engaging

in brutal and oppressive methods to "civilize the savages" (J. González, 2000). Pratt developed ideologies representative of the following theme: "Kill the Indian save the man." This idea stripped Indigenous communities of their culture and way of life. This ideology violently devalued and attempted to destroy a contending worldview simply for being different. Until this day, Indigenous communities continue to fight, struggling to uphold their belief systems and worldviews.

The pressures and expectations reinforced and promoted via the processes of hegemony can be complex and irrational, especially if these rationales oppose and contradict the ideological and cultural perspectives of certain people. To understand how and why the cultures and ideologies of Indigenous or marginalized communities are still found irrational, it is important to look at how hegemony, ideology, and culture favor a dominant history, identity, and perspective. The relationship among hegemony, ideology, and culture is one of fascinating interest. By understanding these relationships, ability is gained toward understanding society and the forces that move and organize its existence. The complexities of modern-day society often make it difficult to understand injustice, power, difference, and control. Nevertheless, critical cultural theory provides a cultural analysis and worldview that explains these dynamics in detail (Sardar & Van Loon, 2005).

Critical cultural theory gives scholars the tools to best understand the cultural and economic breakdown in society (Sardar & Van Loon, 2005). One specific point of importance is determining the ideological and cultural norm of society. If both the ideological and cultural norms of society are determined, then it is easier to see who is in control and who is not, what

knowledge is in place and what knowledge is not, and, finally, what value systems are being played out and what value systems are not (Apple, 2004).

Hegemony

Hegemony is an all-encompassing process by which all people participate either knowingly or not (Williams, 1977). Hegemony is all around us; it affects us in every way imaginable and allows us to both choose and navigate methods of living that fall within the methods established as appropriate by power (Apple, 1995). Hegemony functions through domination and consent, allowing the participants of hegemony to play out prescripted roles necessary and in accord with principles and values of dominant ideology (Williams, 1976/1983). Williams positions a specific elite class in society who formulates a specific ideology that feeds and motivates hegemony. He describes a system of economic and social classes by which society is organized and constructed (Williams, 1961). The elite and ruling class position themselves in control and domination of society through cultural, ideological, and economic means. It is through hegemony by which their elitist values and principles become the standard, the reality, and the common sense by which society as a whole is embraced and reproduced (Apple, 2004). Williams identifies hegemony as a lived process rather than a system or structure. This interpretation of hegemony shapes the individual by an overarching set of meanings and values that permeate all aspects of life:

> Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of "ideology," nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as "manipulation" or "indoctrination." It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. (Williams, 1977, p. 110)

Hegemony is often confused and misinterpreted as an ideology. Both of these concepts are interrelated, and, for the purpose of this chapter, both concepts will be laid out together to see their formations and dynamics. Williams (1977) defines ideology as "a relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as a 'world-view' or 'class outlook'" (p. 109).[7] Ideology is then the principle tool used by hegemony to bring cohesion and dominance over society. In this chapter, ideology will be examined as forming a complicated and dynamic relationship with hegemony. The ideology of the ruling elite class[8] is one of a particular kind based in historical, cultural, economic, and sociopolitical beginnings that determine the rules of hegemony. However, many different forms of ideology exist and the challenge for hegemony is to incorporate, exclude, or dismantle the ideologies presented in society. A specific ideology, then, could either be accepted or rejected pending the hegemonic control of society (Williams, 1976/1983).

In the case of the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ, the ideology of the program came into conflict with the ideology of dominant hegemony. The goal of hegemony is to promote and procedurally establish the one dominant ideology as common and real for all society. If a Western and Eurocentric worldview is the dominant ideology common and real for all society, then Indigenous forms of knowing become an ideological threat and instant battleground for all

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[7] For Williams Class outlook generalized social groups that include specific economic, political, and social realities. However, in the social definition of how Williams predetermines society, racial, religious, and worldview criteria define the tensions and reasons for why the MAS program was outlawed. Specifically, the alignment between the racial, and ideological reality of the Indigenous-Latinx communities clashed with the educational aspirations of the dominant ideology controlling society.

[8] Specifically looking at the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, the author of this chapter sees the "elite" as a product of institutional racism, via dynamics of property, exploitation, slavery, forced assimilation, violence, and the economic stability of a privileged and favored world-view based in race and ideology. However, for the purpose of this question I will be describing Williams' account toward who constitutes as the elite and ruling class.

knowledge considered dominant or official (Apple, 2004). This process can be evidenced in the history mentioned on Indigenous boarding schools, and most recently, the Ethnic Studies Ban HB 2281 in Tucson, AZ (Williams, 1958).

An Indigenous Epistemology and the Ideological Struggle

The MAS program at TUSD is still engaged in an ideological battle where HB 2281 legislation looks to discredit and dismantle the MAS program curriculum and pedagogy. The goal of the conservative legislation was to therefore position MAS as anti-American, separatist, and outside of the dominant ideology (Romero et al., 2009). To win the public's favor toward banning of the MAS program, the opponents of the MAS program relied upon common sense as determined by a dominant ideology and enforced through a specific hegemonic worldview.

Nevertheless, the MAS program does operate outside of the colonized and Western forms of knowledge in our society (Arce, 2015). Its theoretically Indigenous worldview is based in critical education and a critical view of history, identity, self-reflection, and self-determination. The MAS Indigenous frameworks of the Nahui Olin through the four Tezcatlipocas create a foundation to humanize individual experiences regardless of the social constructs imposed by society (Arce, 2015). The four cyclical areas of growth in their framework engage the students and communities of the MAS program in a process of self-reflection, self-education, critical action, and transformation. Individuals enter into a process of decolonization, toward humanization, or as Freire (1970) would conceptualize, a process of concientizacion toward individual transformation based in the self and collective experience.

I acknowledge that there is a long-standing debate in the field of philosophy between individualism and collectivism on which worldview is ideal when organizing and/or

conceptualizing society (Biddle, 2012). Nonetheless, the individual worldview is most prevalent as a national value when looking toward the history and identity of the United States (Biddle, 2012). Specifically, in the United States, education, through schools, has been the medium by which certain values and ideals shape and mold the ideal citizen. There is an inherent bias toward a very specific set of values and ideals preferred when looking toward developing the national identity of the United States (Kaestle & Foner, 1983). For many communities of color, specifically the Indigenous communities of the United States, the process of education has been at the cost of losing their own identities (J. González, 2000).

The Indigenous-based approach to understanding the self collectively rubs up against the dominant understandings of individualism. One of the biggest areas of conflict for both marginalized communities is the clash of ideologies and values that position the MAS curriculum and its pedagogy in direct opposition to the imposed and dominant Westernized set of values and principles predetermined by the status quo (Acosta, 2013). A real example as to how this occurs in Tucson, AZ could be seen in the way the former Arizona superintendent expresses his need to do away with collectivism.

This statement by John Huppenthal, the former Arizona State Superintendent of Public Instruction, demonstrated in a public video interview to the *Western Free Press* the racial tensions and perspectives that have always existed throughout the history of the United States (Zinn, 1995). In the following quote, Huppenthal was very explicit in wanting to prioritize individualism as an American value and principle over collectivity. Huppenthal described his criticism of the value of collectivity as “the eternal battle of all time” (Zinn, 2012a, 6:02-9:57)

The implication of the language used by Huppenthal demonstrates the notion that collectivity is, in fact, a threat to the American ideal. Huppenthal stated:

> We are in the winning values business. . . . This is the eternal battle of all time. The forces of collectivism against the forces of individual liberty and we're a beautiful country because we have balanced those things. Now, right now in our country we're way out of balance. The forces of collectivism are suffocating us—it's a tidal wave that is threatening our individual liberties. And so, we, at the national level need to rebalance this and we need to make sure that what is going on in our schools rebalance this. (Zinn, 2012a, 6:02-9:57)

In this interview, Huppenthal goes on to describe a war strategy used by the Romans to defeat their opponents. He describes the different military strategies he and his collaborators used to beat the MAS program. Huppenthal ultimately communicated that the purpose to eliminate the MAS program was to preserve a specific set of values that were passed down from the creators of the constitution, also known as the Founding Fathers (Zinn, 2012a, 6:02-9:57). This video demonstrates the problem of a colonial paradigm and the exclusive nature of official knowledge. What then happens when your history, identity, and values do not match those reinforced by a dominant society? What then happens when your identity is invalidated and criminalized for not agreeing with official knowledge? The Ethnic Studies Ban of the former MAS program in Tucson HB 2281 exemplifies the reinforcing of an official knowledge and identity (Apple, 2004, 2006).

Ideological Domination

At the beginning of this dissertation, I gave examples of conservative educational policy throughout the nation that focused on legislation coming out of Denver, Oklahoma, and Arizona (Healy, 2014). The focus of such legislation was on patriotism, free enterprise, and promoting courses in U.S. history to reflect the positive achievements and accomplishments of the United States, while ignoring the more shameful and sinister histories that shape the complexity and flaws of an American identity (Galeano, 1973; J. González, 2000; H. Zinn, 1995). These laws appeal to a manufactured common sense produced by a ruling elite to control the status quo.

Many individuals in the United States often unknowingly embrace the ideals reflected in conservative legislation. The ideals and values they embrace align with dominant values, such as patriotism, individualism, respect for authority, and free enterprise. These values and ideals become part of the common understanding when they get promoted in schools, government, media, history, and society. Hegemony via ideology, permeates all aspects of society and therefore the goal of hegemony is to sway the public opinion into a specific view that fits the ideology of the dominant and elite class (Gramsci, 1971).

To further understand this concept of domination, we must see how Williams, via Gramsci's (1971) conception of a war of maneuver and position, sets the stage toward an all-encompassing hegemony of a certain ideology. To do so, the ruling elite has to occupy all institutions, such as media, government, education, law, and popular culture. The ruling elite implements strategy to dominate the narrative to sway the public consciousness into a specific ideological worldview and identity. In the case of United States, and its economic and political ideology, capitalism, free enterprise, land ownership, individualism, and representative

democracy become the only option for a common society. Socially and culturally, Whiteness, Eurocentric identity, hierarchy, patriarchy, heterosexuality, Christianity, a high-to-middle-class position, the English language, and an able-bodied individual define the ideal citizen with no option for deviation. All other ideologies and conceptualizations of different societies become alienated and irrational (Williams, 1977).

Gramsci (1971) described a war of ideology and culture, continuously fought through tactics of maneuverability and positionality. The goal, according to Gramsci, is for the social group to maneuver its ideology to the point of positioning themselves in all forms of political, economic, and cultural society. Such positionality can be seen in the form of political pressures, organized by political campaigns or popular mobilizations reflected in music, theater, and media that influence dominant culture to favor the principles and ideologies of the dominant and elite class (Gramsci, 1971). The goal of positionality, according to Gramsci, is to have swayed the public opinion so much that the dominant and elite group's ideology is positioned in society as common sense. Therefore, if the elite and dominant group—the ruling society—have positioned themselves as the default ideological structure of daily life, then they have the power to impress their definitions upon the ruled (Williams, 1961). In the case of the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ, curricula, books, the study of critical history, and the practice of Indigenous values and principles were outlawed as they reflected an alternative approach and a direct threat to dominant society (Apple, 2004; Grande, 2015).

The Conservative Alliance

Apple (1993, 2006) specifically points to a conservative front, an alignment of four conservative movements working collaboratively and independently to politically, socially, and

economically reinforce conservative ideals and values in our society. Apple makes mention that the conservative front organized by the right exemplify Gramsci's idea of enacting a war of maneuver and position (Apple, 1993). The Right's ability to dominate and influence the ideological landscape of society have proved them efficient in reestablishing a conservative worldview that romanticizes the past as a time in society when the United States was great and ideal (Apple, 1993, 2006). What is lacking from the conservative view is the inability to include difference and/or the social impact of one ideology valued over the other. Apple (1993) wrote the following:

> A new alliance has been formed, one that has increasing power in educational and social policy. This power bloc combines business with the New Right and with neoconservative intellectuals. Its interests lie not in increasing the life chances of women, people of color, or labor. Rather, it aims at providing the educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing international competitiveness, profit, and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the "ideal" home, family, and school. (p. 6)

The four conservative fronts described as neoliberalism, neoconservatism, authoritarian populism, and new managerialism come out of a complex, dynamic, and organized movement to rectify all that is bad in education. The failure of the educational system invites a conservative critique highlighting increased dropout rates, a failure to teach useful skills in the workforce, poor skills in literacy, and a lack of standards and discipline (Apple, 1998). The conservative alliance credits the failures of the educational system as being the reason for a poor and unproductive economy (Apple, 1998). Each front of the conservative alliance addresses a specific approach toward restructuring the educational system. As Apple (1998) suggested, the

conservative alliance wishes for society to embrace a common culture so that our schools reflect a more responsive and efficient product and goal marketable to the private sector.

Neoliberalism proposes to both shift power from the public sector to the private, while corporations maximize profit and control over the economic and social conditions of society. Its commodity-driven proposition indulges all needs of the public as long as those specific needs produce a profit (Apple, 2006). One of the highlights of the MAS program in Tucson, AZ was that the Ethnic Studies program served the communities in the TUSD. The goal of neoliberalism was to commodify, package, and resale the MAS curriculum and pedagogy to any community willing to purchase it (Apple, 1993). An active discussion happening in the Ethnic Studies struggle in Tucson and its participants was, "Why not move the curriculum and pedagogy to a charter school?," where it was perceived that the teachers and students would have more social and academic freedom to explore and practice its culturally relevant pedagogy (active observations from my time in Tucson, AZ). This debate is a complex one and deserving of its own analytical essay; nonetheless, the conservative alliance continues to control the narratives and ideologies of the public. In many ways, charter schools can be environments for critical education, while equally serving the needs of neoliberalism by packaging critical education in the private sector. The subtle repositioning of critical education into charter schools is where the complexities and confusion occur for many marginalized communities and pro-charter advocates. The need for critical education is crucial in our educational system, and given this perspective, the public sector is where the battle exits and the ultimate home where Ethnic Studies and critical education should be. Critical education and Ethnic Studies should not be a

commodity bought and sold to those who could access it; nonetheless, critical education and Ethnic Studies should be a right and responsibility to our society.

The new managerialism is a sector of the conservative alliance whose main concern is efficiency, measurements, evaluation, competencies, standards, and testing (Apple, 1993, 2006). The rigidity and need for efficiency go hand in hand with the neoliberal agenda to commodify, reform, and streamline educational processes. Complexities of diversity and multicultural education interfere with its need to improve standards and evaluations in education (Apple, 1993). The MAS program consistently had to show merits for meeting the educational standards of the public-school system. The curriculum and pedagogy of the MAS program was consistently questioned and evaluated to prove its alignment with national standards. One of the distinctions of the MAS program was its ability to not only meet the national standards of education, yet it excelled its expectations (Cabrera et al., 2014; Cabrera et al., 2012). The constant evaluation, probing, and scrutiny of the MAS program taxed and exhausted the students, teachers, administrators, and community (Sleeter, 2011).

The neoconservative front was primary in the banning of the MAS program. The front's push to restore a common culture, imposing obedience upon the MAS program and forcing their curriculum and pedagogy to reflect the ideology and culture of the United States, demonstrates the impact of this group (Apple, 1993; Cabrera et al., 2014). Its belief in a strong state and the role of government to implement a romanticized past, where there was one culture, one way of thought, and one ideology, demonstrates why the Indigenous foundation of the MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy in Tucson, AZ was such a threat (Apple, 1993; Arce, 2015). The conceptualization of a multicultural society based in difference where many worldviews fit is

counter to the neoconservative agenda (Apple, 1993; Stahler-Sholk, 2000). Apple (1993) describes the strategy and approach toward restoring a common culture in the following passage:

> The expansion of voices in the curriculum and the vehement responses of the Right become crucial here. Multicultural and antiracist curricula present challenges to the program of the New Right, challenges that go to the core of their vision. A largely monocultural national curriculum (which deals with diversity by centering the always ideological "we" and usually then simply mentioning "the contributions" of people of color, women, and others), emphasizes the maintenance of existing hierarchies of what counts as official knowledge, the revivifying of traditional Western standards and values, the return to a "disciplined" (and one could say largely masculinist) pedagogy, and so on, and a threat to any of these is also a threat to the entire world view of the Right. (p. 12)

One of the most used quotes on behalf of Tom Horne, the former Attorney General and lead accuser of the MAS program in Tucson, AZ, was a quote by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963), where he says, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character" (para. 20). Tom Horne used this quote to justify and emphasize that the "content of their character" is where the focus of critical education and the MAS program curriculum should be. To focus on difference and skin color is to fall on the side of racism and therefore disagree with King.

By highlighting the always ideological "we," Horne equates the content of character to an ideological set of norms dominant and common in society. By focusing on the common "we," he erases the social implications and responsibilities of a racialized system whose purpose is to homogenize and/or destroy difference (Apple, 1993). To focus on skin color and/or difference

would mean recognizing the historical erasure of people of color and their experiences in the history and context of the nation. Further, to emphasize in King's quote an emphasis on character, while erasing the experiences of people of color, is to not only miss the mark on what King stood for, but to consciously use King's words to reaffirm an official knowledge—Western traditional values—and maintain an existing hierarchy by design (Apple, 1993, 1998, 2006). The neoconservative agenda specifically targeted the MAS program for daring to push back against the always ideological "we" and stand for a different possibility—a possibility built on difference.

Lastly, the conservative environment of Arizona breathes an authoritarian populist narrative that facilitates the dynamics of the previous conservative fronts. The conservative culture and constant dissemination of conservative media creates an atmosphere that highlights a nativist sense of patriotism that is based in a White America, one White God, and a militancy and bias against secular humanism (Apple, 1993). The authoritarian populist will critique schools for teaching evolution and prefer to home school their children. They believe schools should teach patriotism versus a critical perspective of history and identity, and that the only "real" knowledge is one based in Western Christian values. During the Ethnic Studies struggle in Tucson, AZ, groups of people would gather at the protest and yell, "This is America, go back to where you came from!," and radio talk show hosts, newspapers, and TV adds all demonized the MAS program as teaching witch craft and embracing a hedonistic pedagogy based in Indigenous epistemology (Arce, 2015). Their narrative carried a righteous slant urging Arizonians to side with all that is good: the side of America and God.

Determination, Culture, and Resistance

Human beings work, produce, and contribute to the economy. Based on the conditions of this process, humans are either rewarded or exploited. Human beings also represent diverse ideological and cultural positions different from those determined by hegemony; religion, race, gender, traditions, and sexual orientation are examples. So, what if the ideological and cultural forms of the dominant hegemony, determined by the elite ruling class, are not in line with the ideological and cultural forms of a diverse human society? (Williams, 1983). Using Williams' (1983) reference to determination, we can conclude that hegemony sets limits and exerts pressures upon society. In a very similar manner, the nonelite and ruled class may also push back deterministically against the dominant ideological and cultural elite.

> The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. At any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society. . . . That is to say, alternative political and cultural emphasis, and the many forms of opposition and struggle, are important not only in themselves but as indicative features of what the hegemonic process has in practice had to work to control. (Williams, 1977, p. 113)

Culture is then important when evaluating hegemony; culture becomes the pivotal medium, a form by which an ideology can be communicated and demonstrated (Williams, 2009). Culture acts as a medium toward either reinforcing dominant ideology or creating an alternative or opposition against the dominant ideology in place. According to Williams (1977), for hegemony

to continue its process, it needs to be challenged, renewed, recreated, and modified. Culture can then be resistant and a useful tool to retransform the ideology of hegemony.

Williams (1961) defined culture[9] under three general categories: (a) *ideal*, or a state or process of human perfection within certain universal or absolute values, (b) *documentary*, or the recording of surviving text and practices of a culture, and (c) *social*, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life. For the purpose of this chapter, specific attention is drawn to the third category of culture and its reference and potential to challenging hegemony. The social category further defines culture as expressive and as a cultural analysis reconstituting a particular way of life (Williams, 1961).

If we return to the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ, and the struggle to protect the MAS curriculum and pedagogy as part of reconstituting a particular way of life, the MAS curriculum and pedagogy culturally can be a direct threat against hegemony. Williams (1980) explained the complex dynamics and relationships between the dominant ideological discourse, the ways in which this discourse is maintained through the process of hegemony, and the nondominant groups. He outlined this complexity through five categories: (a) residual cultures, (b) emergent cultures, (c) alternative cultures, (d) oppositional cultures, and (e) dominant cultures (Williams, 1980).

The fifth category of culture has been described extensively throughout this chapter. I will lay out the definitions of the four previous categories and focus specifically on residual and

[9] The definition of culture is descriptive of Williams entire life work. More could be said on the three general categories described as ideal and documentary; however, for the purpose of this question, a focus will be given toward the third category, social.

oppositional culture. It is believed that these two descriptions of culture can be demonstrated in the MAS program struggle. Williams (1980) defined these forms of culture:

- Residual cultures are "some experiences, meanings and values, which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social formation" (p. 40).
- Emergent cultures refers to cultures were "new meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences, are continually being created" (p. 41).
- Alternative cultures refers to "someone who simply finds a different way to live and wishes to be left alone" (p. 42).
- Oppositional cultures refers to "someone who finds a different way to live and wants to change the society in its light" (p. 42).

The synergy and cultural foundation created by the Ethnic Studies movement established by the MAS program in Tucson, AZ could be classified under two specific categories of culture: residual and oppositional. The Ethnic Studies movement in Arizona to defend the MAS program was founded on an old residual foundation based in history, Indigenous epistemology, and a value system of collectivity. Critical pedagogy, the Indigenous curriculum, and the collective modes of participation taught by the MAS program in Tucson were designed to not only educate youth critically and academically, but also to provide a humanizing process—a platform for self-reflection, self-education, action, and transformation (Arce, 2015).

The goal of the curriculum and pedagogy of the MAS program was to remind students of a forgotten tradition and a history/(her)story that aligns with their ancestry and cultural

expression (Acosta, 2013; Arce, 2015). The history of Arizona carries a rich trajectory of events, meanings, and identifications based in indigeneity, and of mestizo (a mixture of Spanish and Indigenous) orientations. The Indigenous identity in Chicanx, Mexicans, and some Latinxs is still very prevalent in the cultural expression and way of life of these Arizona communities. The innate relationship and familiarity to the land and its histories are rooted deeply prior to a colonizing date of reference (Acuña, 2011). As times have changed and old hegemonies have been renewed and recreated, new dominant ideologies become the governing rule of society and fail to recognize the social and cultural experiences, meanings, and values of the residual and oppositional cultures of the land (Williams, 1980). Williams (1977) laid this out clearly:

> Again, the idea of rural community is predominantly residual, but in some limited respects alternative or oppositional to urban industrial capitalism, though for the most part it is incorporated, as idealization or fantasy, or as an exotic-residential or escape-leisure function of the dominant order itself. (p. 122)

Indigenous communities and their respective extensions, such as Mexican, Chicanx, and Latinx communities, generally exemplify Williams' perspective that they are perceived as exotic, romantic, and as a fantasy of the past (Four Arrows et al., 2013). Festive holidays and events generalize and appropriate key elements and symbolism important to the practicing culture. Apple (2006) describes this process as the disarticulation of meaning of a practice or idea and the rearticulating of that same practice and idea to accommodate the dominant ideology in place.

Sacred practices, symbolic historical events, and cultural expressions, such as Cinco de Mayo, sweat lodges, and ritualistic attire, become transformed to accommodate capitol. The Cinco de Mayo holiday in the United States is now celebrated as a time where sombreros and

ponchos are worn mimicking a Mexican stereotype of drunken and lazy Mexicans. The alcohol companies have transformed the symbolic importance of Cinco de Mayo into an alcohol consumption stimulus for the nation (Acuña, 2011). The Cinco de Mayo event is not only an important date in the history of Mexico, it also helped to transform the history of the United States. The Cinco de Mayo Battle of Puebla in Mexico was against the Confederate-supporting French Army. An agreement was waged on behalf of the French to the confederates, vowing to support their war against the North if they had achieved victory against Mexico (Acuña, 2011). The retelling of history sides with the narrative of dominant ideology and the rearticulating of the symbolism of this event takes on a different meaning to what actually took place long ago (Apple, 2006).

A similar process of disarticulation and rearticulating happens with sweat lodges and traditional wear, such as jewelry, herbal medicine, and ceremonial attire. Sweat lodges serve a sacred and reflective purpose of cleansing practices embraced by Indigenous communities across the nation. Very similarly, herbal medicine, jewelry, and ceremonial attire carry a purpose in processes of healing and community development. Nonetheless, it is common that such practices can now be bought and sold voiding the symbolic reflective and social meaning behind the rituals. To add a price tag to such rituals is to align the practices and rituals of Indigenous communities with a dominant ideology, therefore validating the Indigenous practices and rituals, only if they align with power (Apple, 1995). Spas, gyms, and tourism agencies now market sweat lodges and herbal medicine as feel good practices that can be bought and sold void a social commitment to the Indigenous communities. In fact, what is being consumed is the exotic and fantasy stigma imposed by hegemony (Williams, 1977).

Hegemony will only recognize the value systems of residual and oppositional cultures if they are referred to as a memory, or if the values of the cultures align with capitalism (Williams, 1977). However, when these cultures reject the exotic and fantasy labels imposed by hegemony, they become a threat and opposition to the establishment. In the case of the Ethnic Studies struggles in Tucson, AZ, the history and cultural realities on which the MAS program curriculum and pedagogy were founded rejected the notion of assimilative processes and enacted determination to defend their way of life (Williams, 1977).

Conclusion and Social Implications

The struggle for hegemony, then, is one that permeates all of society. Its current principles, as established by the dominant culture, affect all who do not fit into the established value systems of hegemony. These communities, as demonstrated by immigrant and first-generation households, are being forced to abandon their identities and ideological stances to embrace dominant ideologies that violate the community's principles and worldviews (Apple, 2006).

Children and youth of these communities are being raised conflicted, developing a one-sided identity that favors dominant society and its values. Children of the alienated communities often reject the parents' teachings and culture, which causes a direct conflict in disconnection with their children (N. González et al., 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). Division and confusion are being spread through the communities, resulting in self-hate, violence, depression, and anger. Collective principles of unity and family cohesion are now traded for more dominant ideals based in individualism and consumerism. Youth are being taught to think of their own individual success and not the collective success of their community (Apple, 2006; Grande, 2015).

Youth are not the only ones affected by the values and ideologies of the dominant culture—so are entire families and communities. Such communities do not see themselves in the larger context of society. Schools do not reflect the cultural reality of the alienated communities they serve (Valenzuela, 1999). More so, schools often push a cultural identity reflective of dominant cultural ideals. The dominant media portray the ideal body, personality, and style accepted by the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Williams, 2009). Many of the alienated communities cannot identify themselves physically, ideologically, and economically to the norms of dominant society.

All this is said to state the importance of understanding hegemony, ideology, and culture. As scholars and activists, it is our primary duty to challenge societal dominant norms and create spaces that are more inclusive of all communities. We should strive to position ourselves in ideological battles publicly and not just in academic circles (Apple, 2008). We should involve ourselves in community projects with primary goals to learn from the experiences of alienated communities. Using pedagogic skills to help include such experiences in developing inclusive societies is an important next step.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I examine why narrative inquiry and participative observation was used as the most comprehensive methodology for the design of this study. I also share how participants were selected and how trust was built given a harsh and sensitive political environment in the State of Arizona. As a scholar, activist, and member in the community of Ethnic Studies across the county, I also relate my positionality and the real complexities that arose in the process of data collection. In this chapter, I explore aspects and highlights of some of the tasks of the critical scholar-activist and how my identity and relationship to an active social movement co-existed alongside my academic identity (Apple, 2012b). Furthermore, I give narrative to the process of data collection and story lines on how my research design included active participation with the community being studied while simultaneously documenting and reflecting on the process.

Personal Narrative

It was the third day of the data collection process, and I had recently arrived in the city; however, word had already spread that I would be making my way through Tucson, asking for interviews and time for processing. The Ethnic Studies Ban had been in play for quite some time by the time I started collecting my data. Many of the students and teachers I interviewed had already given several interviews to academics who were looking to document the dynamics of the Ethnic Studies Ban. In the time leading up to my visit to Tucson, AZ for data collection, I too had witnessed several individuals rush to Tucson for data as soon as the Ethnic Studies Ban law passed. I was quite nervous about how the community would perceive me, and I feared being

perceived as just another academic coming to Tucson and then leaving without a long-term commitment to the larger social struggle in play (Apple, 2012b).

We had gathered at one of the important ceremonial sites for the Chicanx-Indigenous community in Tucson. I was there because the family with whom I had been staying invited me to a special ceremony to commemorate the Day of the Dead. I was excited and honored to be present at such a special event. I was also there because during several other trips I had made to Tucson, I had felt a connection with the elders and families of this community, and participating in ceremony brought me peace and purpose. Upon arrival, and after greeting the community, eating some great food, and enjoying the environment, I was approached by one of the student-alumni of the former Mexican American Studies (MAS) program. I had not met this MAS student-alumni before, but I recognized them from several of my past trips to Tucson. This student was also one of the students to whom I had outreached via email for a potential interview. As we greeted each other and I introduced myself, I intentionally left the data collection needs out of our conversation, as I recognized I was not in an appropriate place to speak of my research. Nevertheless, the student approached me, and in the most respectful and dignified way I can remember, they said:

> My story is one I truly value and cherish, and giving my story to other people is a gift. Many have come to Tucson and have asked me to give my story, but never give anything back in return. If I give you my story, what will you give back?

This was the first time I had ever been positioned as an academic, as much of my work in the community had been as an organizer, activist, and educator. My scholarship was always critical of academics, and I never really saw myself as one. The mirror held up to me by the student

shook me and for the moment allowed me to feel and taste—in real time—the complexity and responsibility of what it means to be a scholar-activist (Apple, 2012b; Smith, 1999).

For the student, I was positioned as an outsider, even though I did not see myself in that light. Prior to engaging in the Ethnic Studies struggle, I had developed a strong activist identity. I had experience working in labor and farmworker struggles, such as the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) from Florida. In my early 20s, I was fortunate to have formed part of a radical community space in the community in which I was born and raised. El Centro Cultural de Mexico in Santa Ana, CA (El Centro) was known for promoting popular education, horizontal governance, and self-determination through traditional Mexican culture. It was there were I first heard of thinkers/philosophers and ideas, such as Gramsci and ideology and culture. Still very young to understand the significance of these words, I was impressed by the vast possibilities that were proposed for creating change in my community.

As a Santa Ana kid, being raised on the South side of the city, I observed injustice and felt racial hostilities in a conservative environment of Orange County, CA. The schools in the Santa Ana School District were ranked among the worst in the nation, and personally I had been forced to repeat third grade as they had tracked and labeled me a special education student. El Centro, in many ways, was an outlet of expression and a place where I started to put words to my experiences. It was in El Centro were I first connected with punks, the do-it-yourself (DIY) philosophy, cultural expression, and where I also met artisans and traditional musicians coming from rural places in Mexico. My exposure to this new world allowed me to address injustice and to reconnect and embrace my culture and identity.

I learned traditional music from the state of Veracruz, Mexico and traveled intensely to and from Veracruz for a span of several years during my undergrad experience. I learned about community organizing in an immigrant community and was especially drawn to the narratives of immigrant families that were similar to my own. These experiences introduced me to the CIW in Florida who organized a national campaign around farmworker justice against the tomato industry. My participation with the CIW taught me how to build networks and coalitions and develop organizing strategies and approaches when designing and implementing campaigns. It was through the CIW and their networks that I got connected to the Ethnic Studies struggles in Tucson, AZ.

My trajectory and experience as an activist broadsided me when I stood there in reflection after what the student expressed. It was difficult to come to terms with how I was being perceived, and yet I understood the responsibility that comes with my academic identity. For me, the Ethnic Studies struggle symbolized that of my own, and I saw my own story in the narrative of the student alumni who approached me. For the moment, I was speechless, my heart beat incredibly fast, and I began to sweat immediately. The only thing I could share in the moment was a sincere desire to build a relationship with the student and to go forward with them in the larger context of community building and the Ethnic Studies movement (Apple, 2012b; Smith, 1999).

As I spoke, I made it clear that my purpose was to establish a relationship with them, and, at that point, to forget the interview. I then turned to them, and I honestly asked, “How could I build with you?” As the student responded, they spoke of a farming project they were organizing in one of the oldest neighborhoods of Tucson. They then proceeded to invite me to work in their

gardens the next day, and at 6:30 a.m., the student picked me up from where I was staying. That day together at their garden defined for me the importance of story and the power of engaging someone else's perspective. The personal narrative and exchange we had as we picked chili peppers and laid out irrigation hoses clarified for me the essence of my research and exchange in Tucson, AZ.

Why Narrative Inquiry and Participative Observation

When designing my research study, I looked for a methodology that would emphasize the power and fullness of storytelling. Given the hostility and cultural impact of the Ethnic Studies Ban, it was important to engage the participants through narrative (HB 2281, 2010; Romero et al., 2009). As the interviewer, I was aware of the potential hurt that could be re-lived when sharing of their experiences, and I searched for an approach and methodology that would allow participants to take full control of their own stories (Smith, 1999). As the participants engaged in the process of storytelling, they self-facilitated the parameters of how much they were willing to share, therefore co-creating an exchange that was rich and safe.

The Ethnic Studies struggles in Tucson, AZ impacted a significant sector of the population. The anti-Ethnic Studies legislation targeted Mexican American Studies (MAS) and critiqued the program for being anti-American (Acosta & Mir, 2012; Cammarota, 2012). Both narrative inquiry and participant observation allowed me to be reflective about the impact of the State of Arizona's intentions, while being sincere with my reflections and willingness to learn more about the Ethnic Studies Ban. As a scholar and activist, I participated and observed with permission from the Tucson community study participants.

Being both a participant and observer in Tucson, AZ allowed me to equally support the Ethnic Studies movement as needed, while also giving me access to learn about the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of those being impacted by the ban (Apple, 2012b; Smith, 1999). My proximity to and involvement in the Ethnic Studies struggle often positioned me as active in marches, protest, and educational campaigns. Nonetheless, I acknowledged my involvement in full transparency, recognizing that I was not a part of the Tucson community. It is important to state that I was not directly harmed, persecuted, or targeted physically by the legality and enforcement of the Ethnic Studies Ban; therefore, I was not affected equally as many of the students, families, teachers, and administrators. Many of the participants suffered harassment and persecution and were marginalized economically, politically, and culturally. I was respectfully aware of my position and, more often than not, was accepted and acknowledged because of the privilege of my researcher status (Apple, 2012b). Through both narrative and participative observation, I looked for ways to tell my story and open up spaces where others could tell their stories as well. The methodology used in this study was intentional, and its structure and approach allowed me to support a social justice environment while documenting and amplifying the MAS program participants' narratives.

Tucson, AZ is a very complex environment culturally and politically. The environments that exist in Tucson, AZ can be extreme and hostile. The MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy are positioned as one of the nation's leading educational programs for culturally relevant pedagogy and critical education (Cabrera et al., 2014; Sleeter, 2011). Politically, however, the MAS program was attacked critically and publicly by the State of Arizona; these relentless attacks isolated the program, leaving it vulnerable to the demands of the HB 2281

legislators (Acosta, 2013). In the process of learning and understanding about the complexity of these sensitivities, I was nervous and fearful to be neutral and/or indifferent when collecting data with the participants of the MAS program. Being honest about my position and not shying away from either the academic or activist identity created opportunities for full transparency and trust (Apple, 2012b).

My Researcher Positionality: Navigating the Critical Scholar-Activist

As I designed my research study and looked toward the struggles engaged by the MAS program in Tucson, AZ, Apple's (2012b) contribution on the tasks of a critical scholar-activist influenced the negotiation that often occurred when balancing my scholar and activist identities. My positionality going into Tucson, AZ would be constantly shifting, and I needed a grounding approach that would allow me to be true not only to myself, but also—and most importantly—to the community I was researching. Apple's contribution on the nine tasks of being a critical scholar activist were helpful in understanding my role as a graduate student and prospective academic. Of the nine tasks, two of the tasks were considered more than the others when designing my research study. The tasks I used were: (a) using my privilege as a scholar to both amplify and create spaces for more narrative, and (b) acting in concert with progressive movements. Both of these tasks helped guide my perspective and goals while collecting data in Tucson, AZ. Equally, both tasks also encompassed the fullness of who I am and how I might be perceived in the MAS program community (Apple, 2012b; Romero et al., 2009).

One of the ways I engaged my privilege as a scholar in full support of the Ethnic Studies movement was by staying involved in the national academic movement to support the MAS program and by actively finding ways to disseminate the information and action happening

locally and nationally. I regularly helped write press releases, short articles, and spoke at many academic spaces on the importance of the MAS program and the unfairness of the HB 2281 legislation. When I was away from Tucson, I consistently looked for funding resources, media platforms, and academic spaces to feature the work and social injustice happening in Tucson. I leveraged both my academic and activist identities to project the Ethnic Studies movement forward (Apple, 2012b; Smith, 1999). On many occasions, teachers and students from the MAS program visited my university to share of their struggle, and, in turn, I organized to find them resources that would support their movement economically and politically. The purpose of my actions was to take direction and facilitate the resources around me to further act in solidarity with the community of the MAS program (Apple, 2013).

The second task of a critical scholar-activist is to bear witness to negativity (Apple, 2012b); therefore, I used my positionality to clarify and validate the injustice of a racialized law. As an active participant in the Ethnic Studies movement, I too shared my narrative and gave my perspective on the Ethnic Studies Ban. I also participated in marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and was active when it came to teach-ins and dissemination of information. Nonetheless, I was also aware of how I might be perceived by participants due to my scholar identity. I was actively willing to share of my perspectives and biases in the interviews, and I was also available to process intentionally with the participants, regardless of the data collection (Smith, 1999). I was grateful for the conversations I had with the participants, as their conversations acted as symbolic spaces where learning and validation occurred for both the interviewer and participant.

Study Design

Interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, students, and student-alumni of the MAS program of the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). I conducted in-depth narrative-based interviews that allowed the participants to draw deep into their context, experience, and worldviews. Open ended yet genuine questions were asked with the interviewees on the program's structure. The questions explored the participants' relationship to the MAS curriculum, the MAS pedagogical approach, their perspectives on HB 2281, their personal narratives on pedagogy, and the impact they experienced, due to the ban.

A snowball sampling technique was used to acquire genuine and authentic interviews; however, email was also used in the process of recruitment. I relied on the relationships built with many of the teachers and organizers from the MAS program to spread the word about data collection. The snowball method reduced invasiveness and positioned me actively in the participants' networks. Participative observation was also used to collect data. As an active participant in the Ethnic Studies movement in Tucson, AZ, I used field notes and observations to document holistically the impact of the Ethnic Studies Ban. Participant interviews lasted approximately two hours. Each interview was rich and engaging; on occasion, the interviews continued at a separate time and location beyond the 2-hour time. All data were transcribed and thematically organized in Madison, WI. Themes were selected based on occurrence and saturation. Each theme was organized and paired with quotes that further exemplified its content.

Participant Demographics

Sixteen participants were interviewed. Thirteen of the interviews were recorded, while three of them were not recorded, with the exception of notes that were taken while in the field

and in the interviews. Of the 16 participants, seven of them self-identified as female, while nine of them self-identified as male. Of the 16 participants, one woman self-identified as White, six women self-identified as women of color, nine men self-identified as men of color, and one male self-identified as biracial. Of the 16 participants, six were teachers in the MAS program, six were former student-alumni of the MAS program, and two were MAS program administrators. Lastly, two of the participants were active community members impacted by the Ethnic Study Ban.

Each of the participants played an active role in the defense of the MAS program; beyond the demographic information, the participants were also mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, uncles, and aunts in the larger Tucson community. Each and every participant expressed concern with the banning of the MAS program and felt it a personal attack on their culture and identity. All of the participants self-identified as having a Mexican background, and most of the participants further identified as Indigenous-Mexican. The majority of the participants were active participants in the defense of the MAS program. All of the participants were publicly scrutinized and were targeted publicly by the State of Arizona for supporting the MAS program.

Several of the participants were publicly targeted and attacked openly via local and national media outlets. Many of the participants also lost their jobs and were severed traumatically from their families. The amount of pressure exerted upon these participants, on behalf of the State of Arizona, was massive, and many are still dealing with the traumatic experiences they lived. To protect the identity of these individuals, I refer to them by their pseudonyms. Given the public nature of the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ and the hostile political environment that currently exists in Tucson, I have omitted the participants' real names

and/or any identifying information that would reveal their identities. Participants' affiliations to the former MAS program are described to show their proximity to the Ethnic Studies Ban.

Interview Process and Interview Questions

My interviews were in-depth conversations that often flowed organically as motivated by the participants. As we began the interviews, I introduced myself if I did not already know the participant and would also give context to the research questions I was proposing. I also gave them the consent letter and form, explaining that what I valued most was their safety and that, if they decided to exit the interview at any time, they could do so immediately. To preserve confidentiality for third parties who did not consent to participate in the research, I asked participants at the beginning of the interview to not name and/or provide any identifiable information about those parties to avoid the risk of them being publicly noticed. I also asked participants to use a pseudonym to protect the identify of any third party to whom they might refer during the interview.

The interviews were powerful, and participants were engaged in telling me their stories. Most interviews flowed smoothly and felt genuine and sincere in our exchange. The questions asked in the interview were organized in two sections. The first set of questions focused on participant demographics and the personal experiences and impact of the Ethnic Studies Ban, while the second set of questions focused more specifically on the MAS program curriculum. The second set of questions asked participants to describe the characteristics and pedagogical goals of the curriculum and why the State of Arizona rejected the program and curriculum.

Some of the highlights and most powerful moments in the interviews was when the following questions were asked: (a) What is HB 2281? (i.e., What does it mean to you

personally, politically, and culturally?) and (b) Why is the curriculum and program not recognized by the state, and what is it about the MAS program and its curriculum that sets it apart from other standard curricula and programs? These two questions highlighted the richness of the data, and the majority of the participants responded with a personal narrative. What was collected from these two questions helped me to understand the traumatic impact and emotional distress HB 2281 had on the participants' daily lives. I also realized that these questions allowed the participants to answer critically and historically about their process. The interviews with members of the Tucson, AZ community were significant in my own development as a scholar and activist.

The interview questions in the Appendix delineate the interview process used when collecting data. The questions were modified and arranged to match the professional identity of the participants. Also, questions were skipped if I noticed the participant had already answered them previously. In most cases, the following questions would flow, and the participants went down my list of questions organically. The structure of narrative inquiry also allowed me to follow up, interject, and give my personal context during our exchange. I realized that if I gave them a solid intro to what I wanted to know, and disclosed of my background story and how I got involved in the Ethnic Studies Ban, it increased the participants' ability to be more open and sincere in their stories. As a result, the interviews would reach an intimate level of sharing that was more horizontal.

Organization of the Data

The data collected were very rich. The personal narratives of 16 participants told a collective story that give insight into the impact of the Ethnic Studies Ban. The data were

transcribed and listened to repeatedly for about six months. Some of the areas that I would listen for were similarities and themes that would occur in the participants' narratives. I would group the narratives that were similar in content and context and would also collate the participants' responses to match the questions being asked. Each interview was organized according to the questions being asked and were compared with each other to note similarities and differences.

At the end of the organizing process, I was constantly looking for similarities, differences, and themes across the questions. I collected all of the themes and determined headings that described their message. I listed a series of quotes from the participants that further demonstrated the described heading and began to notice a common message and story. I realized that in my thematic approach to organizing my data, many of the participants shared and engaged with the questions, similarly, nonetheless giving personal anecdotes and examples to demonstrate their points. After several months of collating the material, the themes were studied, and six relational findings were concluded. The saturation and thematic process of organizing the data matched the findings concluded within the process. This process is further exemplified in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

My time in Tucson, AZ was constructive, and the interactions and relationships built with the many people involved in the Ethnic Studies battle were profound and thoughtful. I met many people and immersed myself into an environment that was both politically hostile and culturally rich. During my time in Tucson, AZ, I met 16 individuals who would form part of this study, and I was fortunate to have spent a significant amount of time with them while experiencing meaningful moments in the activities of the Ethnic Studies battle and the cultural dynamics of the city of Tucson, AZ.

The data presented in this chapter are rich and dynamic; nonetheless, not all of what was discussed in the interview is presented. The depth-ness of their stories were so layered that it would take several dissertations to fully do justice to every single participant and their lived experiences. This chapter will qualitatively demonstrate the themes in narrative and perspective as to (a) the Indigenous epistemology of the MAS program, (b) the impact of the MAS program ban, and (c) the perspectives and interpretations of what the MAS program meant and signified to the participants and their communities. These three guiding themes are broad enough to understand the contextual dynamics that were experienced by the participants due to the Ethnic Studies Ban via HB 2281. Equally, these three themes also provide narrative on the tensions felt between the State of Arizona's conflicts with the MAS program.

Who these individuals are and their experiences are vital to this study, and their narratives carry a contextual reality that tell a complex story of the importance and significance of the banning of the MAS program. Many of the individuals interviewed were persecuted and harassed culturally, politically, and economically. Many of these participants lost their jobs, their

families were impacted, and they were publicly scrutinized for their participation and support for the MAS program and curriculum. Nevertheless, participants identified the banning of the MAS program as a significant part of their lives. Besides the participants' affiliation with the MAS program, these participants were also mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, significant others, and friends within the Tucson, community. The participants' narratives are in-depth and personal. Quotes will be used to show their context. Six findings will be developed and explained in this chapter.

Findings and Analysis

Four reoccurring themes have been consistent in the analysis and coalescing of the data in this study. The following insights continue to emerge in and out of the interview sample, further amplifying the depth of the data. The following findings characterize the resiliency and tenacity of the Mexican Indigenous communities of Tucson, AZ and situate the MAS program as a primary and significant catalyst for the development and achievements of its community. The findings developed in this study are: (a) evidence of self-determination and a strong sense of control over their own life, (b) demonstration of a strong sense of identity formation, (c) challenging the traditional notions of success, (d) a demonstrated clash of cultural values and defense of a specific way of life, (e) the emotional and social impact of HB 2281, and (f) political and social tensions the dust left by HB 2281. Each one of these findings are developed and supported with the participants' narratives.

Every participant I encountered and interviewed in this project demonstrated in word and action each of the four findings. Their confidence and assurance for who they are, while embracing a critical perspective in their worldview, was reassuring. The strength and

commitment I witnessed while I conducted the interviews was impressive and inspiring. Specifically, the participants demonstrated a solid account for their Indigenous identities, regardless of the social pressures to conform to an ethnic category. The participants consistently credited an Indigenous epistemology that helped them to become better human beings, even in the midst of conflict and repression. The participants walked and lived the four principals of the Nahui Olin and spoke unapologetically of the influence and transformation that occurred in their lives.

Self–Determination and a Strong Sense of Control Over Their Own Life

Participants expressed a right to participate in those social, cultural, political, and economic processes that influence their life and future. They demonstrated a strong sense of control over their own life and assumed responsibility of their own education. The participants made it their responsibility to learn about their histories and identities, often continuing their education outside of the classroom setting. Participants critically looked at their environments and evaluated the social impact these environments had upon their lives. Participants demonstrated an active approached to better the conditions of their own education while also advocating for their communities' development and growth. Self-determination in Indigenous communities is a concept used to emphasize the resistance and continuance of a specific way of life (Four Arrows et al., 2013; Grande, 2015). Participants demonstrated a strong sense of control over their lives, even when they were pressured to conform to the legal restrictions of HB 2281. Marisela, an MAS program teacher, elaborated:

> Obviously, [teaching] was political, but not because I could articulate that it was a political act. More so my experience in school were f**ed up and maybe I can be the type

> of teacher that can provide a positive experience for students. No one deserves to be treated the way I was treated.

In the interview, Marisela talked about her upbringing and shared that her educational experience was not a very good one. She referred to her teaching as a political act, purposely situating her educational experience in a context of mainstream education. She referenced schools not meeting the needs of students and curricula imposing a dominant identity based in Whiteness. For Marisela, to teach within the parameters of a culturally relevant curriculum and an Indigenous epistemology was to engage politically against mainstream education (Sleeter, 2011). This sense of control over her education and the sense of responsibility over the education of her students were common among the participants. A collective sense of responsibility to each other's development was a political act against the system.

Marisela's sense of solidarity and responsibility to give back an equitable educational experience to students was based in her commitment to social justice and a strong sense of determination to better their lives. Her unwavering commitment to her students and their communities gave purpose and drive to her identity. One of Marisela's former students also expressed how what she learned in the MAS program taught her to be secure in her own identity. Cristina positioned mainstream education as a process that takes away creativity, further claiming ownership of her education. Cristina, an MAS program student, related the following:

> MAS classes really helped me to break things apart and look between the lines. It helped me with my creativity, we were talking about that in my Gender and Women's Studies class, and how education takes away your creativity. MAS has helped me to keep to who I am rather than to transform to what the system wants me to be.

Cristina's reflection and clear understanding of how mainstream education limits the educational possibilities for learning and growth is reminiscent of Valenzuela's (1999) work on subtractive schooling. Mainstream education's inability to include the identities and context of marginalized communities into the curriculum proves an educational process that is inadequate and ineffective for students such as Cristina. For Cristina, to resist the social pressures of mainstream education and state her needs within her education is evidence of her secure sense of self (N. González et al., 2005; Valenzuela, 1999).

The Indigenous epistemology of the MAS program taught a principle called Huitzilopochtli, which centers will power and action (Arce, 2015). For many of the participants, self-determination is the "will to act," to continue to self-improve and self-evaluate, constantly striving to better themselves as human beings. It is impressive and exciting, particularly for marginalized youth, to engage in a process of self-growth to further improve themselves—most importantly, they are determined to improve their communities. Sandra, an MAS program student, expressed this sentiment:

> I think these classes are gonna stay with me forever . . . it's on me to keep myself going, evaluating myself. That has to stay with me, to continue to be a good person is to change and to transform and to be who I want to be. And I want to be a part of the struggle, an accomplishment for this movement.

Strong Sense of Identity Formation

Participants demonstrated stability and purpose in their identities, and they were able to situate themselves in specific historical and social contexts while being open to the process of learning, unlearning, self-reflection, and action. Participants credited the MAS program as

having helped to develop their identity formation and self-assurance in an educational context where their identities were discouraged and devalued. Sandra, an MAS program student, described this context in her narrative:

> I was so engaged, I couldn't put books down, I don't know how many books I read over night, book after book, history, and history, you know, I needed to know this history. It wasn't laborious, it's what I wanted to do.

The MAS program exposed students to literature that was culturally relevant; students were drawn in to learn of their history and identity. Sandra described a self-motivated environment where learning was not laborious, yet an opportunity to learn about herself and community. During the interview, Sandra spoke emotionally, as her association to the books she was reading was personal and significant. The books she was reading in the MAS program gave her lived experience validation and purpose. For Sandra, the MAS program was the first time she heard and read about the narratives and stories of a larger group of people whose identities matched her own. In their work on group identity, Tajfel (1981) described the importance of a larger group association and attachment when considering a secure or strong individual identity formation. Sandra's appreciation to the books, and literature being provided through the MAS program, affirmed the experiences and stories of her community, therefore confirming her personal identity. Tajfel's (1981) definition on social identity further describes Sandra's context:

> . . . that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from [their] membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to this [group membership]. (p. 63)

The social validation to students' personal identity is important when we evaluate effective and culturally relevant curriculum in school systems. Sandra's reference to reading as a laborious task stems from years of disassociation to the relevance of literature and content in mainstream education. For many students, disassociation from mainstream education is a side effect of an educational system that promotes a specific identity, culture, and worldview. Mainstream education cultivates an established cultural norm, an unarticulated set of values that are assumed in the United States (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970). Pablo, an MAS program teacher, further defined:

> I don't fit in the White world, I don't fit in the Mexicano world, you know, I'm not Mexican enough, I'm too White. . . . Because the stripping of the culture, that [Chicano Studies] really centered me . . . I committed myself to learning about my history, my culture, my social identity.

Pablo's inability to place himself in a specific identity group is due to not identifying fully with either group. Pablo's Chicano identity is a dynamic set of experiences that incorporate and engage an Indigenous, Mexican, and American context. To force himself into either an American or Mexican identity is to be untrue to the group membership that raised him. Harro's (2000) cycle of socialization is helpful to understand the social impact upon our identities. He mentions that who we end up becoming in regard to our identities is based in a process of socialization that begins at birth. Our social identities, such as race, gender, ability, religion, sexuality, and ethnicity, are identities that are encouraged and developed based on the identification of the communities into which we are born (Harro, 2000).

For the mainstream educational system in the United States, a particular social identity is favored and preferred. This social identity is marked by being White, male, straight, Christian, and able-bodied and is the default culture, ideology, and perspective by which curriculum and pedagogy is designed and taught in the United States (Harro, 2000). Nonetheless, not all people fit into these societal expectations. Andres, one of the administrators of the MAS program, elaborated further:

> Our foundation was Indigenous epistemologies . . . my colegas and myself were able to learn and share, mostly learn from a resurgence of indiginismo . . . with the Chicano Paradigm. . . . That was our pedagogical framework our methodology that's how we operated, the reflection, that acknowledging our Indigenous knowledge, our students home knowledge, the wealth of knowledge our families have, all of them being marginalized, Mexicano Chicano families, so we honored that knowledge.

Armando, one of the student alumni of the MAS program, further elaborated:

> Participating in the MAS program helped establish the lens that I very much use now. Now it's supplemented by a lot of things, by different experiences, but those experiences were acquired through a path that was set by MAS. MAS catapulted or created the lens by how I see the world, my formative place was MAS . . . If I can think of the biggest change, that's happened in the last 20 years for example, it was MAS. MAS was definitely what set the trajectory to what I am now.

In large part, Armando credited his identity formation to the MAS Program. The lens and path of which he spoke are in response to defending his identity formation and perspective. Schools, media outlets, Christian religious institutions, and governmental institutions in the United States

all indirectly participate in encouraging and formulating a specific ideal image and person as valued by society. The Eurocentric and Western values, principles, and culture are valued superior over any other worldview (Four Arrows et al., 2013; Grande, 2015).

One of the most significant findings in the interviews was the fundamental role the Indigenous epistemology foundation of the MAS program had on the identity development of the students, teachers, administrators, and community members of Tucson, AZ. Many of the individuals interviewed referenced the Indigenous epistemologies of the Four Tezcatlipocas and the Nahui Olin as being useful in their own way of life. They reported that what was most learned in the program was developing a process of humanization that guided students to be better people. What was learned in the program was self-growth and self-evaluation, a process of unlearning dominant norms and social ills that are assumed in our society. The participants were critical of historical and current political events and were self-reflective and evaluative of their own social identities.

Challenging Traditional Notions of Success

Participants questioned the social pressures of what success looks like. They consistently critiqued society's expectations and assumptions about what success is and how it played out in their lived experiences. Participants identified conflicting views between their own expectations and definitions of success and those expectations implied by the economy and society. Most importantly, the participants gave examples of how they strived to be better humans, equally identifying values and principles that motivated their worldviews.

The MAS program was a high-achieving program that enhanced student academic projections. In a study on the MAS program and student achievement, Cabrera et al. (2014)

found that students who took the MAS courses were more likely to graduate from high school and pass the standardized tests required of them. The study included more than 26,000 students of the MAS program who graduated from 2008-2010. What was even more impressive with the academic achievement of the MAS program was its ability to improve the academic trajectory of students who previously achieved lower in their academics. For example, if a student was low-performing in their first year of high school, prior to taking the courses of the MAS program, that same student was most likely to graduate at a higher rate than their peers who were not enrolled in the MAS courses (Cabrera et al., 2014; Cabrera et al., 2012; Cambium Learning, 2011; Sleeter, 2011).

I preface the research on academic achievement to show the academic effectiveness of the MAS program. Central to the premise of this study is the politics of knowledge and the impact dominant ideologies have on those forms of knowing that are outside of the status quo. What is important to notice in the case of the MAS program ban was that the program was outlawed, in spite of its academic achievement, for carrying and implementing a curriculum and pedagogy that was oppositional and counter to the national curricula (Sleeter, 2011; Williams, 2009). According to Sleeter (2011), the Ethnic Studies movement and discipline have historically centered their curriculum and pedagogy to critically examine and dismantle institutional racism. Sleeter further stated that mainstream education has always alienated the Ethnic Studies discipline, not for being academically inadequate, but because the Ethnic Studies curriculum at its core rejects the centering of a Eurocentric-American perspective and worldview.

It is here where this study broadens the traditional notion of success to equate those elements vital and necessary beyond academic achievement and transformation for the students

and teachers of the MAS program. What is important to note is that the MAS program further nourished students in ways mainstream education could not. Cabrera (2014) further stated:

> The way the program was structured, the way the students experience everyday life was represented in the curriculum. . . . That's a dramatic shift from the way a lot of classes are taught. There's an identity component, too. They would try to teach the students, "You're not foreign to this land, and you're native to this land." (as cited in NBC Latino, 2014, para. 10)

For the administrators of the MAS program, student achievement was important, and strategies were implemented to achieve the success of the program. The program engaged strategically in collaboration with Arizona State University. Together they created programming, such as the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) focused on social justice, Paulo Freire's concept of critical consciousness, and youth participative action research. These elements were fundamental in the accomplishments of the MAS program and truly developed a program that was academically and socially robust (Romero et al., 2009). In addition to the critical scholarship given to the program, the MAS program embraced an Indigenous epistemology, which created a nurturing, supportive, and loving environment in which students could see themselves and their families reflected (Romero et al., 2009). Andres, an MAS program administrator, enhanced this:

> Those [academic] results and achievements were really an aside, if we would have failed miserably, at those academic goals, yet the students' lives would have been transformed when they saw themselves in a different way, it's still worth it all. The academic achievement was nowhere were the program was, of course, its awe inspiring given the demographics and poverty levels and the ability of the students to succeed. But that just

> shows you the strength of our teachers and our students working together in collaboration, and our families. It's really a collective effort.

The teachers and administrators focused on the social development of their students rather than be swayed by the academic goals of the program. The Indigenous epistemology of the program allowed for teachers to contextualize a historical account of learning, looking at the past to understand the present. Their teaching approach included an Indigenous belief of collectivity and responsibility for the communities in which the students lived. For students and their families, giving back to their communities was a measurement of success. Students embraced the collective understanding of responsibility to improve their lives and the lives of their families and communities. For students and their communities, the MAS program reflected the values and principles of the Indigenous, Mexican, and Chicanx communities of which they were part. Marisela, an MAS program teacher, stated the following:

> You have an understanding that where you are today is because people before you fought for you to be where you are today. So, you have a responsibility to the people ahead. Focusing on the seven generations before and the seven generations ahead.

The cultural congruency that existed between the MAS programs and their communities allowed them to see the difference between mainstream education and the MAS program. For students, the process of schooling is an alienating one, and many students disengage due to the irrelevance of the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students began to see parallels in history related to how mainstream education treats students of color. They critically proposed that perhaps the educational system is working as it should. The student alumni of the MAS program understood that mainstream education further marginalizes students of color and forces them to embrace a

Euro-American identity in line with the larger economy and national ideology (Sleeter, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). Cristina, a MAS program student, mentioned the following:

> And I also think that's why the MAS program was taken away. Because it's not what's supposed to happen, the Mexicans aren't supposed to succeed, they're supposed to fail, and keep the cycle going, and we were breaking the cycle, and people got scared. And so, they did dumb stuff and got rid of [the MAS classes] because they have the power to.

Andres, an MAS program administrator, further stated:

> That model of higher education and success, remove yourself from your home environment and community environment, and that's how I am going to excel. . . . Damn I gotta get away from my upbringing . . . It is painful because we know a lot of Raza [our people] that once they go into higher education, they forget their roots.

Cristiana spoke to the breaking of the cycle, a pattern of oppression that impedes success. Andres further mentioned that, for him, removing of the self from their home environment and community is not a measurement of success. Andres described a painful process of breaking away from those communities from which one comes and alluded to a system of higher education that promotes and encourages this form of removal and disassociation from one's community as a medal of success. For many professionals of color, the concept of leaving the hood, or bettering your life, assumes an economic and cultural trajectory that is distant from the communities in which the professionals of color where raised. That is not to say that communities of color are void of the social ills that make them challenging. However, for the MAS program students, to come back to your community and embrace the challenges that deem their communities ill demonstrated success from a different worldview (Arce, 2015).

Clash of Cultural Values Assumed by the State of Arizona's Mainstream Education

A critical awareness was demonstrated on the contradiction of values, principles, and ideals, as expressed by the participants' families, communities, and the MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy. The values, principles, and ideals practiced and embraced by the Mexican Indigenous and Chicanx communities of the MAS program clashed with those values assumed by the State of Arizona's mainstream education. For many in the MAS program's community, the rationale and reason for why the program was banned was due to a clash of values and a direct rejection to an Indigenous epistemology developed and taught by the MAS program (Arce, 2015). The State of Arizona positioned the MAS program in an anti-American light. People who were critical of the MAS program labeled the program as cultish and witchcraft, and they claimed the MAS program was instilling resentment in the students and teaching them to hate White people. Andres, an MAS program administrator, shared the following viewpoint related to this perspective:

> The Nahui Olin took a lot of heat, I am looking at the court transcripts at both the State and Federal level and the emerging theme throughout, and what is consistent at the state level, is the fear of these types of [Indigenous knowledge]. They serve as a reminder to the dominant society that we are not foreigners, that we are not immigrants, that indeed we are Indigenous. There is a real fear of that right now, we see it in the legislature, and we see it in the narrative and discourse of the State officials attacking us in the public sphere and the legal realm. It is consistent with these discussions that we are cultish, and anti-American, that we are part of the Aztec movement, and that we are blood thirsty Aztecs.

The students of the MAS program also shared very similar sentiments and spoke back to the creators of HB 2281. The students defended their education, feeling offended at the legislators' insinuation that the students were not involved or did not care to play an active role in their education. Esperanza, an MAS program student, demonstrated the following:

> It makes me laugh when Tom Horne says that classes had cult-like activities, which was In Lak Ech [Luis Valdez poem recited] and the unity clap, which I think is ridiculous because it's not cult-like at all. They were saying teachers were trying to brain wash us, which I took an offense to, because they are saying I'm not smart enough to figure out what's going on, which is the whole reason why we need these classes, because we have teachers that actually know that we're smart enough to think for ourselves.

Both Esperanza and Andres demonstrated a defensive position against the assumptions of Tom Horne and John Huppenthal. They defended the notion that Indigenous knowledge and/or the practices of their community are not cultish or witchcraft. To the contrary, they associated the Indigenous epistemologies as being primary in the validation of their identities and way of life. What is significant about the rationale and approach of the State of Arizona is that, in its quest to invalidate the MAS program curriculum and pedagogy, it exposed a set of values and principles preferred and enforced by the State of Arizona. One of the reasons why this study is significant is because it demonstrates the parameters of official knowledge, demonstrating what individuals and knowledge are deemed as acceptable and part of the national culture and identity of the United States (Apple, 1993). Marisela, an MAS program student, further demonstrated:

> I don't know, it [ceremony/Indigenous knowledge] is scary to people, of course that's not the American way, those are not the American values, its counter to what is supposed to

> be taught in schools. Your supposed to Americanize students, supposed to teach them the American way, that's the furthest thing from what we were teaching.

Valenzuela's (1999) work in Subtractive Schooling is helpful in understanding this dynamic, as she further exposed the values embraced by mainstream education vs. those values and principles embraced by the Indigenous Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicanx communities of Tucson, AZ. Valenzuela's work around the perspectives of mainstream teachers is also helpful in understanding the subtle and often forthright and harsh methods of an "Americanized" education. Valenzuela spoke to the separation of education from the concept of "schooling." Indigenous Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicanx students do not oppose education, but do oppose schooling. She described a process of education that includes authentic caring and a learning environment built on relationships (Valenzuela, 1999). The MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy developed a foundation where relationships were always prioritized. This pedagogical approach to education countered the mainstream education's emphasis on the content and the aesthetic of the curriculum (Valenzuela, 1999). The concept of education embraced a cultural element that allowed teachers to build relationships in a loving and supportive environment. The goal of the MAS program was to reduce the feeling of schooling in their students. The following excerpt is narrative of how Sergio, one of the MAS program teachers, engaged with their students:

> I see myself in them, they are young, a lot of these kids come from neighborhoods where I grew up in. From Hollywood, I lived in Hollywood, Anita, I lived in Anita, even when you work with kids, like when I was teaching in Kansas, it's a human connection, how you connect is finding your humanity and creating a bond a natural bond that I think

> institutions work against, and its locating that sense of humanity within me, and convening that opening of my heart out to my students by stories, by how I engage life. I try to be disciplined, I try to be fair, I speak my mind, students have seen me argue with other teachers and they respect that. I believe that they know that I care about them because I open up my heart to them, and they open up themselves to me, I think that's natural. I think that educational institutions don't teach that, that's what's missing the human element.

The MAS program was based in Valenzuela's research. Teachers understood that to nourish and create a healthy learning environment for their students, they first needed to care about the students being taught. Valenzuela posited that mainstream education teachers expect students to care about school and the content of the curriculum. However, for the Indigenous Mexican, Mexican American, and Chicanx students, relationships are crucial for an effective learning environment. Valenzuela demonstrated that what students want is to be cared for prior to engaging effectively in the learning environment. Marisela, an MAS program teacher, further explained:

> I always say the biggest compliment that a teacher can get is that students call you mom . . . Ahh miss, I just called you mom, if you think about it, that's freakin' deep. I want that for my students, because I didn't have that.

Marisela demonstrated in her reflection the familial association and relationship her students have when they interact with her. For Marisela, embracing the role of mother with her students further demonstrates Valenzuela's point on students' need to be cared for. Marisela's endearment and gratitude toward being called "mom" shows her close connection to her students. Equally

worth noting is how the students also demonstrate comfort and an immediate association for their teacher as their mother. What the MAS program promoted in its curriculum was a pedagogical approach founded upon an Indigenous epistemology, where individualism and competition where challenged with collectivity and collaboration (Arce, 2015). Marisela's pedagogical approach to her classroom embraced a community environment where everybody's needs were addressed, voices heeded, and experiences and cultures embraced. The MAS program promoted the success of all students and effectively developed a curriculum and pedagogical approach that was culturally sensitive and equitable for everyone. Marisela, an MAS program teacher, stated:

> Part of those [MAS] classes is also learning not to be selfish. Because in the systematic school, you are taught to be selfish, you are taught to get a better grade than the person next to you . . . it's always a competition. But in the MAS classes you are only as good as the person next to you, you have to help your classmates so that you can all succeed. Because if you don't all succeed, then nobody is really succeeding.

Marisela further demonstrated the different worldview and value system of the MAS program. The idea of competition, as promoted in mainstream education, is discouraged and situated as selfish. For many of the communities that composed the MAS program, the sense of community and reciprocity was essential. To collaborate and share is fundamental to the identity of the MAS program community. Participants of the MAS program communicated that true success was dependent upon the success of all students.

What was evident in the analysis of the study was that the MAS program truly met the needs of those students who traditionally have been left out of mainstream education. The MAS program genuinely included and reflected the identities of all their students by strategically

closing in on the education debt and by addressing the systemic disparities affecting marginalized students of color. What was powerful about the program was its ability to academically prepare students to be successful as determined by mainstream education and also develop conscious, reflective, and committed students who value community and social justice for all. Regardless of the false perception of the State of Arizona, what is clear is that the students of the MAS program still embrace and engage their way of life (Arce, 2015; Williams, 2009).

HB 2281 Significantly Imposed a Harmful, Emotional and Social Impact on the MAS Program Community in Tucson

To comprehend the emotional and traumatic experiences lived by the MAS program community in Tucson, AZ is essentially impossible. To witness the devastation and violence portrayed legally through HB 2281 is infuriating and disheartening. The power and strength witnessed in the Tucson community was impressive, nonetheless uncalled for. The MAS program had grown truly from the bottom up—its collective historical roots date back to the Civil Rights Movement (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). The MAS program truly belonged to the Tucson community, so when HB 2281 took effect in 2010, it created a void the Tucson community is still trying to fill and understand. Esperanza, a former MAS program student, shared this sentiment:

> January 10 was when they voted to take away MAS . . . the community really broke, I mean all this fighting for years, the 60s, the fighting for having these classes and then to have them for like what 50 years and then have them destroyed so easily. You could feel it, the hurt in the community. . . . It hurt me to know that all of this that has helped me to

> succeed, other people like me aren't going to succeed because they don't have the support they needed. What hurt me the most, it's really sad, how easily [MAS] can be torn down, by people that are ignorant and naïve.

Esperanza's sentiment contextualized the historical roots on which the MAS program was built, and she also expressed hurt and sadness for the future generations of students who would not have access to the same quality of education she received through the MAS program (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). Her statement was reflective and pointed to a sense of collective caring for other students who form part of her community. Esperanza, in reality, did not have to be concerned for the well-being of other students; nevertheless, her concern was motivated by a collective, historical, and personal relationship to the MAS program. The MAS program's commitment to the community was profound and meaningful (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). The MAS program reflected, in real time, the context, needs, and aspirations of the Tucson, Mexican American, and Indigenous communities.

Esperanza was not the only student from the MAS program who experienced sadness and regret that other future generations in the Tucson community were not going to benefit from the education of the MAS program. Armando, also a former MAS student, related that he and his parents felt upset about the actions of the State of Arizona via HB 2281. The solidarity and reciprocity that both Armando, an MAS program student, and his parents felt for the other students in their community was a sentiment that was felt consistently throughout the Tucson community. Armando shared:

> I had conversations with my parents about what was happening and my mom at that time was upset of what [the State of Arizona] were doing to the opportunities of the kids that

> were just like me. Fortunately, I had experienced MAS, so my only reaction, was to try to defend MAS for the other kids, for other people.

The collective feeling expressed by Armando and his parents point to the importance and relevance of the MAS program. Armando specifically referenced that the State of Arizona was intervening in the opportunities that were beneficial to other students that reflected his experience. Armando further felt commitment and responsibility to defend the MAS program so that other students, such as him, may also have the same opportunities he had in their education (Brummer & Rusk, 2011; Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012). The MAS program was bedrock to a larger community experience based in culture and identity. The implementation of the Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ destroyed the bedrock of the larger Mexican American and Indigenous community.

Teachers were also affected, scrutinized, and persecuted for their teachings and knowledge (Acosta, 2013; Arce, 2015; Cabrera et al., 2012; Horne, 2007; Huppenthal, 2015). Many teachers who were experienced and award-winning professionals prior to HB 2281 were assign teaching coaches and labeled ineffective post HB 2281 (HB 2281, 2010; Huppenthal, 2015). The teaching coaches were state mandated to monitor the material being taught and to make sure teachers were in compliance with the law (HB 2281, 2010; Huppenthal, 2015). For many of the teachers, the teaching coach assignment was considered censorship and a public demonstration of shaming designed to humble the teachers publicly.

Many of these teachers were dedicated educators in and out of the classroom; they shared similar identities and experiences with their students. Many of them even lived in the same neighborhoods in which their students lived. The personal relationship built between the

students, their MAS teachers, and the extended Tucson community fostered a learning environment that was culturally sensitive and effective for the Mexican American and Indigenous community (Valenzuela, 1999). Sergio, one of the MAS program teachers, further expressed the following:

> I'll never forget what they've done, I've seen the eyes of my kids and how they were traumatized and that really eats me up . . . on top of that . . . I was assigned a teaching coach, because I was [considered] an ineffective teacher . . .

Teachers were also consistently in the public eye. They were portrayed in the news and other media outlets as biased, indoctrinating, and anti-American (Horne, 2007; Palos et al., 2011). Sergio, an MAS teacher, further demonstrated:

> We always had to be consistent of what we were saying, there's a legal term for it, it's called chilling effect, We always had to psychoanalyze and process what we say before we said it, so no one would misinterpret it, that was freaken taxing, on top of that, we were trying to get kids to understand to love who they are.

This statement demonstrates the commitment MAS teachers had to their students. Even in the toxic environment HB 2281 created, teachers still worried about the impact and emotional well-being of their students (Acosta & Mir, 2012; N. González et al., 2005). In his statement, Sergio mentioned having to always second-guess himself as a "chilling effect" that was emotionally taxing. When the law specifically outlaws learning about your own identity, history, and context, the emotional toll and psychological effect it has on your personhood is traumatic and subtractive (Valenzuela, 1999).

Valenzuela (1999) speaks to the importance of relationships and curricula that reflect the realities and culture of the students. For there to be equitable learning spaces for Mexican American students, Valenzuela shares that a social and cultural alignment is needed between the school, family, and teacher. She specifically points to dissonance between forceful assimilative practices and the curriculum as a deterrent and cause for disengagement and alienation (Valenzuela, 1999). Four Arrows, in his book, *Teaching Truly: A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education*, also stresses the need for teachers and their classrooms to reflect the cultural needs of their students (Four Arrows et al., 2013; Valenzuela, 1999). Nonetheless, Valenzuela's research on subtractive education on students, in the case of Tucson, can be applied to the MAS program teachers. The disenfranchisement and constant invalidation of the teacher's expertise and culturally relevant pedagogy created a subtractive experience in the TUSD (Four Arrows et al., 2013; Valenzuela, 1999).

The constant pressure and stress that the teachers experienced affected their emotional well-being. Sergio specifically spoke of a diminished sense of confidence and will. He described the constant surveillance, censorship, and invalidation perpetuated by the TUSD and the State of Arizona as extremely stressful. Sergio, an MAS program teacher, further contextualized this sentiment in the following statement:

> I never thought I was really affected by [HB 2281], other than my confidence, I've always been confident, but I knew it was taking an effect. At times I just wanted to stay in bed and not wanna get up and go to work. . . . I think Domingo [MAS Teacher] said it best, us teachers, we've dealt with that posttraumatic stress disorder . . . we've been battered in many ways, not just by the district, but by the community too. It did affect me,

> and it took away my confidence as a teacher, and it stripped me of that. We've all, whether we want to admit it or not have been affected by [HB 2281] . . . It is just now that we are starting to come out of that darkness.

The feeling of having gone through an experience traumatic enough to merit PTSD is no light statement. The stress and invalidation shared in both passages describe the unfortunate conditions the MAS teachers lived through post HB 2281 (Acosta, 2013; Brummer & Rusk, 2011). The environment HB 2281 created for the teachers was hostile and oppressive (Brummer & Rusk, 2011). Some of the MAS teachers today are still working for the district trying to overcome the lingering effects of the Ban, and some of the teachers moved on, either forcefully or by will. The Ethnic Studies Ban destroyed lives, relationships, families, and community ties (Andres, personal communication, December 16, 2014).

HB2281 Lawfully Dismantled Progressive, Political, and Cultural networks, Causing Social Tensions Among the MAS Program Community in Tucson

The Ethnic Studies Ban uprooted the MAS program (HB 2281, 2010). It lay waste to a program that truly belonged to the Tucson community. The devastation it left behind ignited fear, anger, rage, sadness, and hopelessness (Palos et al., 2011). HB 2281 brought out the best of the MAS community and also intensified some of the imbalances and social inequalities present in the community. Sonia, an MAS teacher, further expressed this sentiment. Armando, an MAS program student, described visually the impact generated by the State of Arizona via HB 2281:

> 2281 was the beginning of the end, something blew up here, you're looking at the left over dust of that explosion. . . . When the state came down on MAS, it destroyed the glue that kept all the groups together, after the dust settled, everyone retracted to their groups.

Armando described HB 2281 as an explosion that was specifically directed at the MAS program. His visual statement was insightful in many ways as he described this emotional portrayal. His reference to the dust settling after the explosion was imagery that followed me as I heard peoples' narratives and experiences of the emotional toll HB 2281 had on the Tucson community. Armando specifically described to me that what I was witnessing in Tucson was the settling of the dust, the social and political tensions still evident and sensitive in the community. Armando also referred to MAS as the glue that held all of the groups together.

The MAS program was the center and gathering place for progressive groups to share ideas, educate, relate back to community, and deconstruct larger social issues afflicting the Mexican American and Indigenous communities in Tucson (Romero et al., 2009). The MAS program had strong relationships with Indigenous ceremonial groups, feminist groups, university groups, activist youth groups, progressive political groups, and families (Palos et al., 2011). The MAS program was truly an educational space that effectively drew upon all of these groups to provide the most comprehensive and holistic education for the MAS students (Palos et al., 2011; Sleeter, 2011). Sonia, a MAS program teacher, further contextualized the impact of HB 2281:

> It opened up, some of our community . . . it was a rallying cry for our community, but then at the same time, you have some of the other imbalances throughout our community. It made us more vulnerable and more exposed, and so um, it tested us, it tested us. Some of us lost a lot, and some of us didn't. But I think we all lost, we all lost with the getting rid of the courses, as educators having to face our students. Prior to that, my students reporting to me, "I'm having nightmares," "I'm not eating," "This is all I'm thinking about," "How can I help," "What can I do?"

When HB 2281 specifically took effect, all of the groups mentioned earlier began to mobilize in support of the MAS program. The fight to defend Ethnic Studies against the State of Arizona was long and drawn out. No words could describe the emotional and physical exhaustion exerted by the supporters of the MAS program. Sonia referenced a vulnerability caused by HB 2281 and how the emotional and strained positions forced upon the students and community of the MAS program drained and wearied their efforts. Sonia also stated that HB 2281 further emphasized and intensified the unbalances already afflicting the Tucson community. The amount of stress and pressure to resist HB 2281 given the constant violence imposed on the MAS program community is truly incomprehensible. Many youth, activists, teachers, and community members fought dignified and righteously for a program they not only believed in, but also realized formed part of a collective history and memory of the Mexican American community of Tucson (Gómez & Jimenez-Silva, 2012; Palos et al., 2011). Armando, a MAS program student, described this experience:

> We were actively defending everything, being extremely frustrated, we were very unhealthy with always having to defend [the MAS program], and never really creating anything, nothing was expanding, we weren't creating alternatives, we were just defending our own. All our resources were going into the same pot, it was a big chingaso [blow] to everything we were doing. It was the beginning of the end of MAS.

Sonia, an MAS teacher, further supported and testified of the devastation that impacted the MAS program community. She positioned the State of Arizona as outsiders coming into their community and taking away that with which they most identified: the MAS program. She situated the hard conversations she was pushed to have with her students, acknowledging the

difficulty and helplessness experienced when she tried to explain to her students why the MAS program was being removed. The questions asked from her students further contextualize the vagueness, censorship, and decentering conditions created by HB 2281 (Horne, 2007; HB 2281, 2010; Huppenthal, 2015). The following statement by Sonia, an MAS program teacher, is evidence of the devastation HB 2281 imposed upon the teachers and students of the MAS program:

> It [HB 2281] tested us in all of the different ways, it devastated us in terms like, this is the 21st century, and this is where we are at? You know, Tucson in its self, were different than other places . . . we just are, and [the State of Arizona] took that away from us. They were able to come in as outsiders and take it [MAS] away from us. . . . Being in the classroom, with the kids, they were like, "Miss, what can we do? What are we allowed to say even?" . . . Just remembering that . . . [tears] That this was there space, this was their education, and [the State of Arizona] took it.

When Sonia mentioned that HB 2281 tested the Tucson MAS community, she implied in her heartfelt response that the hardship was top down on behalf of the State of Arizona. Nonetheless, the MAS Tucson community was also tested personally. The pressure and strain imposed by the restrictions inflicted by HB 2281 stressed and challenged friendships, collaborations, and networks (HB 2281, 2010; Huppenthal, 2015; Palos et al., 2011). The State of Arizona forced individuals to ideologically draw lines and pushed politicians, activist, educators, and community members to side according to the mandate of HB 2281 (Horne, 2007; Huppenthal, 2015). Divisions where imposed and individuals acted according to the limits of their own conditions

and well-being. These times brought on complications through which the MAS Tucson community is still working. Domingo, a MAS program teacher, shared the following insight:

> A lot of people when they talk about . . . the different *desmadre* [mess], they don't talk about internalizing the racism, and the disposition and displacement. Where did we go to cope, we went to shit they gave us [historically and systemically], either the gun or the bottle, for me it was mostly the bottle, I saw people making really bad decisions because they were medicating the pain with the boos. Unfortunately, we didn't have the foresight or in that moment when you're at war.

Domingo's reflection is in line with historical accounts of state involvement through the use of drugs and alcohol in marginalized Black and Brown communities (J. González, 2000). One example of these interactions involves the CIA involvement with Contra Rebels and Cocaine trafficking from Nicaragua into Black and Brown communities in South Central Los Angeles. The CIA was secretly funding Contra Rebels in Nicaragua without the sanction of the U.S. government. The CIA specifically sold narcotics to Blood and Crip gang kingpins to sell in their communities (J. González, 2000). Domingo's reference to history demonstrates a contextual and personal perspective on the role and impact of the State on marginalized communities. In the case of the State of Arizona, Domingo referenced the pressure and stress of HB 2281 as a factor for personally coping with alcohol to relieve the tension of HB 2281. He also referenced the internalized racism, disposition, and displacement of a colonial past that is still alive and well and afflicting Mexican American communities today (Acuña, 2011; Rodriguez, 1993). Domingo referenced the analogy of war and lack of in-the-moment foresight that led the Tucson community into a series of outcomes that are still being felt today.

In Armando's earlier statement, he described HB 2281 as the beginning of the end, not only for the MAS program, but also for the larger destruction of community and its cultural and social roots. When the State of Arizona effectively eliminated what the community most valued, it left a void, as Esperanza described at the beginning of this section. The void is still in effect today. The following statement by Domingo, a MAS program teacher, further describes and contextualizes the aftermath of HB 2281:

> The narrative that we were all in it together has been romanticized, we were, but we were in disparate groups, so when you took away the thing, it's like Jenga, when you take away the thing that kept us all together that kinda balanced [us], we fell apart. Well that was MAS, it was a space we all believed in, even though we came from all these different things. Folks try to put it on these other things, the sexism, the interpersonal, the politics. Let me share something with you . . . I just stumbled upon it and it really cheeses it up, but we were in it together for this reason. So, this is from Antwi A. Akom [Allison Scott, and Aekta Shah, in the book *Resistance Research and the Theories of Change*] . . . "If we want to create sustainable forms of resistance, we need to create structures that resist domination, communities that resist domination, cultures that resist domination." We did that, that was the collective [MAS] we were resisting that domination and oppression together, the space, the theory, the epistemologies that held that in place where taken from us, of course everything was going to go to shit, we were going to go all over the place. The Marxist were going to go back to Marx, the feminist would go back to the Chicanisma Feminism, everybody would go back to their totem if you will, because we had everything embedded, the Indigenous folks would go back to the red road, the

> whatever I am would go back to being me, teachers would go back to being teachers." . . . The reason why it all fell apart, all these people resisting domination, it was all the people outside of the traditional power structure, we were resisting the domination. Aekta Shall et al. said, sustainable forms of resistance in structures, that was MAS in school, communities.

Domingo's analysis is insightful, and his reference toward building sustainable forms of resistance was visual throughout Tucson. The collective sense of pain that was expressed throughout the community marked a fracture, a break still evident and felt today. HB 2281 wounded the MAS Tucson community by systematically and strategically removing the unifying force that brought balance to the progressive movement in Tucson, AZ. The MAS program was truly an educational space not only to the TUSD students, but also to the extended community. The MAS program created space for all social, cultural, and political groups to work together regardless of their differences. When the MAS program was removed, the collective unity faded back into a siloed approach in activism, critical discourse, and resistance. The collective effort toward resisting domination, as Domingo expressed via Allison Scott and Aekta Shah, were no longer a collective effort, the imposition of HB 2281 forced the MAS program to dismantle, disintegrating the glue that held many of the collective efforts together. When the MAS program was eliminated, progressive groups recalculated and defensively retreated back into their area of struggle (Tuck & Yang, 2014).

The MAS community in Tucson is still in a healing process and on a long road to attempt to rebuild what the State of Arizona destroyed. Even with the recent good news this past summer, where HB 2281 was ruled unlawful, the ruling stating the law was designed with racial

animus, the violence and destruction to the MAS community in Tucson was already imposed (Astor, 2017). Since the banning of the MAS program, the MAS community is still trying to clear the dust that has not completely settled. The community is still trying to fully understand where to go now while equally reflecting introspectively how growth can come out of this tragedy. Andres, a MAS program administrator, reflected the following:

> We understand that, while we are battling the state, we are battling those ideologies those practices that affect our communities. . . . Our familias [families] are being deported at unprecedented rates, our barrios [neighborhoods] are attacked consistently. Yes, we are at war with those things, but most importantly we are at war with ourselves as a community, because there are so many ills in our communities as colonized peoples, we don't treat each other right and I am not saying this from a perspective of a deficit, I'm saying this as colonized peoples, so that's who we are at war with. This part of our greater movement, a decolonial liberatory educational project . . . a rehumanizing project.

The MAS community in Tucson have begun their journey toward healing; nonetheless, the lessons learned on the disastrous effect of the HB 2281 should never be forgotten. The destruction caused by the State of Arizona via HB 2281 are irreversible, and, once again, the Mexican American community has been systematically wronged (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000). Andres's reference to Mexican families being deported and their barrios (neighborhoods) being attacked are additive elements the Mexican American communities have had to face in spite of HB 2281. The systemic accumulation of persecution broadly by a national anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiment still affects Mexican communities across the country (Arce, 2015).

Andres's reflection is powerful; he referred to the analogy of being at war with both the State and the self. His recognition and reference to a system of colonization contextualized the self as being a reflection and continuation of the larger dominance of the State. In this case, Andres referenced the social ills that have historically and socially affected the Mexican American communities. The internalized racism, patriarchy, sexism, ability, and classism that have plagued the Mexican American community stem from a complex set of social and historical dynamics that begin with colonialism and an imposition of a new worldview (Freire, 1970; Galeano, 1973). To look inward and undo or unlearn the socializations and colonial paradigms of the past 500 years is a challenge, and/or even impossible; nevertheless, Andres encouraged the Mexican American community to look inward and undo the social ills that afflict them. For many in Tucson, introspection and evaluation is what is left to do. Equally moving forward must embark a critical and reflective journey toward a humanizing project based in critical consciousness (Arce, 2015; Freire, 1970; Harro, 2000).

Summary of Findings

In this chapter, I have identified a number of findings relevant and significant to the participants. The six findings incorporated an analysis and critical view on the impact of HB 2281. Each one of these themes represented the participants' values, sentiments, and worldviews; the findings included elements vital to the identities of the MAS Tucson community. Nonetheless, the values and worldviews embraced by the MAS Tucson Community were also the same values and perspective rejected by the State of Arizona. The findings in this chapter equally amplified the voices of the MAS Tucson community and exposed racialized and political tensions projected by the State of Arizona upon the Mexican American community in Tucson.

The Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ takes its place in a long history of racialized legal persecution on the Mexican American community on behalf of the United States (Acuña, 2011; Rosales, 1997). HB 2281 will go down in history as an ignorant law resembling past legislations such as the Repatriation Act, where Mexicans were blamed, rounded up, and deported after the Great Depression. Operation Wetback was a mass deportation round-up in the 1950s after U.S. citizens perceived that too many Mexicans were migrating to work in the United States; hence, Bracero programs were largely recruiting cheap labor. *Mendez vs. Westminster* was one of the first desegregation court cases where Mexican American families fought the Westminster School Board so that all children of color could attend the White schools (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000; Rosales, 1997). These historical accounts are only but a few incidents in the history of the United States, along with other histories that include Indigenous boarding schools, Japanese concentration camps, and other racialized legislation targeting communities of color (H. Zinn, 1995).

At the root of the historical and political tensions in the United States and the Mexican American community exists an ideological clash where knowledge is politically and culturally contested (Apple, 2004). For the Tucson communities, whose narratives we heard earlier, this clash is lived daily. Institutions, such as schools, reinforce the idea that their identities, cultures, languages, values, and worldviews are not welcome. The struggle to maintain a national identity has never been relevant to the historical realities of communities of color (N. González et al., 2005; Grande, 2015; Valenzuela, 1999). The changing U.S. demographics exceed an ideological shift that would be more inclusive for communities of color, respectively (Apple, 2004).

Our society needs culturally relevant curriculum and instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995). All students in our educational systems can benefit from the unofficial knowledge omitted in schools (Apple, 1993). It is time our schools teach herstory and embrace a lens of learning where the starting point is difference and not sameness (Apple, 1993). The Ethnic Studies Ban in Tucson, AZ taught us a great deal on the role of power and its relationship to identity. The lessons learned in Tucson, AZ are crucial for the development of programing, curriculum, and policy.

CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPANTS' FINAL REFLECTIONS ON MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

This chapter summarizes lessons learned from the aftermath of HB 2281. The contextual reality left behind by such an unjust law is still evident and felt deeply throughout the country. The devastation and violence imposed upon the community of Tucson, AZ can never be undone; nonetheless, we must learn how power intervenes, invalidates, and further reaffirms dominance. The Ethnic Studies Ban is an important marker and an unfortunate reminder that difference is still socially/culturally, economically, and politically suppressed. The Ethnic Studies Ban is also a reminder that racialized policy is still designed intentionally to invalidate difference. In this chapter, I propose different perspectives important for developing just, equitable, and culturally relevant curriculum across our schools. The fast-changing racial demographic of the country can no longer relate to the old national curricula used in our educational systems. The MAS program serves as both a testament and reflection for what our school can and should look like.

The State of Arizona was savvy and intentional when it designed HB 2281. Its purpose demonstrated how power operates and how power can effectively disengage counter hegemonic proposals. The State of Arizona used HB 2281 to invalidate and de-legitimize the curricular process important to the Mexican American communities of Tucson. The banning of the books, the monitoring and surveillance of teachers, the accusations of being separatist and anti-American were strategies used to further dismantle and invalidate the communities' knowledge foundations. The goal and strategy from the beginning of the ban has always been to reaffirm dominance and re-establish hegemony (Apple, 2004). The following discussion will lay out themes that may help in understanding the overall impact the State of Arizona had on the

individuals and communities of Tucson, AZ. HB 2281 has been destructive, and the void left from its imposition will take generations to repair.

Peoples' Lives in the Hands of HB 2281

The themes incorporate the personal narratives and context that describe more intimately the environmental, cultural, and political climate of the Ethnic Studies battle in Tucson, AZ. The narratives personalize the effect of an unjust policy upon marginalized communities. Likewise, they demonstrate the genuineness, sincerity, resiliency, and tenacity of the people of the Mexican, Chicanx, Latinx, and Indigenous communities of Tucson, AZ.

The following narratives describe the residual experiences and interpretations of the Ethnic Studies Ban, their relationship to the Indigenous epistemology being developed and operationalized in the MAS program, and their beliefs as to why the MAS program was banned. The participants also demonstrated the benefits of having participated in the MAS program and/or any other program teaching Mexican American and Chicana/o Studies. The participants spoke to a close and equitable relationship with their students and teachers and likewise demonstrated their resistance and distaste of the Ethnic Studies Ban law HB 2281.

At times, the transparent nature of the interviews vividly described an institutional trauma affecting all the community. The pain and violence experienced by the Ethnic Studies community in Tucson, AZ is still very raw and sensitive, and only certain aspects of this context are shared by the participants. The power of the law HB 2281 shook and hurt the Ethnic Studies and Mexican, Latinx, and Indigenous communities deeply. There is no written language or academic endeavor that could ever communicate and demonstrate the aftermath of such a policy.

As one of the MAS program teachers, Sergio, who I truly respect and appreciate, sincerely said in his interview:

> As a human being, we have the moral responsibility to resist and to fight, we have to resist this inhumane law, that's what we did, it was our responsibility, ya basta, enough is enough.

Therefore, it is my moral responsibility to also resist and fight against injustice. It is my duty to document and give justice and space to the stories of all the participants who gave their time and effort to offer their stories to me. Given the constraints of a lineal form of communication in the English written language, it is my hope that the participants' narratives lead and are meaningful to all who may read this work.

HB 2281 and the Continual Historical Invalidation of the Mexican American Community

The Ethnic Studies Ban outlawing the MAS program in Tucson, AZ had a profound impact on many of the participants. HB 2281 is a law that not only removed the MAS program from the TUSD, but also publicly denounced a critical and culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy across the nation (Acosta, 2013). Many in the Tucson community who were involved and/or who benefitted from this curriculum fought, resisted, and mourned the effects of HB 2281. For the participants, the law targeted and legally suppressed the teachings and curriculum that most reflected the social, economic, and political reality of the Tucson community. What was most indignant for the participants was the denial of a cultural curriculum that was both a highly successful academic and social program, but that also communicated the cultural reality of many of the participants involved (Cabrera et al., 2014; Cambium Learning, 2011). Esperanza, an MAS Program student, said the following:

> HB 2281 is a law that has banned my culture, attempted to take away my knowledge, an ignorant law that has tried to keep minorities down and whitenize the educational system. That we should not be critical thinkers.

What is most impactful about the statement by Esperanza, student-alumni and activist in defense of the MAS program, was her specific description of the law communicating a banning of a culture and an attempt to take away her knowledge. For Esperanza, the banning of the MAS program was, in fact, a banning of her culture and an attempt against her knowledge (N. González et al., 2005). Esperanza alluded to a personalization, a sense of connection between the curriculum of the MAS program and her own reality (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The ban of the MAS program equally denied her access to her own identity, history, and cultural expression.

Esperanza further mentioned an education system based in Whiteness and an attempt to keep minorities down by suppressing critical thinking. The historical works of Acuña (2011), Dunbar-Ortiz (2014), J. González (2000), and H. Zinn (1995) all developed a critical view of the history of the United States. They specifically critiqued a historical view that has centered Whiteness as the dominant narrative of the country. What Esperanza was referring to in her statement was the consistent and historical imposition of Whiteness as the preferred and default identity, ideology, and history of the country (Apple, 2004). Her frustration with the law is just another example of how policy makes her experience irrelevant in the educational system of the State of Arizona.

The historical erasure and perpetual imposition of a specific culture, identity, and way of life is particularly important to the communities of Tucson, AZ. Many of these communities' families can be dated back almost five generations and even longer in the Tucson area. The

cultural identity of many of these families is of an Indigenous identity in a Mexican-Chicanx historical context (Acuña, 2011). The Southwest specifically shares a dynamic history that involves conflict over land and culture between the Mexican and U.S. side. The nationalistic labels of being of Mexican decent, or marking White on a survey questionnaire, is complex to many of the communities of Tucson, AZ. Esperanza, an MAS program student, mentioned the following:

> I identify as Chicana, that's the closest thing I can identify with, cuz I don't really feel I fit anywhere. I am supposed to circle White on questionnaires, but I don't get treated like I'm White, and I'm not Mexican because I didn't come from Mexico, and my parents didn't come from Mexico, and my grandparents didn't really come from Mexico, so I don't really belong anywhere.

The geographic area of Tucson, AZ use to be part of Mexico and was lost to the United States at the end of the Mexican American war through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This treaty and land dispute is one controversy where Chicanx historians have critiqued the United States for forcing Mexico into a war in which it did not want to engage (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000). The motivation for this westward expansion was an ideological premise called Manifest Destiny that gave the U.S. government a "God Given Right" to all land west of the Mississippi (J. González, 2000). In the United States' ambitions to acquire these lands, any communities who stood in the way were killed and/or forced to assimilate. Boarding schools, religious missions, and churches were used to indoctrinate and convert Indigenous and Mexican communities who had lived in the conquered lands for generations (Acuña, 2011; J. González, 2000). Andres, one

of the MAS program participants and also one of the administrators, relayed his insight on the historical yet personal account of this history:

> A lot of my identity formation went through a dehumanizing schooling experience, where there was real stark segregation here in Tucson just for being Mexican, and representing themselves as Mexicanos in schools. . . . Tucson in that way has a really ugly history like many other Southwest centers, very dehumanizing . . . like many other Chicana/o children of that time they were segregated often and put into racial tracking systems, where their culture, history, language was stripped from them. They were not allowed to speak Spanish." So we [Family] came out of that, and they [parents] thought they would protect us because of their experiences. As a result, we didn't learn Spanish.

Andres pointed to schools as a specific place where the racial tracking was happening and specifically referenced a stripping away of language, culture, and history. Andres also spoke to a painful past that is still remembered and felt today. This historical point and marker is of importance when understanding the context and impact of HB 2281. For many of the participants, the Ethnic Studies Ban is only reminiscent of a traumatic and violent past that is constantly being relived. The banning of the MAS program is triggering for most of the participants. The participants expressed the continuance of an imposed culture and ideology that, in time, erases their Mexican and Indigenous identity. The participants communicated a direct link of continual oppression that is still happening today. Sergio, a former teacher for the MAS program, historicized the trauma that HB 2281 represents:

> HB 2281 is a continuation of the cultural genocide that we as a people have endured and continue to endure. It is an attempt to erase our culture and manifestation of what Cortez

> did to the codices in 1521. A continuation of that historical trauma, something like that was resisted, and today it was resisted. . . . Individuals that have been seduced by gold, they are still looking for their gold.

Sergio specifically named the continuation of a cultural genocide and the cultural manifestation of what the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez did in 1521. The burning of the Mexica and Mayan codices, recordings, and books documenting the Mexica and Mayan way of life was a strategy used by the Spanish when they were colonizing the Indigenous people of Latin America. The Spanish attempted to erase the Maya and Mexica ideology, religion, and culture, forcing the Indigenous communities to assimilate into a Eurocentric identity (Galeano, 1973). Galeano (1973) further speaks of a crazed obsession over the accumulation of gold and wealth and describes a historical context where the value of gold, silver, and natural resources outweighed the culture, identity, way of life, and bodies of Indigenous communities of the Americas. Galeano (1973) wrote:

> They lifted up the gold as if they were monkeys, with expressions of joy, as if it put new life into them and lit up their hearts. Their bodies fatten on it and they hunger violently for it. They crave gold like hungry swine. (p. 19)

One of the most controversial aspects of the Ethnic Studies Ban was that the State of Arizona put a ban on the books and literature being used with the MAS program. Many of the references being used in this study were prohibited from being used in the TUSD. Sergio, an MAS teacher, specifically referenced the burning of the codices in 1521 to show how still the State of Arizona prohibits a specific knowledge and culture. Sergio's reference of individuals that have been seduced by gold and still looking for their gold is a reaffirmation that what is still valued in

education and the culture of the United States is an identity based in a capitalistic economy—the development of people who can effectively contribute and participate in a system of consuming and buying that disregards people's lives and realities (Williams, 2009). Sergio's reference to individuals still looking for their gold is a critique of capitalism and the set of values it imposes on all people in its wake.

Beyond Culturally Relevant Curriculum: The MAS Program Pedagogical Approach

For the participants, MAS was more than just an academic program that helped students increase their chances for college acceptance and higher scores on the AIMS standards testing of Arizona (Cambium Learning, 2011). The participants consistently stated that The MAS program developed students to socially understand justice and see the humanity in other people. One of the highlights of the interviews when I was in Tucson, AZ was continuously hearing the ways in which the MAS program helped students to be better humans (Arce, 2015). The participants consistently situated the MAS program as a significant marker in their educational and personal trajectories of development. Esperanza, an MAS program student, related the following:

> I think senior year I was still a little what's the word, like those teen years where you want to be rebellious, and you don't want to listen to your parents, and I think I was pretty rude and disrespectful at times in senior year. This was important because it changed with MAS. My mom was diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer the summer before senior year, and so once I was in those classes we would have a Tlatocan, which was a talking circle, this was a couple weeks into the class, and we were talking about what is holding us back, what are we struggling with, and so I told the class about my mom, and it was a big deal to share that with a bunch of students in your class, and the

> support I had in that class, the class became family oriented and community. We helped each other to succeed, and that was huge for me, because of that connection, we were able to succeed together.

Esperanza conceptualized her education in the MAS class as it being a familial process, where she was able to confide in her classmates for a supportive network. She described a community atmosphere that helped her succeed both emotionally and academically. For Esperanza, the emotional connection to her class aided her in developing an academic platform for success (Valenzuela, 1999). The space her MAS teacher created was pedagogically designed so students could embrace and support each other beyond the academic rigor of the classroom. These forms of pedagogical strategies on behalf of the MAS program were intentional to create supportive networks for their students. Delgado Bernal's (2001) conceptualization on the "Pedagogies of the Home" gives context to the importance of bridging the skills and values of the home with those used in schools. Specifically, the cultural and ideological alignment between the values and culture of both the school and home is what gave the MAS program its value (Delgado Bernal, 2001; N. González et al., 2005). Esperanza, and MAS program student, stated:

> Besides [caring for each other], it was really good on academics too, something I always say, because of how it impacted my life, especially the Latino Lit class with Domingo, it taught me how to be analytical, how to analyze every reading, what's on TV, how to write.

Armando, an MAS program student, further emphasized:

> It was also teaching me about justice and community and *familia*, and if there ever was a class that taught me how to respect my elders, it was also MAS. It was both in an

> academic sense and in a learning how not to be *malcreado* [badly raised/disrespectful] sense.

Armando amplified the concept of education from an academic sense to an added social element of interpretation where the concept of education in a Latin American context also signifies behavior, manners, and respect. He alludes to the word in Spanish *malcreado,* directly translated into "badly raised"; however, the direct translation does not give this word justice. Culturally, in an Indigenous perspective of Latin America, the meaning of the word also means being a bad person, disrespectful, implying your parents or family did not teach you how to be or see others in a respectful light.

Armando credited the MAS program with teaching him how to be respectful to others, especially elders. He specifically mentioned that the MAS program taught him how not to be *malcreado*. This point is specifically important when understanding the impact of the MAS program curriculum and pedagogy. It demonstrates the program's ability to transcend the divide that often exits in marginalized communities and schools. The program's ability to effectively develop curriculum and teach from a pedagogical stance that was culturally relevant truly made this program effective and meaningful for the marginalized communities of Tucson, AZ.

The MAS program closed in on the academic and social disparities of marginalized youth in the nation. The achievement gap, and/or the achievement debt, to which Ladson-Billings (2006) speaks, is evidence of a failed educational system that has historically resisted meeting the needs of marginalized students and their families. Ladson-Billings highlighted Randall Robinson's quote in her article on the historical implications of the achievement gap toward an achievement debt. Randall stated:

> No nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonably expect the gap between the heirs of the two groups to narrow. Lines, begun parallel and left alone, can never touch. (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 8)

Ladson-Billing's reference to a history of enslavement and oppression is key when understanding the achievement debt. Her quote speaks about two groups: the enslaved and the enslaver. She qualifies and describes each group's trajectory and alludes to a historical mistreatment and oppression of those enslaved, equally qualifying a privilege to those who were not. In the case of the Ethnic Studies battle in Tucson, AZ, the MAS program's curriculum and pedagogy were accused of being one-sided and biased toward a Mexican American perspective, nonetheless emphasizing Ladson-Billings' (2006) point: What can be said of the bias and expectations of assimilation assumed in mainstream education?

The premises of the HB 2281 law state that the MAS program was trying to: (a) overthrow the U.S. Government, (b) promote resentment over a race or class of people, and (c) advocate ethnic solidarity instead of seeing students as individuals. In the context of a historical trajectory of equity and debt, the law favors a dominant ideology and identity that has always been privileged and in control. Ladson-Billings (2006) refers to an institutional and systematic design of curricula and pedagogies that purposely leave out the identities, histories, and cultures of marginalized communities from mainstream education.

The participants reported that the curriculum and pedagogy of the MAS program reflected their cultures, identities, and histories. The participants saw themselves reflected in the

literature and teachings of the MAS program (Sleeter, 2011). Their narratives spoke of reading stories, accounts, and history of a context that was familial and relevant to their reality and community (Acosta, 2013). Andres, an MAS program administrator, stated:

> I started to see myself in the literature, making those connects between my parent's history our history and Chicanos. . . . The heavy police presence, the incarceration of two of my brothers, just that pain and struggling started to make sense, where before I internalized that oppression. . . . Chicano Studies saved my life, it allowed me to develop some critical thinking skills, self-reflect and make connections, why my parents were marginalized and dehumanized, why we weren't [my brothers and I] in the schools. It just really inspired me, it gave me something to be proud of, my history, my *cultura* to reconnect and understand that well.

Domingo, an MAS program teacher, further stated:

> I found my story was in there, I found my dad's story through all these authors. The stories of pain and isolation and alienation, and also of pride and cultura and baseball and boxing. . . the most powerful one was Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street*, and then being able to teach that and read that with my students was liberating and emancipating for all of us. I was devouring it, I was devouring literature for like years, and that became the foundation for everything I did.

The MAS program incorporated the lived context of marginalized communities into the academic world of Ethnic Studies. Students experienced congruency and familiarity between the education happening at home and the education happening in their classrooms (Delgado Bernal, 2001; N. González et al., 2005). Once students began reading literature that spoke of their

struggles, dreams, and environments, it awoke in them a desire to learn. The dissonance that has historically existed between marginalized communities and schools was lifted, and what was left over was sincere learning (Arce, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999). The MAS program, however, added a significant element to their curriculum and pedagogical process. The Indigenous epistemologies allowed students to also self-evaluate and self-educate. Students were taught to understand a concept of self-respect, self-love, and balance in their development (Arce, 2015; Four Arrows et al., 2013; Grande, 2015). The program's ability to provide a method and structure of process that aided both the teachers' and students' understandings of their social identities, privileges, and oppressions provided a space for learning, and, most importantly, unlearning.

The Indigenous Epistemology of the Mexican American Studies Program

One of the unique characteristics of the MAS program was its Indigenous epistemological foundation based in Uto-Nahuatl ancestral knowledge. This knowledge is based in an ancient set of values called the Nahui Olin and the Four Tezcatlipocas. Each of these principles and values promote a process, a guide toward becoming a better human (Arce, 2015). Many of the Mexican Indigenous communities of Mexico and the Southwest still adhere and abide by these values and principles. At the core of the Indigenous epistemology embraced by the MAS program is a curriculum and pedagogical approach that centers a process of humanization that is both equitable and accountable to not only human beings; likewise, it strives to be in balance with nature and the land. Andres, an MAS program administrator, further states:

> We really felt Indigenous knowledge was holistic, it really addressed all forms of oppression, it addressed organic, in Gramsci's words, organic intellectuals. This

> knowledge is from our antepasados [ancestors], that's why it's so powerful, students saw that. That's not to denounce other forms of knowledge, because we don't want to do that at all, but this knowledge stands on its own it doesn't need legitimizing by any other form of knowledge. That's not to say we won't use other forms of knowledge and tools to re-humanize ourselves and to strengthen our selves as teachers and help strengthen our students and communities.

The MAS program taught within the parameters of the Nahui Olin and the Four Tezcatlipocas. Each principle describes a cyclical process of self-reflection (Tezcatlipoca), self-education (Quetzalcoatl), will power to engage in action (Huitzilopochtli), and evaluative transformation (Xipe-Totec). The Indigenous epistemology helped students self-evaluate and engage a process of bettering themselves, academically and personally (Arce, 2015). Students and teachers applied this approach to all aspects of their life. All of the teachers built their curriculum within this structure and followed the Indigenous approach pedagogically (Arce, 2015). Domingo, one of the MAS program teachers, described how the Four Tezcatlipocas were followed when teaching students how to conceptualize and write a personal statement for their college applications:

> I would literally show them how to write their personal statements based on the Nauhi Olin. . . . If you think about it, the Nahui Olin is what colleges ask from students. I would literally say, when you think about your past, that's Tezcatlipoca, your reflection of who you are. It's also where you are now because you have to reflect on where you came from, who your family is, and who you are. Quetzalcoatl is what I've learned and what colleges want to know, what are you interested in, why do you want to go to college. Huitzilopochtli, what have you done in the world, another present piece, but also a

> transformative piece, and it's also a future piece, Xipe-Totec, who are you going to be? What are you going to work on, and what are you going to do?

Domingo's example of how the Nahui Olin was used in the classroom exemplifies how Indigenous epistemologies were implemented into the MAS curriculum and pedagogy. Students engaged and personalized their assignments by putting into practice the values of the Nahui Olin. There academic success came from their ability to effectively and critically reflect upon the conditions and environments of their own lives, while analyzing and expressing critically their perspectives and viewpoints. For many marginalized students, the experiences of the home are void when engaging mainstream education (Delgado Bernal, 2001; N. González et al., 2005). The MAS program's ability to merge both experiences provided marginalized students an opportunity for an equitable education. In the following passage, Esperanza, an MAS program student, further demonstrated how she applied the four Tezcatlipocas reflectively and personally when reflecting on the passing of her father:

> The four Tezcatlipoca's concepts of being a better human, and so you have to look at your past, and decide what is it about you that has to change, make a goal to change it, then you have to do it. Huitzilopochtli is the will to act, it also means hummingbird on your left. The concepts really helped me to build a relationship with my dad. He and I use to have a lot of issues, because my parents divorced when I was very young. And, so, having those classes made me realize we have to treat each other as human, and we have to acknowledge each other, and love each other, and we have to respect each other. Because of that I had a relationship with my dad for about a year and a half, and he just passed away in April, so those classes if I didn't have them, I don't know how I would

> have been able to let him go without knowing that we didn't have a relationship. So, I mean, those classes were huge in supporting each other and teaching me to care for other people.

This testimony by Esperanza demonstrates that the pedagogical Indigenous approach and curricular design of the MAS program was effective and transformative not only academically, but also socially. The MAS program curriculum and pedagogical approach brought families closer together emotionally and culturally. The MAS curriculum and pedagogical approach should be replicated across the country, as evidence demonstrates its usefulness and strength.

As expressed in participants' personal narratives, the MAS program engaged and enhanced growth beyond an academic expectation. The MAS program was much more than a K-12 program whose emphasis and task was Mexican American Studies. The MAS program curriculum and pedagogy embraced families and communicated cultural and social values that validated the historical context of Southwest communities and families. The MAS program reached beyond the classroom, embracing the values and perspectives important to its student's communities and families. The MAS program blurred the line and disconnection often felt by Mexican American communities between the culture of the school and the culture of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001; González et al., 2005).

In the next and final chapter, Reflections and Recommendations, I propose recommendations and perspectives for practitioners and policymakers to consider when developing equitable and just policy and curriculum for a diverse youth population. Personal narratives are given as evidence and rationale for the urgency and importance of working toward

a more culturally relevant education. The recommendations presented in the next chapter are vital if the world of education is to reach a more just, culturally relevant, and equitable platform.

CHAPTER 6: REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What Was Learned From the Ethnic Studies Ban HB 2281

The following recommendations can be drawn from the discussions and analysis developed in this dissertation. The struggles and narratives from the people of Tucson, AZ have taught us immensely about the racialized politics of knowledge and how power molds, shapes, and manipulates people's lives and experiences. The destruction left by HB 2281 leaves much to morn; nonetheless, it also provides spaces for insight, reflection, and critique. Throughout this dissertation, the following recommendations have been developed slowly, discussed, and often proposed informally and collectively with the participants of the study. Aspects and pieces of the recommendations have been proposed and thought through by personally mixing and deconstructing ongoing conversations and exploring the literature examined in this study. Through my own process, the following statements can be concluded from this dissertation. Each one of the following recommendations are a critique of the educational condition of mainstream education, as well as a critical reflection on how to transform and improve our current educational system.

Recommendation 1

There is a need for political struggle over knowledge, so we understand who is consistently and historically included and left out in schools, communities, and political decision-making processes. The MAS program consistently challenged mainstream education by asking questions such as whose identity, whose culture, whose ideology, and whose knowledge is consistently being centered in mainstream education. The curricula and knowledge base they engaged in the classroom consistently countered the dominant narratives and

perspective assumed in mainstream education. The MAS curricula examined the histories, herstories, perspectives, and ideologies of non-White, Eurocentric, male identities and centered an Indigenous epistemology that confronted official knowledge. Both teachers and students were engaged politically, thus influencing and pressuring policy and politicians to reflect their educational needs. Likewise, teachers and students should be aware of the economic, political, and social policies affecting their students, families, and communities. To be politically involved outside of your educational and academic responsibilities is to be actively engaged and concerned about the well-being of your students and their families. As educators, practitioners, and policymakers, we must have an active voice in making sure the content knowledge in our curricula reflect the identities and his/herstories of marginalized communities. Likewise, as educators, practitioners, and policymakers, we must be active in challenging mainstream curricula that reflect dominant ideologies and identities.

Recommendation 2

There is an inherent bias in our schools and youth-centered systems where Eurocentric and Westernized forms of knowledge are privileged. For students to grow up in an educational system where the curricula bias a Eurocentric identity and history is no longer rational and equitable. Students should have access to culturally sensitive curricula that speak to the multicultural and social realities they live and navigate daily. Students deserve an education that critically examines all perspectives equitably. Why not offer a curriculum that teaches from an Indigenous or feminist perspective in mainstream education? For students to learn only about the Founding Fathers of the country and not the founding mothers of the country is to side with only a patriarchal perspective of our national identity. For students to learn about the California

Missions in a positivistic narrative of charity and good will, without including the Indigenous narratives of forced Christianization, violence, and assimilation, is to side with a Eurocentric and biased perspective of our national history. Finally, for students to learn about racism and bias as a thing of the past is to not be in touch with the lived realities of communities of color, and specifically, our Black communities. It is time we realize there is inherit bias in our educational system, and to challenge these biases, we need to allow space for learning and difference in our schools.

Recommendation 3

Lack of spaces exist where youth can exercise self-determination and a sense of self in context; likewise, students do not get to participate and determine what knowledge is important and appropriate in policy and programming. The MAS program provided youth a space where they could exercise self-determination and a sense of self in the Tucson, AZ context. The MAS program's reach went beyond the classroom and motivated students to take education into their own hands. As a witness to the youth's determination while in Tucson, it was impressive and powerful to see youth self-organize, both themselves and their communities, for a more inclusive education. While I was in Tucson, AZ, I witnessed the commitment and agency youth displayed in their advocacy to defend their studies. At one of the rallies organized outside of the Tucson School District building, students chanted with high energy, "Our education is under attack, what do we do? Fight Back!" at the same time youth grouped into small circles and discussed the proceedings happening inside of the school district meetings after not being let in by district security officials. Students owned their education and were committed to fight for it. Likewise, these same students organized teach-ins at the district offices and public spaces, it was

inspirational to see youth in control of their education. Throughout my time in Tucson, I learned greatly from the youth of the MAS program, as their insight and approach were always reflective and inclusive of all people. Very similar to youth in other areas, they understood the limitations of the educational system and were insightful in proposing new ideas and alternatives.

I was also witness to youth from across the country acting in solidarity with the youth, students, and communities of the banned MAS program. Youth from across the county, such as in Phoenix, AZ, Santa Ana, CA, Los Angeles, CA, Chicago, IL, and Madison, WI, to name a few, self-organized in solidarity with the youth of Tucson by engaging teach-ins, disseminating art and education, and demanding justice for the youth and communities affected by HB 2281. Specifically, in Madison, WI where I lived, taught, and organized locally, youth were inspired by the mobilizations of Tucson, AZ and took it upon themselves to reach out and learn from the MAS program's perspective and organizing efforts. The youth in Madison, WI also took education into their own hands and began organizing other students around immigration, identity, and ethnic studies in their schools. One of the proposals in Madison, WI, influenced by the Ethnic Studies youth movements in Tucson, AZ, was the Xicanx Institute for Education and Self-Determination (XIES). This project started in response and in solidarity to the injustice happening in Tucson, AZ, while at the same time proposing a culturally relevant curriculum for youth as a summer institute where students could engage Ethnic Studies classes outside of their official school schedule.

It was impressive to see high school youth dedicate 3 weeks out of their summer to learn and engage culturally relevant curricula. One of the most rewarding aspects of this program inspired by the Ethnic Studies movements in Tucson, AZ was its desire to build a relationship

with the Menominee Nation of Wisconsin. On its third year of programing, the XIES program has taken youth to the Menominee Nation, building relationships and exchanging Indigenous values and perspectives. Words cannot describe the connection and energy exchanged in these visits. The youth participate and engage in ceremony, visit and listen to elders, sit and embrace food with the Menominee community, and learn about each other's struggles, stories, and experiences. The XIES program is just one project that was inspired by the Ethnic Studies movements in Tucson, AZ. Similarly, other youth groups in Madison, WI mobilized and were inspired by the determination of the youth of the Ethnic Studies movements in Arizona.

Respected youth organizations in Madison, WI, such as ExpressARTE, [Re]Generacion youth group, the Latinx Student Union, MEChA of UW Madison, and Freedom Inc., are still creating space for their own education. These organizations provide a perspective and education often not accessed in mainstream education. Youth gravitate to these organizations because they provide and supplement education absent in the mainstream classroom. Recommendation 3 is reflective of student voice and agency. Policy and youth programing could benefit from youth participation and perspective. Most of the youth programs listed here have very little funding and support from formal governmental, educational, or nonprofit institutions. The agency and accomplishments of these youth groups come from a resilient need to see themselves reflected in their education. If youth organizations such as these were heard and included, youth policy and programing could be more equitable to the needs of our youth.

Recommendation 4

Racialized legislation primary and permanently affect people of color, and reparations and accountability must be implemented for justice to exist in legislation.

History has demonstrated that racialized legislation has always negatively and systematically affected communities of color. Challenges in our legislation, initiated by social movements, have transformed our country for the better; nonetheless, history shows that racialized legislation such as segregation in schools/public spaces, Jim Crow Laws, Asian Exclusion Act, Blood Quantum Laws, Women's suffrage, and operation "Wetback," for example, systematically target a specific group of people. Equally, racialized legislation, such as the aforementioned examples, may be perceived as a thing of the past; yet, marginalized communities still endure such racist and unjust laws today. HB 2281 is a clear example of how racialized legislation was designed to omit critical Indigenous and Mexican American perspectives from being taught in mainstream education.

Immigration policies currently are targeting marginalized immigrant communities today. Young children brought to the United States and educated in this system are still denied the Dream Act, and families requesting political asylum are being denied and separated at the border. Ridiculous tax rules such as the "pink tax" systematically discriminates against women by increasing a tax upon women's products. It is time a national conversation on accountability and reparations begins. If we want a more just society, as addressed in this dissertation, we must first address the ideological and systematic beginnings of the country and engage in a national conversation on recognition, reflection, and accountability. The Ethnic Studies model of education provides a critical and viable vehicle to commence this initiative, despite being aware of the realization that, as a society, we may be far from initiating a truly critical national curriculum that challenges mainstream education, ideologies, and perspectives. As my mother advises me always, *poquito a poquito*, or "a little bit at a time."

Recommendation 5

Curriculum is crucial for different ways of knowing and official knowledge; however, it is also crucial for building alliances and intersections of movement building. The building of alliances has major implications for interrupting dominance. The MAS program curriculum not only enhanced the academic and cultural needs of the Tucson community, it also infused different knowledge bases and proposals important to their community. The MAS curriculum built alliances and intersections between a diverse set of communities that may have otherwise organized independently from the other groups. The MAS Curriculum served as the center—the hub—connecting the different spokes and work being proposed in the city. The MAS program collaborated with and brought activists, scholars, educators, elders, feminists, politicians, and community members together. All of these independent sectors came together to embrace the MAS curriculum and worked together to best serve their communities.

When the curriculum was dismantled by HB 2281, all of the alliances and movement building also disintegrated in the community. The State of Arizona intentionally banned the MAS program and, in turn, took the program's legitimacy to operate legally. When the program was eliminated, the ties, alliances, and agency built in the program were also destroyed. To take the MAS program's legitimacy and agency also eliminated the physical and ideological space for people to continue to work together.

Looking Ahead Critically and Intentionally

The MAS program was critical and effective, and their curriculum and pedagogical approach should be replicated across the country, not only in formalized school settings, but also

in community-based environments. In casual conversations with community members, family, friends, and many of the participants, it is agreed that if they had an opportunity to relive their schooling experience as children and had access to a curriculum such as the one designed by the MAS program, they say in a generic summary that their experience in schools would have been more generative and affirmative, equally allowing them to benefit more from their school experience. It made sense to them that a culturally relevant curriculum would be helpful for engaging students. I personally agree with this perspective, as I too had no interest and felt completely alienated from the curriculum and programing being offered in schools.

A rigid and awkward divide existed in my own education between the education of the home and the education of schools. The lesson plans on the Founding Fathers and California Missions in my schooling experience contradicted my own family worldviews and perspectives. I did not have space in my education to learn more about my mother's Indigenous ancestry or why the Founding Fathers came from overseas, being that both of my parents' ancestry originated on this U.S. continent. I had so many questions growing up, such as why I spoke Spanish and others did not, why I felt less than when I spoke Spanish, why I ate different food, why I felt less than when I opened up my burritos or tacos from home etc. Of these dynamics, I later realized the power of invalidation, as students, teachers, and school officials emphasized the importance of English over Spanish or the practicality of a lunch box with a sandwich over a plastic bag with a burrito wrapped in aluminum foil. The hidden curriculum was evident in my own education and demarcated in my own developmental insecurities that I am still unlearning as an adult. If schools in the United States are to truly engage in a social justice and equitable

platform, curricula such as the one developed by the MAS program is needed throughout the United States.

Attention must be given to the current Ethnic Studies movement slowly developing across the nation. Currently, in the State of California, AB2772 is an Ethnic Studies bill that would mandate that all high school students in California take an Ethnic Studies course as a graduation requirement. Indiana and Oregon already require a similar policy for their K-12 schools, and the State of Arizona just recently overturned HB 2281, speaking of reparations and how to move forward after the ban. Ethnic Studies must be part of the national curriculum; the changing demographics of the county now requires a more inclusive, critical, and historically correct account of our society's reality. Ethnic Studies curricula and programs create spaces where knowledge, history, and identity can be questioned and explored.

Lastly, the national ideology and worldview of U.S. education must be challenged. The national demographic of the United States is now culturally and racially changing, and schools should historically and contextually reflect the identities absent from the national curricula. Although the Ethnic Studies movement has gained traction in the past 5 years, I would be remiss to say that this growth came naturally due to the changing demographics of the country. An active and intentional movement has been developed by years of struggle, which included direct confrontation and resistance toward the status quo. This dissertation and the Ethnic Studies struggle in Tucson, AZ are clear markers for the hardships and complexities that arise when challenging dominance. Nonetheless, such collective pushback is needed if we are to conceptualize more inclusive and balanced schools.

Resistance against conformity is important, and we must voice the inconsistencies we encounter in our schools. Let us question the historical perspective used in schools, and let us evaluate the literature and demand that it includes diverse perspectives that reflect the changing demographics of the country. We must constantly question whose knowledge and ideology is being centered as common sense. We must also develop and propose a curriculum that is critical, inclusive, and equitable with the realities and narratives of marginalized communities. The curricula we build and propose must decenter Whiteness and deconstruct power, privilege, and oppression. Only through these proposals and initiatives can we begin to hold a mirror up to dominance and therefore begin a more equitable possibility for our schools.

Concluding Remarks

As I conclude this section of the dissertation, I am reminded of the wise words of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the long road of justice:

Let us realize the arc of the moral Universe is long, but it bends towards Justice.

These words are encouraging and sobering at the same time. Now, 50 years since the passing of Martin Luther King, Jr., not much has moved in regard to equality and justice in our schools. Schools are no longer segregated legally; nonetheless, schools still remain segregated economically (Nazaryan, 2018). Racial tensions and divisions are still evident and on the rise via media, politics, and schools. The current presidency has recharged and emboldened race-based rhetoric, taking on a more active approach in denying immigrant rights and sanctuaries in their communities. As protests continue to engage on both sides of the political spectrum, we stand in

the middle of an intense ideological racial struggle that is reminiscent of MLK's time and struggle. The words spoken by MLK are so vivid, real, and I hope they are true.

Optimistically, however, I must believe we await an ideological progressive shift in our society. The narratives described in this dissertation are also evidence of the power and potential for what a more inclusive holistic education could look like. Although many of the narratives bare hardship, they also speak to transformation demarcating the radical possibility for what our national education could look like. Equally, as the racial tensions intensify in our country, I am also witness to a vast amount of work being done to counter dominant ideologies. Just recently, and for the first time in the history of the Pulitzer Prize, the award was given to Kendrick Lamar for his hip-hop album called *Damn*. Music videos such as "This is America" by Childish Gambino in the world of hip hop are speaking honestly about the racial and historical tension that exists in the United States, and superhero movies such as "Black Panther" are taking over the mainstream screen designed in radical Black feminist perspectives. Many of the examples I give are not perfect, as they are still exploited by capitalist ventures; nonetheless, they show the beginning of a racial ideological shift that reflects people's experiences. This dissertation and the fight for Ethnic Studies in Tucson, AZ take their place and part in a long-lasting arc we hope bend toward justice.

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Appendix

Questions for Teachers, Students, and Administrators

1. Where were you born? Where did you grow up? How do you identify ethnically, culturally, and racially? What is the gender you identify with? A little about your demographic self, I.e. do you have a family, children, partner, dog etc. etc.
2. How did you end up in Tucson, AZ? (If they came from outside of Tucson)
3. How long have you been teaching? What is your educational background? Where did you study and get your teaching degree/credentials?
4. How did you end up working for and teaching with the MAS program at TUSD?
5. What material and/or materials did you teach at when working with the MAS program at TUSD? How long were you involved with the MAS program? What drew you to MAS program at TUSD? What pedagogic lens did you use to interpret the MAS curriculum?
6. How active were you in the MAS program? Describe your participation, both outside and inside of the classroom? What role has the MAS program played in your life (e.g., family, work, education, professional development)?
7. What is HB 2281? I.E. What does it mean to you personally, politically, culturally, and socially? Did your teacher education program prepare you for what was experienced during and post the ban?
8. What impact did HB 2281 have in your classroom, your teaching, your family and your community? What was your students' response and to HB 2281? How did they get involved, did the MAS program support them? What have you learned by participating in the MAS program? What have you gained from this learning?
9. Can you recall and describe the feeling you experienced when you realized HB 2281 would be passed? What role did you play, did the community play, and did students play? Can you describe the process of organizing, who were the actors, who was engaged in this movement? Did the materials taught and learned in the MAS program prepare you for what was to come from HB 2281? What was the community's response? Was there support for the ethnic studies struggle?

Questions on Curriculum for Teachers, Students, and Administrators

10. What classes where offered via the MAS program? What was being taught? From your perspective what was its focus, mission, and purpose of the MAS program? Do you think it reached its purpose?
11. Why isn't the curriculum and program recognized by the state, what is it about the MAS program and its curriculum that sets it aside from other standard curriculums and program? From your perspective why was it banned?
12. Follow up question on the critical perspective?
13. How is TUSD addressing the state mandate to have ethnic studies in its schools? What is replacing the MAS program? What do you think of the new program? How does HB 2281 fit or not in the new programing?

14. Where is the Ethnic Studies struggle now? What is happening in the School district now? Will the MAS program ever come back? What is the future of Ethnic Studies Chican@ critical courses in Tucson?
    -Follow up with social movements and a history of watered-down curricula movements and dis-articulation and re-articulation of the MAS curriculum.
15. Anything else that you would like to add or any questions that I can answer for you?