Emerging Tensions: The Variances and Silences in Survey Research with Youth

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Abstract

In the process of organizing to build power through mobilizing young people against displacement from school pushouts, we observed ways in which low-income youth of color have internalized negative ideas about themselves and their communities and how they collectively challenge those ideas. Using Critical Race Theory and critical whiteness studies as a framework, we identify some of the ideologies that we observed in our survey research with youth. Drawing on examples from two youth survey projects that we participated in, this paper considers what young people of color thought they deserved as public goods in spaces that have been racialized under a white neoliberal logic albeit in schooling or community spaces. We then discuss our findings to demonstrate how these ideologies create tensions that must be considered when conducting survey research including any form of YPAR and organizing.

Keywords: youth, organizing, whiteness, education, CRT

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While critique and desire propel vibrant movements for future change (personal and collective), the cumulative consequences of punishing social realities and profit-making seductions mute and redirect structural criticism so that the sharp arrow of critique turns back on self over time.
(Fine, 2016, p. 352)

Introduction

The three authors of this paper first convened in May of 2018 at a convening of the Urban Research Based Action Network (URBAN), a space created to connect academic and community practitioners oriented toward social justice. Each of us separately presented our work on youth survey research and organizing, which we had conducted through two different organizations. After presenting, we found a lot of overlap in the issues we were grappling with. So we decided to write this article together. Our aim in this article is to explore the tensions in Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and organizing efforts by talking through some of these issues or tensions. We share two different survey research case studies conducted with youth in two different state contexts. Two authors engaged in youth survey research in a southern state and the other in a midwestern state. Two authors organized a survey in partnership with youth at Power U while the other organized the survey in partnership with youth practitioners through Young Aspiring Americans for Social and Political Activism (YAASPA). We unpack the meaning making happening for student's experiences of displacement through under resourcing schools in low-income neighborhoods and exclusionary discipline places, as they acknowledge, witness, and remove the veil of their racialization in schooling and community contexts.

We began this collaboration by having regular phone conversations and came back together in person at another URBAN convening in the winter of 2019. At this second convening, we were able to share our initial findings with other participants who helped us build out our arguments. At this convening, we were pushed to hone in on the key tensions in our experiences with youth survey research and how these tensions might present important challenges for the education field. We then went back to our data, specifically our survey research with youth findings, to explore when and how dueling ideologies arose in the respondents' answers.

As we began to discuss our work and some of the emerging tensions, we thought about how we could share our learnings with scholars, youth workers, and critical praxtitioners (Mackey, 2015). Critical praxtitioners purpose their work to bridge critical theories and consciousness into practice. Being committed to racial equity and social justice, we also grappled together with the implications of how to critically conduct survey research when variances and

silences in the data suggest an internalization of hegemonic ideas amongst respondents. We argue that sociopolitical contexts shape the ways in which youth experience, internalize, and explain issues of displacement in schooling and community contexts.

Organizational Context

Power U Center for Social Change, Miami, Florida

Two of the authors have been engaged with Power U in Miami, Florida for over a decade and helped lead Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) there. YPAR is a form of research in which young people who are impacted by an issue take a lead role in shaping the goals of the research, conducting the research, analyzing the findings, and sharing out the final report (Fine, 2016). Power U builds power of low-income Black and Latinx youth through leadership development, base-building efforts, and direct action to change school policies that push students out of schools through high rates of suspensions, expulsions, and youth incarceration. We see the struggle for student and community power in the schools as being about claiming places and institutions for people that have been historically marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes. The various ways that students are pushed out of schools parallel ways that adults in the community are pushed out of housing, incarcerated, deported, and denied basic access to rights. Keeping students in schools is about those impacted communities claiming control of institutions and spaces and shaping policies and practices informed by our experiences and knowledge.

Florida has historically taken a heavy-handed approach to juvenile justice, a process which has disproportionately harmed Black and Latinx youth. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2018), children of color make up 65.8 percent of juvenile arrests in Florida. Florida notoriously tries children as adults at high rates, and 76.5 percent of children transferred to adult courts are Black and Latinx (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018). While Miami Dade County tends to pride itself on being more liberal than other parts of the state, arrests of youth in the county nevertheless follow these patterns. School-based arrests, suspensions, and expulsions are disproportionately inflicted on Black youth. Respectability discourse towards Black youth prevails, as schools discipline Black students for infractions related to dress and comportment and commissioners pass ordinances against people wearing saggy pants (Daniel & White, 2018; Miami Herald, 2013).

Power U youth have been organizing since 2008 for restorative justice programs in Miami schools. In the summer of 2015, as the school district had still not funded and implemented a restorative justice program, the youth and organizers felt that the use of resources was perpetuating the schoolhouse-to-jailhouse pipeline. The district continued to fund punitive discipline measures rather than invest in programs like restorative justice, which when implemented as a whole-school approach can help students and teachers alike acknowledge issues, examine root causes, and collectively identify solutions. As a way of raising awareness, Power U youth publicly organized actions that highlighted the misalignment between Miami

school budget allocations and what both research and common sense tell us can help improve outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We saw the need to demonstrate the poor treatment of youth of color in these schools and developed and administered the survey used in this study.

Young Aspiring Americans for Social and Political Activism (YAASPA), Denver, CO

YAASPA was birthed out of the desire to ensure that Black and Brown youth had the knowledge, tools, and skills to navigate academic, career, and civic spaces that were not designed with people of color in mind. It is also intentionally designed with Black and Brown youth to redefine the standards to pull down the barriers. YAASPA undergirds all its programming and issue work with a critical race lens and focuses on the following themes: academic and career efficacy, civic engagement, civic literacy, and racial identity development.

Colorado is known to be one of the most educated states in the country, as it imports folks who have already attained their post-secondary degrees in other states. Yet Colorado struggles to enhance the college graduation rates of its youth. This phenomenon is called the Colorado Paradox. Colorado Department of Higher Education (2018) reported that "[i]n spite of its recognition as one of the most highly educated states, Colorado ranks at or below average in student persistence and completion" (p. 17). The report also highlights the need for racial equity for Black and Brown youth to increase persistence and completion. As *Colorado Rises* (2018) indicates,

> The story for African Americans in Colorado is even more sobering. While their 39 percent attainment rate currently is higher than that for Hispanics and has increased slightly since 2012, their 10-year completion rate has actually decreased, making the gap even more challenging to address (p. 15).

Black and Brown youth in Colorado are navigating an educational context in which displacement has become normalized as the state has refused to create supportive environments or effective school improvements. When the state does participate in educational reforms, it is in a punitive fashion that positions schools, students and families as failing. School closures, a focus on punitive discipline approaches, and limited educational opportunities for Black and Brown youth in Colorado shape the landscape for many of YAASPA's young people.

YAASPA thus conducted its youth survey in the context of displacement, privatization, and inequitable access to resources. Specifically, the survey was administered in a district that positions "school choice" as the north star toward justice for youth and families, particularly in Black and Brown communities. Schools that were once beacons of refuge and cultural capital for students of color (Yosso, 2005) are demonized as unworthy of district and state support and co-located with charter schools. This co-location led to the displacement of youth and their families' sense of cohesion and community. In light of this displacement, we now have a generation of youth who have an ahistorical and normalized understanding of this displacement, and do not know anything outside of small charters or charter networks.

YAASPA conducted this survey research in partnership with other Colorado-based organizations including Colorado Circles for Change, Padres y Jóvenes Unidos, and Project VOYCE to unveil what the most pressing issues were for youth. YAASPA youth informed the creation of the survey, along with other stakeholders with the goal of informing the priorities of an incoming superintendent. However, given the sociopolitical context, we knew that this would need to be a long-term endeavor of continuous youth engagement rather than a quick project tangential to a rushed superintendent process. The need for sustained youth activism and engagement speaks to the very foundation of why YAASPA was created.

Theoretical Framework

We ground our research and analysis in Gramscian theories of common sense and critical theories of race and whiteness to consider how neoliberal forces enable and constrain youth survey research and organized resistance. We discuss how whiteness and neoliberal logics appeared in our research, and what this might tell us about how the structures and ideologies that enable and constrain our lives also shape the experiences and understandings held by young people.

White Supremacist Neoliberalism

We seek to build on existing theoretical frameworks that examine how young people's experiences and identities shape their understandings of social justice (Shedd, 2015). We also explore how dominant or hegemonic ideologies, such as white supremacy, can perpetuate inequities if not challenged by critical thinking about whose interests these ideologies serve (Gramsci, 1992). The dominant current political economic arrangement, neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007), promotes white supremacist ideas to justify the exploitation of people of color for the wealth and benefit of white people. This arrangement impacts life in many corners of the globe. In considering neoliberalism in education, Gilbourn (2014) shares,

> Neoliberal policies are typically characterized by a desire to cut back state-funded provision, an individualized perspective that views success as a reflection of merit and hard work, and a belief that private provision is inherently superior. Neoliberalism typically works through colour-blind language that dismisses the saliency of race-specific analyses (p. 27).

Neoliberalism has had a key role in shaping educational policies and practices in ways that exacerbate racialized inequalities (Lipman, 2013).

The prevalence of oppressive ideologies, such as whiteness, allows for the infusion of neoliberalism in educational spaces, insidiously masking its white supremacist underpinnings and outcomes (Gilbourn, 2005). Critical Race Theory (CRT) proposes that racism is inherently embedded within American systems and thus the systems were not created with the success or consciousness of youth of color in mind (Matsuda, 1993, p. 6). CRT also honors and validates the experiential knowledge stemmed from lived experiences from folks of color (Yosso, 2005). Critical whiteness theorists have pointed out that whiteness has three defining characteristics: the

explanation of inequality as attributable to anything *except* the actions of whites; the 'othering' of non-white people such that whiteness becomes the norm; and the minimization of a racist legacy to deny any continued importance in shaping current race relations (Frankenberg, 1993, Leonardo, 2000; Roediger, 1992).

These characteristics together mask the ways that all white people benefit from the privilege of whiteness (Roediger, 1992). When this privilege is masked, people often blame non-white people for the conditions in which they live, learn, and work. Marginalized people are not immune from the prevalence of these ideas and can internalize white supremacist analyses to explain their lived experiences (Gramsci, 1992). People from minoritized backgrounds resist such ideologies when hegemonic ideas clash with other ideas they hold, making hegemony important contested terrain for social movement actors when seeking to overturn systems of oppression (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014).

Common Sense and the Hidden Curriculum

Gramsci (1992) discusses 'common sense' as the uncritical and often contradictory composition of prevalent ideas in societies that can reflect dominant or conservative as well as utopian or critical elements, the latter he terms 'good sense.' Common sense ideas are perpetuated through our educational system, in which a hidden curriculum reproduces class inequalities as students are educated for different types of work based on their class background (Anyon, 1980).

White supremacist ideology in schools is perpetuated through curricular and pedagogical practices and choices. Through this hidden curriculum, schooling reproduces dominant ideas designed to hide the ways that racialized and gendered inequality is reproduced (Giroux, 1983; Morris, 2016). Even liberal educators perpetuate the hidden curriculum by not working with their students to critically question and think about dismantling oppressive structures (Giroux, 1983). Schools thus perpetuate white supremacist ideologies in student's schooling experiences. Students' funds of knowledge and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) are often not reflected or valued in teaching and learning environments due to the encroachment of white supremacist ideologies. The image below depicts the layers that must be contended with before survey research with youth can be analyzed, with an understanding that surveys and youth organizing can challenge common sense ideas and the structures that create them.

Figure 1

Theoretical Frameworks to Contextualize Survey Research with Youth
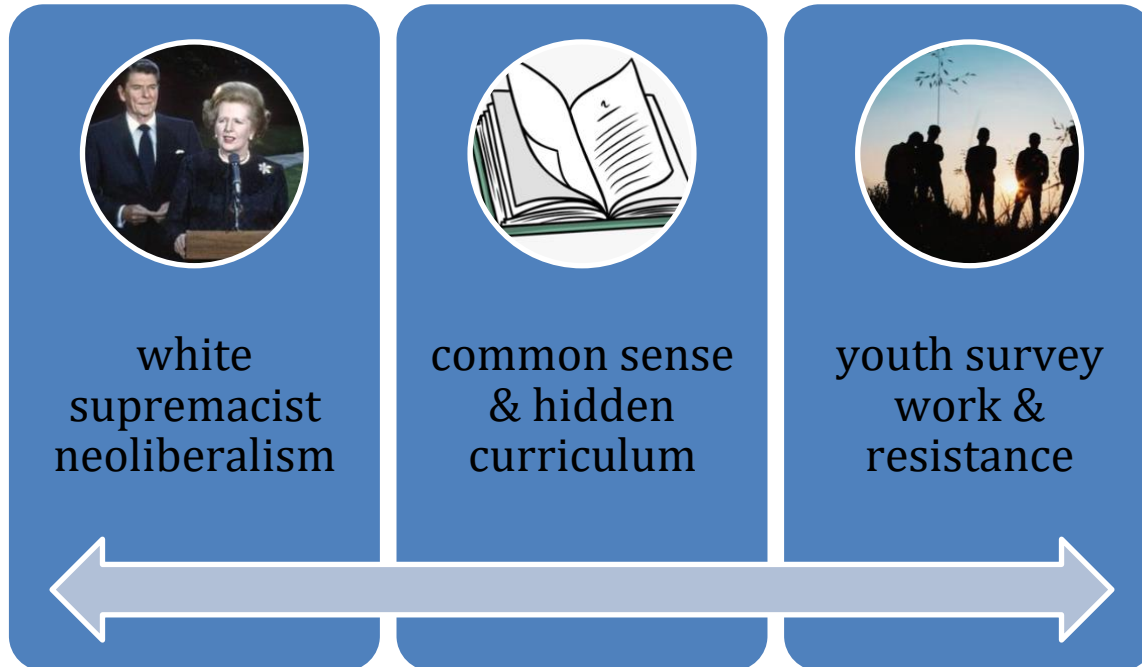
As Gramsci points out, within common sense, there is also a 'good sense' among people that shows an understanding of exploitation (Gramsci, 2000). Hall and O'Shea (2014) argue that these pieces of good sense are the "obvious taken-for granted understandings that express a sense of unfairness and injustice about 'how the world works'" (p. 10). This good sense can be drawn out through critical pedagogy and PAR to help people connect students' lived experiences to an understanding of how broader systems of oppression function (Apple, 2019; Fals-Borda, 1987). Youth organizers find that *good sense* within the common sense and strive to make that good sense dominant in discourse, culture, and policy. These organizers can position themselves to shift youth mindsets toward social change by helping young people reflect on how their lived experiences might contradict some common sense ideas or how they might reinforce good sense.

Methodology

We use these critical theories of whiteness, race, and *common sense* to critically examine survey research with youth and organizing efforts. In order to honor and validate the ways in which Black and Brown youth make sense of their experiences in schools and community contexts, we explore how white supremacist neoliberal ideology can show up in surveys and how organizing can challenge it. We complicate ideas about marginalized students' consciousness and consider implications for survey research with youth and organizing efforts.

The survey research we discuss was guided in different ways in the two different contexts. For Power U, the survey research was created using critical YPAR methodologies (Fals-Borda, 1987; Mirra & Rogers, 2016). Power U youth worked with Keno and julia to develop the survey questions as well as pilot, modify, and conduct the survey. At the end of the survey, Power U youth members analyzed the data collectively along with organizers and a few allies (Stoudt & Torre, 2014) and graded the schools and the district, using this opportunity as a consciousness-raising practice.

YAASPA's survey research was designed with youth practitioners and informed by youth. The survey was built to understand the sociopolitical shifts resulting from a new school board, a superintendent's departure, and a new superintendent's arrival. For YAASPA, the survey research was intentionally designed to not examine race in order to see if and how it would show up in the survey data. Students and staff of the YAASPA's partner youth organizations played a role in disseminating the survey. The survey was targeted to high school students within one school district and had responses primarily from students attending charter schools. In analyzing the data, staff used a constant comparison method, extracted themes, labeled and interpreted the responses from YAASPA practitioners. YAASPA staff named and interpreted key themes from the 167 survey responses, ranging from personnel, structural, and identity issues. Each student survey response had multiple themes embedded within the response. We also paid attention to what was said repeatedly and what was not said, or the co-occurrences and silences.

Researcher Positionality

We believe it is important to discuss our various positionalities as we approach the youth work and research from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds that inform our understandings. Black feminist thought and standpoint epistemology teach us that people's positionality shapes how they view the world, such that those living at intersections of different forms of domination can have important critical insight because of their experiences (Collins, 2000; Haraway, 1988; Harding, 2004; Reid, 2004). We attempt to unveil and humanize the ways we orient ourselves towards work in youth contexts by sharing a bit about ourselves with the reader.

I, Janiece Mackey, am a Black woman who grew up in the state and communities where my nonprofit YAASPA operates, and where I straddle academia. In light of this, I have been able to see the sociopolitical shifts that have impacted the schooling experiences of Black and Brown youth. I have also seen how these sociopolitical shifts have translated to different ideological truths digested by youth over time. I now have Black children in the school system at the elementary and middle school level which also paints the way I experience youth engagement. A constant across time has been the racialization of our experiences despite the sociopolitical shifts in our contexts.

I, julia daniel, spent many years as a community and labor organizer in Florida, including 10 years with Power U. I came to graduate school seeking tools and support for building our

collective capacity to win and to build my own critical thinking skills. As a white woman, there are undoubtedly things that I miss in organizing in a Black community because my experiences in education and other institutions are very different from those of the young people involved. I hope that my experience as an organizer helps supplement what I lack in lived experience, and the knowledge of the youth and organizers including Keno helps fill out and bring important critical thinking to the data.

I, Keno Walker, am a youth member who transitioned to becoming a youth organizer, I've been involved in Power U organizing and YPAR work for years. In the survey process, there was a lot of learning and relearning through some of the challenges in doing this kind of work when neoliberalism has such a strong influence on students in their day to day lives. It became clear to me how deeply neoliberalism runs in families and communities in ways that cause trauma, and is perpetuated throughout all aspects of lives, especially during the school day. The school and community ecosystems where I grew up and where our members live and learn cause so much harm to young people. It has become clear to me, through the survey process, that we must engage young people in a holistic way, otherwise surveying and research will leave a nasty taste in my mouth.

Findings

Through our examination of the survey results, discussions with members, and conversations amongst ourselves, we unearthed how different ideologies form a contested terrain within which we conduct research and organizing. While many young people answered the surveys in ways that demonstrated critical thinking that drew on good sense to understand the systems shaping their everyday lives, others offered answers that reflect common sense ideas. The responses that we highlight below demonstrate the complicated nature of doing critical survey research. Rather than simply reporting the youth survey research from a positivist "what you see is what you get lens" (Nueman, 2011), we conducted our analyses highlighting co-occurrences of youth responses that we felt highlighted a tension, often demonstrating the subtle ways that whiteness was reproduced in schools. We begin this section by exploring the two cases of Power U and YAASPA's survey research, and then share examples of how co-occurrences and silences surface within the process of analyzing the survey research or the data itself. We then discuss what the implications of these challenges to survey research might be for YPAR and conducting survey research with youth.

Power U Case Study

In Power U's survey in Miami-Dade schools we found that some of the ways in which students responded to our questions demonstrated that they were very used to the punitive models of discipline in their schools. For example, 44% of respondents answered that discipline in their school was fair, yet 66% of students responded that their school spent more time punishing students than rewarding them. To more seasoned Power U members who were conducting the survey, these results appeared contradictory. Yet in schools where suspensions

and arrests are presented as the only way to deal with issues and where student supports are few and far between, many respondents believed these punitive measures to be 'fair.' An exclusively punitive way of addressing issues in schools was common sense to many of the respondents. This discrepancy opened up an opportunity for conversation with organizers about what type of discipline practices might better resolve issues and keep students in class, such as restorative justice. Often in those conversations, the young people we surveyed became interested in changing the school discipline practices to be more restorative. However, in the absence of this alternative, the punitive techniques seemed fair.

Similarly, when asked about discrimination, 65% of respondents did not think that students were given special treatment based on race and 55% did not think that students were treated unfairly based on their race. However, 54% of the students agreed with the statement that "police discriminate against students based on race." While a lot of students seemed at first to think racial discrimination was not present in their schools, when we dug a bit more into specifics, a higher percentage did feel that there was discrimination. It is possible that the respondents did not consider police as part of their school, and so their presence was not contradictory to their understanding of racialized discrimination. However, because the Miami-Dade school system has its own large police force—disproportionately distributed in schools with a higher proportion of Black students—the carceral state is embedded within the educational system (Shedd, 2015). This racially disproportionate distribution of police presence also demonstrates the normalization of common sense ideas about school safety that shape the context in which we conduct survey research. These common sense ideas reflect the hegemonic way that whiteness shows up in school as discipline policies appear to be race neutral, but have deeply disparate impacts that can become barriers for young Black and Latinx students' academic achievement.

Power U organizers then felt it important to challenge student respondents to consider the presence and role of law enforcement in their schools as well as the possibility that punitive mechanisms were not helpful ways to address issues and harms. While debriefing the findings, more seasoned members and organizers talked together about some of the challenges of doing survey research:

> Nat – "Students feel like it's normal for the punishment to happen and that it's a good form of disciplinary action. They don't know or think that there are alternative ways to hold people accountable for their actions."

> Lena – "This stuff is embedded in them so whatever environment that they grow up in becomes normal to them and they see nothing wrong with it"

Together, Janiece, Keno, and julia then talked about how we could challenge these common sense ideas in further conversations with student respondents. Often organizers would have deeper conversations with students after the survey, seeking to build on the good sense

ideas students shared. Some students decided to join the Power U organization, becoming active members pushing for alternative means of addressing issues. By building on students' critical thinking skills, which are grounded in their experiences as students of color, these organizers are challenging the systemic ways that racism has persisted in schooling (Yosso, 2005).

YAASPA Case Study

YAASPA found co-occurrences and silences embedded within the process of the survey research as well as throughout analyses of the responses. There were multiple questions asked in the short survey research that YAASPA conducted, but for this study we focused on one question: What are the top three issues in your school that you want the superintendent to address? This question allowed youth surveyors to see through the purview of youth's schooling experiences and understand what they deemed as issues or symptoms of their schooling concerns. As YAASPA members examined the emerging codes, the youth surfaced more than 20 codes from the initial round of coding, which were eventually collapsed into larger buckets of codes and narrowed to the five categories depicted below.

Figure 2

Survey Themes

Percentage of Responses with Collapsed Themes for Question: "What are the top three issues in your school?"
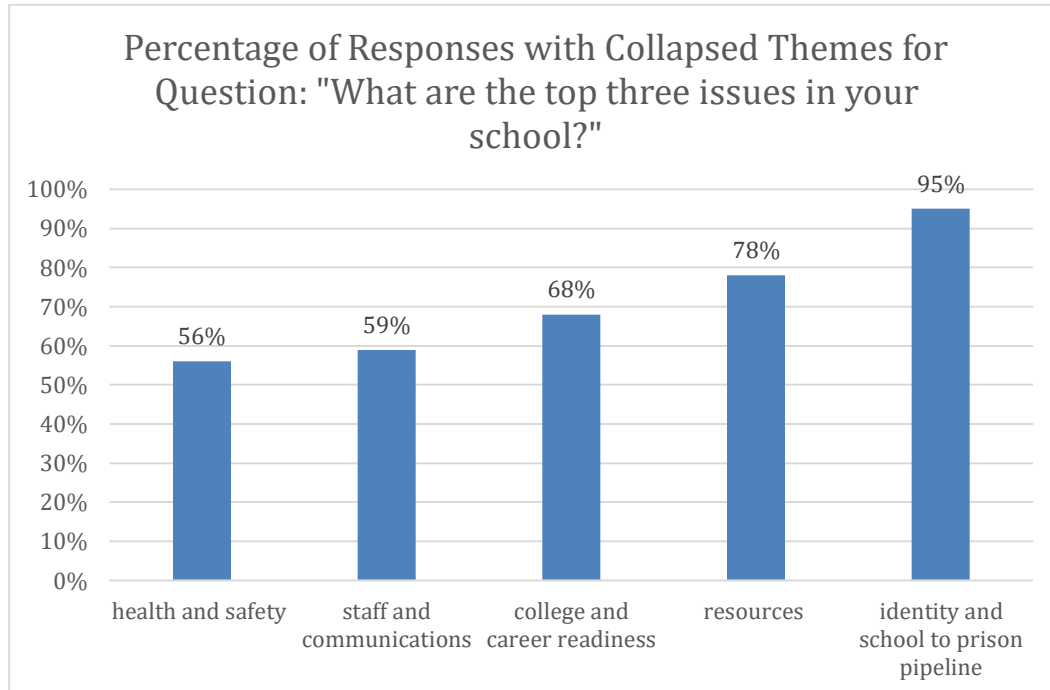
Some of the silences and co-occurrences in youth survey responses are reflected through the interpretation and coding analyses from YAASPA staff. While we did not ask about race

explicitly in our survey through the phrasing of the question, we still heard racialized circumstances surface from the youth's responses. For instance, some issues that students wanted the superintendent to address include the following:

> "Dress code inequity"
> "Giving equal opportunities to all students"
> "Lack of language learning options"
> "Diversity in higher classes"
> "The way kids get in trouble is kinda unfair sometimes"

The aforementioned issues are just a few youth responses that required us to name and claim our epistemological lens in survey research, contextualizing these statements as issues of power, place, and positionality undergirded by hegemonic ideologies. Hearing youth indicate issues of importance without race explicitly named led us as staff to lean on our critical race epistemologies, which undergird not only our personal worldviews but the organizational theory of change as well. As staff, we discuss words and language that are often used in place of others to implicate and introduce issues of race with youth. We also know that "diversity, inequity, equal opportunities" are often phrases that youth use to communicate in race dialogue.

Discipline surfaced as an issue within the YAASPA survey data, even though the survey did not include discipline specific questions. While students indicated issues with the dress code being implemented inequitably, there were students who stated the top three issues in their school experiences as "the way kids act in class and speak to the teachers when the teachers tell the kids to do certain things. Kids actually doing their homework." While students raised issues of power relations concerning dress codes in schools, they did not question power or race in issues of pedagogy and curriculum.

In both survey processes, we found that young people often responded in ways that reflected an internalization of common sense ideas shaped by white supremacist neoliberalism. The ways that young people in both cities spoke about their peers showed that they held complicated and sometimes contradictory understandings of their educational environments. While respondents to both surveys sometimes repeated dominant ideas that put the blame on their peers, when they were more deeply interrogated about their answers, they often shared more complex understandings of racial power relations in their schools.

Discussion

The findings presented through this collaboration confirm Shedd's (2015) research that students attending highly segregated majority Black and Latinx neighborhoods and schools experience carceral and educational institutions, yet have a restricted cognitive frame to analyze their experiences with these institutions because of their location in highly securitized and spatially separate environments. We draw on Shedd (2015)'s analysis of how youth's perceptions of injustice are shaped by their racialized position. Students' lack of exposure to how

youth of different backgrounds are treated in schools and by police or school personnel shapes their views, as Power U's youth surveyors found. Shedd (2015) describes how Black and Latinx students in highly racially segregated and policed schools and neighborhoods are less likely to understand their individual and group disadvantage because they are not exposed to students in different conditions. Understanding that ideologies shaped by white supremacist neoliberalism influence students' perceptions of what they deserve and what they interpret as just from their experiences, we explore how these ideas show up in survey research within youth organizing and advocacy contexts. By figuratively reading on the margins (Stoudt, 2016), we have seen that policies that support white supremacist neoliberalism, such as punitive discipline policies and large police presence in Black and Brown schools, appear to be fair to students who do not have exposure to alternatives.

Similarly, the co-occurrences and silences in the YAASPA survey data highlight the ways that young people often do not explicitly use racism or whiteness as explanatory factors for educational inequities. When issues of power and inequity came up in these survey responses it was still laced with respectability politics. Bullying was mentioned frequently as one of the top three issues related to school experiences, but the comments around bullying were often laced with issues of respect, talking back, and judging people. These comments led staff to wonder about the underlying issues embedded in bullying and how the students were defining bullying for themselves. For example, we wondered if acts of racism are considered bullying by the students.

As researchers with deep lived and organizing experiences in the communities in which we conducted these surveys, we know that young people (and adults for that matter) often adopt the common sense ideas reflective of dominant ideologies of whiteness that they are taught in school. For example, neoliberal reforms to education—including the privatization of schools as well as the increased emphasis on punitive discipline—while appearing colorblind, have disparately negative impacts on young people of color according to our surveys. Yet respondents often explain these disparities in ways that blame individual students before structures of inequality. However, because of our experiences, we also know that when we challenge students to reflect and interrogate on how conditions like educational inequities arose, they draw on good sense ideas that demonstrate deep critical thinking skills and awareness of racialized power dynamics. Thus, the survey process including data collection and analysis can become an opportunity for consciousness raising. Because of our experiences working with young people through this process, we read survey responses with a critical eye and used the data to continue to have critical conversations to build on good sense ideas. Having a grounded knowledge of the communities in which we conduct research as well as a critical awareness of how white supremacist ideologies can create common sense that will impact responses is important to be able to make sense of data.

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Implications

While the organizing efforts of Power U and YAASPA provide hope and some lessons, the tensions noted above point to challenges for the field of researchers and organizers conducting YPAR. The tensions and silences arising from common sense ideas expressed in survey responses point to the ways that students' ideas about an issue might shift with further discussion. In conducting survey research with marginalized stakeholders and community organizers, researchers must critically interrogate what might be left out of the data and why. Attention to unexpected or seemingly contradictory responses, for example, can provide insight into some of these common sense ideas. YPAR and youth survey research that acknowledges the racism embedded within institutions but does not expose and work to undermine these systems threatens to reinforce these problematic common sense ideas.

Schools and organizations can support youth consciousness development by creating opportunities to interrogate and reconstruct ways to civically engage on terms that reflect their racial and cultural funds of knowledge. As educators, community organizers, and researchers, we must be cognizant of the ways neoliberal racism can be perpetuated and imposed upon Black and Brown youth. YPAR can be a way to challenge dominant ideologies when done with critical youth workers, educators, or organizers. As Hall and O'Shea, (2014) point out, opinion polls, like surveys, are "a tool in the struggle over common sense, rather than an objective reflection of it" (p. 16).

Surveys can give us a better understanding of the common sense ideas that are dominant in our communities. They can also give us seeds of 'good sense' which we can nurture with interrogation and deliberation. The process of interrogation and deliberation simultaneously functions to raise consciousness and to situate the survey question within a broader context, making it harder for neoliberal logics to dominate. In this way, organizers and researchers conducting YPAR can develop strategies to mitigate the effects of white neoliberal common sense ideas from distorting our assessments with youth, while also using these distortions as ways of understanding what dominant discourses need to be addressed through organizing and consciousness-raising efforts.

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