We Are Our Own Best Advocates: Latinx Immigrants Teaching And Learning For Their Rights

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We Are Our Own Best Advocates: Latinx Immigrants Teaching And Learning For Their Rights

Abstract
Alicia Rusoja
H. Gerald Campano

This practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) study examines the literacy, teaching and learning practices of Latinx immigrants’ organizing in the context of historically high anti-immigrant legal violence (Abrego & Menjivar, 2012) by the United States government. Informed by theories of de/coloniality (e.g. Mignolo, 2011), research decolonization (e.g. Smith, 1999/2012), literacy as sociocultural practice (e.g. Street, 1984), intergenerational learning (e.g., Gadsden & Hall, 1996), Latina/Chicana feminist epistemologies (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) and popular education (e.g., Freire, 1970/2007), this study involved systemic inquiry into my own and shared organizing practice at a grassroots immigrant-led Latinx organization over the course of one year. Methods included in-depth interviews of eleven Latinx immigrants with whom I shared an organizing practice, as well as documentation of our work through fieldnotes and photography.

A key finding is that Latinx immigrant communities organize for their rights by intergenerationally mobilizing literacies as critical social practices that facilitate what I term a “communal pedagogy of resistance”. This is an inquiry-based dialectic pedagogy that foregrounds communal being, expands our sense of who is part of our people, and leads to intermeshed action (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) for immigrant rights and for the larger dismantling of systems of oppression that affect all disenfranchised and racialized communities in the U.S. Another key finding is that practitioner inquiry can be a methodology to resist coloniality. Distinctively, this research also demonstrates that the organizing practice of Latinx immigrants is inquiry-based intergenerational educational practice.

As a whole, this study provides important insights for K-12, community-based and higher education practitioners. Among much else, this research makes the case for regarding Latinx immigrant children, youth, adults and families through deepened resource-orientations that acknowledge the complexity of the educational and literacy practices they must employ to resist oppression everyday. Similarly, viewing organizing through literacy and education lenses could be influential to organizers within and beyond the movement for immigrant rights. In all, this study provides a textured image of what resisting coloniality in research and in organizing entails from the epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997) of communities most affected by legacies and ongoing realities of colonialism and imperialism.

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WE ARE OUR OWN BEST ADVOCATES:
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Alicia Rusoja
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Dedication

Esta tesis está dedicada para... y es de (sin orden particular): Erick, Itzel, Boris y Fernanda, María, las Olivias, Lluli y Juan Carlos, Erika Guadalupe, Miguel, Jasmine, Yared y Erika. Usando las palabras de Galeano en su *Libro de Los Abrazos*: Ustedes son un mar de fueguitos con un fuego por dentro que arde con tanta pasión que no se puede mirarlos sin parpadear y quien se acerca se enciende! Cada palabra de este trabajo es para y de ustedes y toda la comunidad de Juntos.

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ABSTRACT

WE ARE OUR OWN BEST ADVOCATES:
LATINX IMMIGRANTS TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR THEIR RIGHTS

Alicia Rusoja
H. Gerald Campano

This practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) study examines the literacy, teaching and learning practices of Latinx immigrants’ organizing in the context of historically high anti-immigrant legal violence (Abrego & Menjívar, 2012) by the United States government. Informed by theories of de/coloniality (e.g. Mignolo, 2011), research decolonization (e.g. Smith, 1999/2012), literacy as sociocultural practice (e.g. Street, 1984), intergenerational learning (e.g., Gadsden & Hall, 1996), Latina/Chicana feminist epistemologies (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) and popular education (e.g., Freire, 1970/2007), this study involved systemic inquiry into my own and shared organizing practice at a grassroots immigrant-led Latinx organization over the course of one year. Methods included in-depth interviews of eleven Latinx immigrants with whom I shared an organizing practice, as well as documentation of our work through fieldnotes and photography.

A key finding is that Latinx immigrant communities organize for their rights by intergenerationally mobilizing literacies as critical social practices that facilitate what I term a “communal pedagogy of resistance”. This is an inquiry-based dialectic pedagogy that foregrounds communal being, expands our sense of who is part of our people, and leads to intermeshed action (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) for immigrant rights and for
the larger dismantling of systems of oppression that affect all disenfranchised and racialized communities in the U.S. Another key finding is that practitioner inquiry can be a methodology to resist coloniality. Distinctively, this research also demonstrates that the organizing practice of Latinx immigrants is intergenerational inquiry-based educational practice.

As a whole, this study provides important insights for K-12, community-based and higher education practitioners. Among much else, this research makes the case for regarding Latinx immigrant children, youth, adults and families through deepened resource-orientations that acknowledge the complexity of the educational and literacy practices they must employ to resist oppression everyday. Similarly, viewing organizing through literacy and education lenses could be influential to organizers within and beyond the movement for immigrant rights. In all, this study provides a textured image of what resisting coloniality in research and in organizing entails from the epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997) of communities most affected by legacies and ongoing realities of colonialism and imperialism.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My Story of the Question

I regard my life in Philadelphia as my life before and after Juntos. Though I was only actively a part of this organization during the last two years of almost seven years in this city, it is through my practice there that I made some of the most nourishing relationships I hold most dear in my life. Juntos is a small and mighty Latinx-led immigrant rights organization in Philadelphia. From organizing there as a Latina immigrant alongside fellow Latinx immigrants, I have learned fundamental lessons about what practices will work to destroy the cemented systems of oppression that trap humanity.

I have written most of this dissertation surrounded by pictures of Juntos leaders whom I love and miss greatly, and by the art and written cards we exchanged over my time there and since my move to Oakland, California. Through this study, I have gotten in touch with my and others immigrants’ facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). I define la facultad as the critical and oppositional consciousness and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997) that those of us at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) hold as a result of permanently living in the borderlands, which is a liminal space where those of

---

1 I have chosen to use the term Latinx, instead of “Latino” or “Latina/o” because I want to be inclusive of all the various identities that encompass this group of people, and because the communities who are part of this study used this term as part of their purposefully intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991) and intermeshing (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) activism. Thus, I borrow this term from writing conventions of writers with social justice ideologies who challenge the traditional male imposing term “Latino” and the cisgender-normative “Latina/o” and Latin@ (i.e., Johnson, 2015; Scharron del Río & Aja, 2015). I also use Latinx following the use of it by grassroots Latinx communities to whom I belong. In Chapter 4, I analyze how and why “Latinx” is used by Mijente and Juntos, both communities from whom I learned during the course of this research.
us caught in-between cultures, races, languages, genders, sexualities, lands and religions dwell and struggle as non-dominant/minoritized beings. In order to survive at the *borderlands*, we develop a unique critical and oppositional consciousness that gives us epistemic privilege into how oppressions work. I have felt this *facultad* infuse my own and our shared practice of learning and teaching to fight domination alongside each other, with our full hearts, full identities, and full power, in ways that highlight how bound our lives are to each other’s.

As a whole, this study tells many interrelated stories of what I call a “communal pedagogy of resistance,” which Latinx immigrants mobilize every day to defend their own and other’s rights. Writing and analyzing these stories has felt high-stakes. This is because this work holds stories of a place and a people I love and respect, whose narratives I want to do justice to and honor. Further, organizing is intricate and it is hard to concisely and clearly represent two years of complex practices into a bound document that argues something about our shared and my own work. There is so much left to untangle and discern. I feel honored to have had this treasured opportunity at Juntos to re-start an active journey of breaking down oppression alongside others, after a five-year burnout-induced-break from immigrant rights work.

When I moved to Philadelphia in January 2010, a dear friend, Geovanny, had been murdered less than a year before by a gang in Guatemala City. The gang members had demanded he give them the money they assumed he had as someone returning home from being an immigrant in the U.S. But Geo had spent it all in building the house in which the gang stood, and so they killed his brother to get him to give them the money.
When no money appeared, they killed him. Geovanny and his little brother left behind their elderly mother, one older brother and Geovanny’s young daughter, who had just enjoyed two weeks with him after not seeing him since she was three years old. Geo had been one of the first students in the evening English classes I taught as an 18-year-old volunteer and recent immigrant in Providence, Rhode Island. Geo was about my age, and over the next five years, with the English from our classes and the beautiful fire he had inside, he fought for his rights at work and elsewhere, leading protests and writing poems about life far from his family. We were good friends. He showed me radical education could fire up justice and yield change.

When I heard the news of his passing, I had just left my position as Education Director at English For Action (EFA), a popular education organization in Providence, Rhode Island that used language learning as a tool for immigrant communities to organize for their rights. The everyday work there had become very challenging for me, mainly due to the traps of the nonprofit industrial complex (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2007). The deep poverty and omnipresent weight of immigration raids and human rights abuses in the community where EFA worked had become very heavy on me. My health was deteriorating due to high levels of stress, and so I moved away from Providence.

Soon after, I heard the news of Geo’s death. The loss of Geo and the loss of EFA wounded me. I felt the needed to take space to inquire into how radical education could be a tool for bringing about a revolution that would stop the killing of so many brilliant and powerful activists and poets like Geovanny, a revolution that would not succumb to
nonprofit and interpersonal conflict. I was moved by the Reading, Writing and Literacy Program at Penn’s Graduate School of Education’s affirmation that education is a tool for equity and radical change, and so I began my masters’ studies there in January 2010.

Within my first two years in Philadelphia, I noticed Juntos in the local news, its grassroots leaders challenging local and national anti-immigrant legislation and advocating for the education rights of immigrants. The organization caught my attention not only because it was able to change local policy and protect undocumented immigrants in Philadelphia, but also because it self-identified as a popular education organization that conceptualized immigrant rights as human rights. Additionally, it seemed to be led by Latinx immigrants themselves. These features reminded me of EFA, and of Geovanny leading protests. Yet I remained generally distant from Juntos. I still needed to learn and heal from my past experiences at EFA.

Between 2012 and 2014, I applied for two different staff positions at Juntos: one as popular education curriculum developer and one as parent organizer (during the time of the massive public school closings in Philadelphia) but due to other commitments, and my ongoing hesitancy of burning out, I withdrew my applications both times. Still, I kept feeling drawn to Juntos. In Spring 2014, I attended a fundraiser for the organization. There, I met the staff of Juntos for the first time. At the event, undocumented immigrants spoke about their personal transformations as a result of their collective action to defend the dignity and humanity of immigrants. Being there reminded me of what I loved about working with others for immigrant rights.
Immediately after the event, I became a Juntos sustainer (making monthly donations). In early Fall 2014, I was able to meet for coffee with Erika, Juntos’s Executive Director, to talk with her about volunteering and, if they agreed and it seemed possible, doing my dissertation research in the context of the organization’s organizing. During our conversation that afternoon, Erika welcomed me as an intern in the organization. Later, she told me this was because I had shown great respect to my mother when her call had interrupted our meeting, which gave me a warm feeling about Erika (whom I have since learned also treats her parents with great respect), and about the kinds of relationships of care that I felt I would come to enjoy as part of Juntos’s community. I began volunteering for 8 hours each week in Fall 2014, sometimes spending more time than that. Starting in late Fall 2015, I spent a minimum of 16 hours at Juntos each week, writing grants, drafting a community-resource guide, translating documents, facilitating committee meetings when needed, and helping run community events and direct actions, among much else.

I decided to carry out my dissertation research with Juntos after some time volunteering that Fall of 2014, and after confirming with Erika that this would be welcomed by the organization. My formal research would not begin until the following year (Fall 2015) but as soon as we agreed I could do my research there, I began to take notes for myself about Juntos, and my own involvement there, that would eventually help me figure out what kind of study I wanted to do. At that time, I did not know exactly what my dissertation study questions would be yet, and I wanted them to arise organically from my everyday and shared practices there. As time passed, I felt I wanted
to carry out research that would be most useful to Juntos and that could contribute knowledge about Latinx immigrant communities, and about the practice of organizing, to fellow social justice educators, activists, and scholars.

My passion for understanding and contributing to the immigrant rights movement, particularly as carried out by Latinx communities, comes from being an immigrant myself, having moved to this country from Venezuela when I was twelve years old and having had a very challenging time adapting to life here as a racialized member of a minoritized community in the U.S. It also comes from my own experience as a popular education (Freire, 1970/2007) ESOL facilitator in mostly undocumented Latinx immigrant communities in this country.

Learning Freirean pedagogy and facilitating twice weekly ESOL classes that aimed to support learners in their own mobilizing of English to learn about, and organize for their rights, led me to know I was incredibly privileged. I understood that life in the U.S. as a recent immigrant could be much worse than I had experienced in my teenage years, particularly when a person is unable to obtain a visa to live long-term in the U.S. Through my work at EFA, I realized I had been very fortunate to have been moved to Miami, Florida, where public schools were filled with immigrant children from around the world. I understood I was very privileged, as well, because my older sister and my mother were both ESOL teachers during my first years here, and could help me with homework and further support me in learning English at home, while also ensuring I maintained my Spanish.
Additionally, the more I learned about ESOL learners’ life stories, such as Geovanny’s, of walking across physical borders and being discriminated against as a below-poverty-wage worker in Providence, the more I realized I had another type of privilege that would take me many years to fully grasp. My father, sister, mother and I had green cards and would eventually be able to obtain U.S. citizenship (I obtained mine midway through college). Further, though my grandmother was undocumented, and though we were a “mixed-status” family for our first seven years here until her passing, our lives as a family were not marred by daily deportation fears or labor abuse, or by the inability to return home to see loved ones -- among much else that I came to know as a participatory ESOL facilitator were tough challenges that undocumented and mixed-status families faced, and face still, every day in this country.

I have also realized, too, that I began volunteering in an immigrant community because I was searching for a new shared home, a place and means to process and heal the trauma and deep grief of migrating. Though our lives were vastly different, mainly given our documentation and class differences, the ESOL learners in my classes and I shared a lot as recent Latin American immigrants in the U.S.: the struggle of learning a new language and of being often judged for our accents as we learned English; the omnipresent soreness of missing home and loved ones; the anger, impatience and

---

2 The term “mixed-status” has begun to be used in social science research in the U.S. (see Dreby, 2015; Pallares, 2015) to refer to families and communities where members have different immigration statuses. In my case, my dad had not been able to include my grandmother (my mother’s mother) in his immigration paperwork, and so she lived with us for the first seven years of our lives in the U.S. as an undocumented person. Because she was already elderly and did not need to work to survive, and because my mom was able to include her in her health insurance, she did not face the often-prevalent everyday challenges undocumented people in this country face. Our family stopped being of “mixed-status” when my grandmother passed away in 2004.
grieving of surviving and growing in a wholly new place; the stress and sense of loss of not belonging, of living in-between and in what I later came to recognize as the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1999); the having to involuntarily undergo a racialization process by virtue of living here, of being immigrants, of not passing as or being white, and of having an accent when speaking English; the confusing, discomforting feelings that came between family members and communities as assimilation to U.S. culture was imposed by U.S. society, as well as the nostalgia and longing for what we were accustomed to and/or loved about a place far away from here.

The Larger Story and Significance of the Question

The healing that I have been seeking, through my participatory education practice in immigrant communities over the last fifteen years, is now foregrounded by a recognition and commitment to challenging the abuse and injustice that immigrants experience as a racialized and minoritized community in the U.S. This abuse is exacerbated by the inability of an estimated 11 million immigrants3 (Pew Research Center, 2014) to get immigration documentation due to criminalizing and nativist federal immigration laws and deportation policies. These include the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which was passed under the Clinton Administration, which (among much else) streamlines deportations to allow the government to deport certain immigrants without a court hearing of their case, and makes immigrants (including those with legal status) retroactively deportable for past

3 In my time organizing for immigrant rights, I have heard the number 14 million used by community members most often. The argument is that data sources for calculating the exact numbers per year cannot accurately attain this information given the reasonable fear that undocumented people have of sharing their immigration status in community surveys/census.
interactions with the criminal justice system (Gonzales, 2014), even if they have already served sentences for these. More recent policies also include President Obama’s deportation of 2.8 million people between 2009 and 2015\(^4\) (Gonzales-Barrera & Hugo Lopez, 2016), his administration’s reclassification of immigrants with traffic violations and small drug offenses as felons and as priorities for deportation, and a detention quota of 34,000 immigrants, including children, at all times during his presidency (Detention Watch Network & Center for Constitutional Rights, 2015). As a whole, the U.S. has deported more people in the last fifteen years than it has in all of its history as a nation (Gonzales, 2014 citing Winograd, 2013).

Under the current Donald Trump administration, these trends will only worsen. In the first three months of his presidency, Trump’s administration has expanded the definition of “criminal” as it applies visa and non-visa holding immigrants, so that all prior contact with the law (even if no charge or sentencing took place) deems any immigrant and/or legally classified “refugee” a priority for deportation (Medina, 2017). Using Executive Orders, Trump has banned entrance into the U.S. to people from seven Muslim-majority countries (Lalami, 2017). Though federal judges have halted full implementation of these bans, the White House has noted it will modify and re-instate a travel ban. Further, the government has already begun giving notices of land condemnation to landowners in Texas in order to build a border wall (del Bosque, 2017).

\(^4\) President Obama is widely known in immigrant communities as the “Deporter-in-Chief”. This is because in the years he was in office, his administration deported more people than any other U.S. administration in the history of the country, including more people than were massively “repatriated” in the 1920s and 1930s (Dreby, 2015), and more than all of the administrations’ deportation numbers between 1892-2000 combined (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2014).
Currently, about 13.5% of the U.S. population is immigrant (Zong & Batalova, 2017), defined as born outside of the U.S., and approximately less than half of it (48%) has U.S. citizenship (Pew Research Center, 2015). Further, immigrants and their U.S. born children make up 27% of the U.S. population (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Overall, current U.S. immigration policies, such as the ones noted above, criminalize or “attribute criminal characteristics to a targeted group…to win consent for legal violence” (Gonzales, 2014, p.4) against people for the sole act of migrating into the U.S. Thus, these policies facilitate continuous abuse in the lives of immigrants. Further, criminalizing discourses blatantly ignore the imperialistic foreign policies enacted by the U.S. and Europe, across their histories and through today, which every day force migrations to take place around the world.

Resisting the U.S. immigration policies (a few of which are delineated above), in Spring 2006, massive intergenerational immigrant rights demonstrations took place across 160 cities in the United States (Bloemraad, Voss & Lee, 2011; Gonzales, 2014). These marches – also known as the Mega Marches because an estimated 3.7 to 5 million people participated – voiced full opposition to the Sensenbrenner Bill (HR4437), which had passed in the House of Representatives of the 109th Congress in December 2005. Overall, the bill criminalized undocumented immigrants and anyone who helped them (including by providing water and food), and also included stipulations for strengthening 700 miles of fence along the southwestern border between the U.S. and Mexico (González, 2014; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Salas, 2008). Along with challenging the Sensenbrenner Bill, the marchers demanded public and legislative protection and

Among those protesting were an estimated 1 million young people, including children (Rauh, 2006), as well as adults across age groups and national origins (e.g., Cacho, 2008; Voss & Bloemraad, 2011). These features of the Mega Marches, organized primarily by the Latinx immigrant communities in the U.S., reflect a crucial aspect of the kind of organizing that has been taking place across documented and undocumented immigrant communities in the U.S over more than a decade: one carried out intergenerationally and coalitionally.

As scholars have pointed out (e.g., Gonzales, 2014; Tzintun, Perez de Alejo & Manriquez, 2014; Bloemraad, Voss & Silva, 2011), the Spring 2006 Mega Marches were successful in defeating the Sensenbrenner Bill yet they did not secure citizenship status, nor legal protections, for undocumented people in this country. Nonetheless, the momentum was built for continued intergenerational and coalitional organizing for the protection of all undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Since 2006, the movement has transformed from being represented in the mainstream by “immigration reformers” – or a “class of professional middle-class to affluent [documented] Latino brokers who mediate between the state and the broader base of working-class Latinos in society” (Gonzales, 2014, p. 9) and who speak for undocumented communities and focus solely on citizenship status – to being increasingly mobilized by a networked layer of smaller local grassroots organizations across the U.S.
These networks are led by undocumented communities who, with support from mixed-status and documented communities, advocate for their full human rights. The passing of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), as a short-term immigrant relief program (passed as an Executive Order in 2012 from then President Obama) for a selected group of undocumented youth, is an example of a legislative win that resulted from undocumented youth advocating for themselves. This shift in how the movement is led means that its mobilizing increasingly addresses (in coalitional manner) the issue of immigration status as it is impacted by, and impacts, other human rights issues affecting undocumented communities, such as educational access and equity, racial injustice and discrimination, and state and everyday violence based on gender and sexual orientation, among many others.

The immigrant rights marches and actions that took place in 2016, a full decade after the Mega Marches, reflect this transformation. For example, in the summer of 2016 the Democratic National Convention (DNC) was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There, an intergenerational march of over five hundred Latinx immigrants – along with allies from across the U.S., including Chicago, Arizona, Tennessee, Georgia and New Orleans linked through the Mijente and Not1More networks – marched for immigrant rights in downtown Philadelphia (Piette, 2016).

Just as in 2006, those marching in 2016 were children, youth and adults from across racial and cultural backgrounds. This time, however, this populous march had coalitional signs that reflected this rising transformation in the movement and said: “Black Lives Matter,” “Trans Queer Liberation,” “Felons are Our Families,” “Racial
Justice & Climate Justice!” “Defund the Police,” “Stop Deportations,” “Moratorium on Deportations Now!” and “Dismantle ICE.”

Along with signs and large banners, protesters in the DNC immigrant rights march carried mobile murals of intergenerational leaders of the immigrant rights movement in Philadelphia. Each mural showcased the profile of un/documentied immigrant leaders who, over the two years I have spent organizing with Juntos, have been participants in my study of organizing practices for immigrant rights.

Figure 1.1 Democratic National Convention Immigrant Rights Protest on July 29, 2016.

Figure 1.2 Mobile murals of Juntos members at immigrant rights protest in July 2016. All were painted collectively from local artist Michelle Angela Ortiz’s designs. All people visible in murals and pictures participated in my study. Not all of the murals that were made are included in this figure. Bottom left picture shows how the murals were turned into large posters for a subsequent protest in January 2017, as well.
Over the past two years, hundreds of Juntos members have carried out actions of civil disobedience, on their own and often in coordination with other organizations across the U.S., to call attention to immigrant rights as they intermesh (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) with other oppressions. This, plus the coordinated action at the DNC immigrant rights march with others advocating for a wide range of social justice issues, demonstrates that the struggle for immigrant rights is about human rights.

Months and years of intergenerational and coalitional organizing went into this one march, and the march was but one of hundreds of immigrant rights actions taken in this city and across the U.S in 2016. The daily behind-the-scenes practices that make these actions happen – which in this study I argue are practices that involve teaching, learning and literacy as a critical social practice (e.g. Street, 1984), as well as complex negotiations and relationships across identities and oppressions of those within and beyond the immigrant rights movement – have not been studied from within the field of education. Yet, as this study will show, understanding organizing practices as educational practices of intergenerational undocumented and documented Latinx immigrants can provide important insights for the practices of K-12, community-based and higher education practitioners and researchers. This is particularly the case given that recent estimates suggest a quarter of all children in the U.S. are first and second-generation immigrants (Child Trends Data Center, 2014) and that approximately 3.9 million K-12 students have at least one undocumented parent (Passel & Cohn, 2016).

Similarly, a deepened understanding of the intergenerational and coalitional practices of Latinx immigrants, through a literacy and education lens and in the context
of a small Latinx-led community organization in Philadelphia, can offer lessons to fellow organizers within and beyond the movement for immigrant rights, and most importantly, to those already involved at Juntos. Additionally, this research can be impactful for gaining a more complex understanding of how to collectively resist and bring about justice, through a lens of literacy and education, and from the perspective of communities most affected by the legacies and ongoing realities of colonialism and imperialism.

**Why the Focus on Latinx Immigrant Rights Practices**

It is important to note that I have chosen to learn from my own and shared practice alongside Latinx immigrant communities for a few specific reasons. First, I feel part of the Latinx immigrant communities in the U.S. However, as a documented, middle-class cis-gendered Latina, married to a cis-gendered non-Latinx man, I am not an insider to poor and/or undocumented Latinx communities, or to queer and trans Latinx communities. Thus, in many ways, I am both an insider in, and outsider to, the heterogeneous Latinx communities with which I learn about the practice of organizing for immigrant rights. I view this insider/outsider dialectic as a generative space for inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Second, an estimated 77% of the undocumented population in the U.S. was born in a Latin American country (Migration Policy Institute, 2014b). Further, Latinx communities in this country are disproportionately affected by deportations (Magaña-Salgado, 2014) in comparison to other undocumented communities here. In fact, in 2013 96.7% of all deportations were of Latinx individuals (Magaña-Salgado, 2014).
Additionally, the most severe anti-immigrant and racial profiling laws of the last decade in the U.S. have been enacted in states where Latinx immigrant populations are larger than other immigrant populations (Arizona, Alabama, Texas), a fact that has contributed to public discourse on undocumented migration associating Latinx immigrants, particularly Mexicans, with undocumented migration.

According to a 2014 joint report by The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, The National Day Laborer Organizing Network and The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, in recent times the “most deported individuals” (Magaña-Salgado, 2014, p.1) are Latinxs and “nearly one quarter of all Latinos personally know someone who was deported or detained by immigration authorities” (Magaña-Salgado, 2014, p. 1). In Pennsylvania (PA), the largest undocumented community is Latinx, specifically Mexican (26%) (Migration Policy Institute, 2014c) while in Philadelphia the Latinx undocumented population is the largest (36%) of the undocumented community (Migration Policy Institute, 2014a).

Finally, in Philadelphia there are few immigrant rights organizations and only one, Juntos, that clearly self-describes as a “popular education” and Latinx-led grassroots organizing community, both of these features directly relating to my academic and activist commitments. Given all this, studying the movement for immigrant rights in Philadelphia, PA from the perspective of Latinx immigrant communities’ engagement with a popular education organization, yields significant knowledge towards an overarching understanding of the literacies, pedagogies and organizing of the immigrant rights movement in the U.S.
Research Questions

As an immigrant Latina, popular education facilitator, immigrant rights activist, and literacy education scholar, I seek knowledge that is valuable to social justice movements and to K-12 and higher education practitioners, as well as knowledge that contributes to the wellbeing and protection of the lives of those most disenfranchised and minoritized in the U.S. and beyond. As a literacy scholar, I am particularly interested in the ways literacy is mobilized in out-of-school spaces to challenge or cement the status quo, and how it reflects the sociocultural knowledges of communities. I am drawn to understanding dis/connections between the literacy practices that are valued and privileged in formal schooling settings and the everyday literacies that disenfranchised communities mobilize in the protection of their rights. These dis/connections influence the life chances of minoritized and disenfranchised students and communities.

My interest in literacy and education, my commitment to social justice, and the privilege I have had in contributing to the organizing of Latinx immigrant communities in Philadelphia as a Juntos member since 2014, have facilitated my ability to carry out a practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) about my own and shared organizing practices as an immigrant rights activist. Thus, this study – from the location of my personal practice as a member of Juntos, in the context of a practice that is collective and dialectic – was guided by the following questions:
1. How do Latinx immigrants organize for their rights?

1.1. What are the literacy practices that Latinx immigrants mobilize in the process of organizing for their rights?

1.2. How do I, as a practitioner researcher, work alongside fellow Latinx immigrants to support their/our work for change?

The Context of Juntos

Juntos, which means “together” in Spanish, was founded in 2002 in South Philadelphia as a volunteer project by female clients of Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR). Juntos was founded as a response to the growing Mexican population in the area and its need for more diverse services. During its first year, Juntos was housed in donated space at the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in South Philadelphia. In the following four years, Juntos’s office moved to two other additional spaces, both shared with other community organizations. In Fall 2015, Juntos opened its own office with enough space to hold press conferences, art making, music workshops, legal clinics, committee meetings and movie nights. This is how Juntos describes itself:

Juntos is a community-led, Latinx immigrant organization in South Philadelphia fighting for our human rights as workers, parents, youth, and immigrants. We believe that every human being has the right to a quality education and the freedom to live with dignity regardless of immigration status. Juntos combines leadership development, community organizing, and focused collaborations with other community-based and advocacy organizations to build the power of our community members so they can be active agents of change and work against their own oppression. (Juntos’s Website, March 18, 2017)

Overall, Juntos engages more than 300 undocumented intergenerational Latinx members in South Philadelphia and Norristown, a town outside of Philadelphia with a
growing population of Latinx immigrants\(^5\) who have recently revitalized it. It is important to note that 90 percent of Juntos’s constituency and membership lives below the federal poverty line, and over 75 percent are undocumented (Juntos’s Case Statement, December 2014).

The formal structure of the organization in the close to two years I was a part-time intern (2012-2014) included: a full-time Executive Director (paid staff); a full-time Lead Organizer (paid staff); a full-time Youth Organizer (paid staff); one part-time intern (me); several high school interns (who were members of the youth committee and spent 3-4 hours in the office per week); a seven-person board; and six committees facilitated by staff, or co-facilitated between community members and staff. These committees were: (1) Fuerza (Juntos’s youth committee); (2) Immigrant Rights South Philadelphia; (3) Immigrant Rights Norristown; (4) LGBTQ (inactive for part of 2015-2016); (5) Parent/Education (inactive 2014-2016), and (6) Women’s Committee (founded in 2015 and currently inactive). The level of activity of each committee fluctuates depending on funding, staffing, and community-chosen campaigns. Often, people are members of multiple committees at a time, and often committees go to sleep for periods of time and later reactivate.

Importantly, Juntos never turns away anyone who comes to meetings or events, so whenever non-Latinx immigrants come to legal clinics to meet with immigration lawyers, seek guidance for cases of labor, housing or other abuse, etc., Juntos always welcomes

\(^5\) According to 2015 census data, “Hispanics” (the census term used to refer to Latinxs) make up 17.5% of the total population in Norristown (U.S. Census, 2015).
them. Thus, though the organization bounds itself as a Latinx organization, it does not reject people who do not identify as such. As this study will show, it also organizes with a commitment to ensuring other communities’ struggles are understood as related to ours.

As of March 2017, Juntos’s seven-person all-Latinx board has three undocumented or recently undocumented members; two immigrants who identify as queer and are both young leaders; four women; three men; one Latina immigrant residing in Norristown; two local Latina professors (I don’t know their demographic information); one Chicano who is originally from the U.S. southwest; and four people who are working-class (I don’t know the class status of the whole board). Five of the seven Board members are very active on committees and direct actions, and two of them (each undocumented or recently undocumented) participated in this study.

It is important to note that though the Board makes decisions about the logistical running of the organization (human resources, budgets, funding, etc.), it does not make decisions about which committees, campaigns, and workshops to start or what social justice directives to tackle. These decisions about committees, strategy, etc., are made by people active in committees in communication with staff. This is because staff has more funded time and resources to organize workshop series, campaigns, etc. However, staff overwhelmingly follows the directions and concerns of committee members.

This study focuses primarily on the organizing practices of committees, which are facilitated by staff with support from community members who organically step up to co-facilitate or lead particular projects and tasks of the committee. This research also pays
attention to the practices of these individuals who organically take leadership roles within committees.

When speaking to Yared – one of the young participants of the study whose practices and perspectives at Juntos are highlighted across this study’s chapters – about Juntos’s committees and the organization’s need to be bounded as a Latinx organization, she said:

I think when you have been so disempowered for falling under a specific identity group there’s a power to be found when you’re able to take that identity and build around it, in and of itself. It’s true that Latinos aren’t the only immigrants, but Latinos face racism in a different way than Cambodians may face racism, or than Black people may face racism, or than Asian Americans, or Chinese people, or Japanese people, or Vietnamese people might face racism. We all experience it differently and it’s really annoying [when] someone just shoves us all in one space and says, “You’re all immigrants. Your experiences are all the same. Go do something [together]”. Whereas if we’re each able to go into our own spaces, [and there] understand what unifies us through that identity group and then build our power in that [identity], and then pair that power with the power of other groups that have [also] been able to take that moment to reflect on themselves, to understand where the power in their identity is, [then we are able to] come back and unite those [identities] and find those powers [from our varied] immigrant identities… So, it’s like if you have a group of people that are all immigrants, you can be denying all the other little parts of that identity. Juntos is a Latino organization, but there are a lot of different identities within that [group] and that’s why we have different committees [that address different identities and oppressions]…As people show their needs, these [committees] grow into their spaces and people find that power [within] that identity. Then each group comes together and says, ‘here’s where we’re at’, ‘here’s what we need’, ‘let’s learn to support each other and come together’. So, yes, we are all humans but… we should not deny the things that make us different. (Interview May 6, 2016)

Yared’s words provide a complex rationale for Juntos’s organizing structure of committees. The structure is modeled after those of immigrant rights organizations in New Orleans and Los Angeles that are part of Juntos’s network of translocal organizations (this network is further explored in Chapter 4).
Yared’s insights show that Juntos recognizes the wide heterogeneity of Latinx communities and attends to it by facilitating the coming together of people based on differing identities and oppressions they identify as being of importance within the larger umbrella of being Latinx. This allows for people to have protected space to inquire into and draw power from particular aspects of their identities that shape their unique experiences of oppressions, and their related epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002). It also ensures that the larger work of the organization is attentive to not erasing non-dominant experiences of those who belong to the community. Committees arise from community members identifying their own needs for a particular space. Because people are part of different committees at once, and because people are in constant communication and building with each other through cross-committee events – like immigration clinics and workshops, campaigns to close down detention centers or stop the deportation of committee members, etc. – communal organizing across committee happens regularly.

However, as Yared points out, a committee structure based on named identities and oppressions gives Latinx immigrants the space to figure out what they need based on their unique and differing experiences, and from there be able to unite with others with a much more clarified sense of their needs, their epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) and their power. In many ways, Juntos’s decision to be a Latinx organization rather than a broad immigrant rights organization speaks to this same point Yared notes. As Latinx peoples, we do not experience oppression in the exact same ways other immigrants do. Thus, Yared’s explanation emphasizes the need for our Latinx
communities, as diverse as they are, to come together and figure out what it is about our
shared experiences that shape our knowledges and power and what it is that we need.
From there, we can work with other disenfranchised and minoritized ethnic communities
to engage in a dialectic across difference and experience.

One of the basic tenets for Juntos’s work, which the organization conceptualizes
as popular education (Freire, 1970/2007), is well reflected in the stance “Nothing About
Us Without Us.” This lema reflects the organization’s belief that the Latinx community
must be involved in the discussion and drafting of any laws and policies that will affect
them. Because the movement organizes on issues of immigration documentation, but also
on other issues that affect documented and undocumented Latinx immigrants, such as
education access and equity, queer and trans rights, racial justice, etc., “Nothing About
Us Without Us” refers to the need to involve whoever in the community is most affected
by any particular policy.

When I learned about this stance through Juntos, I thought about its serious
implications for research, as to me it also clearly demands that the community be
involved in shaping any research done about them, that they exert their “right to
research” (Appadurai, 2006). I write more about this stance in Chapter 2 but find it
important to here describe the organization as one with little tolerance for anyone
speaking for Latinx communities, particularly for undocumented people, if they are not
most affected by the issue about which they are speaking. Thus, Juntos is committed to
ensuring the immigrant rights movement is led by immigrants themselves, particularly by
undocumented immigrants.
In Appendix E, I present an abridged timeline of Juntos’s major campaigns since 2011, when Erika became its Executive Director, in order to present a sense of the organization’s scope of work in the last six years. During this time, the organization transformed from being a service provider (offering ESOL classes and information on resources for people to get help to fight daily abuse, for example) to being an organizing and popular education organization focused on protecting immigrant’s lives and rights. The timeline also notes when different participants in this study became involved and what campaigns they have communally organized.

An Overview of this Dissertation

Over the course of almost two years (2014-2016), I was a part-time organizing practitioner at Juntos working with fellow Latinx immigrants in the organizations to build power together to resist oppression and injustice and protect all members of our communities. Between 2015 and 2016 I was a practitioner researcher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This role involved my taking fieldnotes and photographs of my own and shared practice, collecting artifacts from our shared work, and interviewing a total of eleven Juntos members about their practices for immigrant rights (see Chapter 2 for details on Methodology and Methods).

Across the chapters of this study, I argue that Juntos Latinx communities organize for their rights by mobilizing literacies as critical social practices that facilitate what I term a “communal pedagogy of resistance.” This pedagogy brings about a communal sense of being and intermeshed action (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) to fight for Latinx
immigrant rights, and for the larger dismantling of systems of oppression that affect all racialized, disenfranchised and minoritized communities in the U.S. Through the inquiry-based dialectic process of engaging in a communal pedagogy of resistance, the movement’s common sense is changed and eventually yields a new political culture (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000). Across all chapters, the argument that practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) has the potential to resist coloniality is also put forth. Below, I provide a brief overview of each chapter.

Chapter 2 is guided by the main research and the secondary question: “How do I, as a practitioner researcher, work alongside fellow Latinx immigrants to support their/our work for change?” In this Chapter, I examine Juntos’s experiences with research/ers prior to and during my practice there, and I read these experiences through the analytical concepts of coloniality (e.g. Mignolo, 2011; Patel, 2016) and settler colonialism (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012; Walia, 2013). I also place theories of coloniality and of practitioner research in conversation, and posit that practitioner research is a methodology that humanizes research and can resist coloniality. Grounded on this argument, the chapter details this study’s methodology through an exploration of what taking an “inquiry stance” meant as a practitioner researcher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) at Juntos.

Chapter 3 addresses this study’s secondary research question: “What are the literacy practices that Latinx immigrants mobilize in the process of organizing for their rights?” as well as this study’s main research question. To do so, I review scholarship that informs my answering of this question. From there, I analyze stories of Latinx immigrants’ intergenerational mobilization of critical literacies (Knight et al, 2006; Freire
that involve music and art making in the context of the coalition #ShutDownBerks Campaign, as well as an intergenerational action of civil disobedience by Juntos members calling for a moratorium on all deportations.

This chapter argues that Juntos’s “communal pedagogy of resistance” is mobilized by the communities’ mobilization of literacy as critical social practice. As such, it provides insights into how literacy as a critical social practice is fundamental to organizing efforts that protect and advocate for immigrant rights. Because it is consequential that literacies and pedagogies at Juntos are mobilized across local, regional, and national arenas, this study presents instances from across these various spaces, beginning with ones enacted locally through Juntos. Therefore, Chapter 3 showcases key examples of Juntos’ critical literacies and “communal pedagogies of resistance” within the context of the Philadelphia area.

Chapter 4 is guided by the research questions examined in Chapter 2 and 3 and additionally examines instances of organizing practices that involve regional and national teaching, learning and coalitional relationship building. In doing so, it specifically analyzes how communal pedagogies of resistance – and the critical and coalitional literacies (Campano et al, 2013) that facilitate them – address the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and intermeshing (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) of identities and oppressions in and across local and translocal communities. This chapter demonstrates that engaging a “communal pedagogy of resistance” means figuring out – through dialectics from and across our differences as organic intellectuals of our movement and as people at the borderlands with unique facultades (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) – how to
make transformations to our movement’s common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000),
with an ultimate goal of transforming the larger common sense of society.

Together, Chapters 3 and 4 provide a big picture of how literacies and pedagogies
across generations, locations and communities are mobilized by Latinx immigrants in the
process of organizing for their rights. In this study’s conclusion (Chapter 5), I review and
discuss its findings, providing additional insights resulting from this work and its possible
directions.
CHAPTER TWO: PRACTITIONER INQUIRY TO RESIST COLONIALITY

As members of Juntos, María and her young daughter, Itzel, arrived early the morning of the all-day human rights convening and tribunal that Juntos would be co-hosting with two local organizations: one organizing for the rights of South East Asian refugees and one for the rights of all public students in Philadelphia. As soon as she arrived, María helped me organize the simultaneous interpretation equipment that community volunteers and I would use to ensure the whole event was accessible to Spanish, Khmer and English speakers alike.

As she helped me, one of the volunteer interpreters arrived, and he and María started talking to each other. He mentioned he was from Latin America, had been teaching indigenous languages for many years, and felt a great passion for language rights. María told him she came from a village where the indigenous language Otomí had been spoken for centuries. She explained that over time most of it had gotten lost, with only the elders in her community speaking it now. She mentioned that her mother and father speak Otomí to each other and that her mother wished the language was spoken widely, as it used to be, and not in the dialect that remained now.

As they spoke, I remembered María once told me her mother had been part of a study on her community’s indigenous culture and language. I later learned the study had been made into a bilingual (Spanish-Otomí) book, a copy of which they kept in their house. María had a second copy of the book and she felt proud her mother’s stories were in it. At the same time, she knew the book had stories about the women’s lives (including her mother’s) that her mother felt ashamed by and wished had not been published in the
manner they had been. Her mother also told María that she felt she had been misled by the researchers, who had told her they would write “a book about the village’s stories so that people who read about them would not think they were ignorant and so that they would be respected” but the book had ended up including anonymous stories of abuse as recounted by these indigenous women (Member check with María, March 17, 2017).

When I asked Maria more about this instance to ensure my accuracy of retelling of it here, Maria showed me the book, and I noticed the women’s stories were written in Spanish and Otomí. María’s mother told her the Otomí in the book was not accurate, and that she felt ashamed by the stories’ portrayal of abuse and suffering. She also mentioned to María that many whose stories were in the book could not read and so the book was not accessible to them.

María’s mother had not known the stories would be laid out this way until she received two copies of the published book. She did not share the book with any of her children as a result of the shame she felt. She only shared it with María because she is “outspoken about women’s rights”, and so she thought her daughter would “not criticize the book” (Member check, March 17, 2017). María expressed to me that she sympathized with her mother’s concerns and did feel the village elder women had been “abused by the researchers because they should have asked them if how the stories would be in the book was okay and ensure they felt okay” (Member check, March 17, 2017). At the same time, María felt proud the women had finally told stories they had never shared publicly and she felt grateful to have these stories documented. Even as they were difficult, María hoped they would be useful to the next generations of people in the village to know about
the abuses women had experienced in the past and work harder to treat women as equal to men.6

Maria’s story, which recounts her community’s loss of Otomí, and of her mother and their indigenous community being studied by outside researchers—including the fact that such study elicited community responses of deep shame juxtaposed with pride and hope—provides a window into how the complex logics and structures of colonialism (i.e., coloniality) can be asserted by research, from colonial times through today. As a whole, the story illuminates the legacies of colonialism, specifically in the life of someone who decided to participate in my study with her children, and whose family and community have been researched for a long time in ways that have replicated colonial power dynamics. This story is also about the loss of Otomí, a language lost due to the violence of colonialism. It is a story that has made me ask myself, throughout the course of this study, questions about the possibilities of my research not replicating coloniality logics. How am I fully respecting María’s wishes, humanity and power—as well as those of all others at Juntos who generously joined this research with me—as I study their, my own, and our shared practices of organizing for immigrant’s rights?

In this chapter, I tell the story of how the study I carried out as a member of Juntos came to be, how its context has shaped it, as well as what its methodology and related methods have entailed and why. In doing so, this chapter theorizes what it means to do practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) in a community-organizing context, and to do so in opposition to colonial logics and legacies (e.g. Mignolo, 2011)

6 After I finished writing up this vignette about her mother’s story in March 2017, I sent it to her translated into Spanish, and in its original version in English, to ensure my retelling of it for this chapter was accurate. She approved of the paragraphs written here about it.
related to the practices of research, such as those presented in the story above. Centrally, this chapter posits that practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) has the potential to uniquely address calls for the humanizing (Paris & Winn, 2014) and decolonizing (Mignolo, 2012; Patel, 2016; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012 Walia, 2013) of research.

The chapter is divided into four sections. I begin by examining the experiences with outside research/ers that Juntos had prior to and during my time as a practitioner researcher in this organization. Here I explore the beliefs that Juntos community members have about research in relation to, and beyond, these experiences, and how these relate to coloniality. I begin with this examination in order to provide a rich context and analysis for how my study became and remained possible in this site, and to emphasize that the call for humanizing and decolonizing research practices very much comes from those in grassroots communities who are most affected by inequity, injustice, and the existence of traditional top-down research that asserts colonial logics.

In part two, I think through the specific components that would make a research project one that resists coloniality (e.g., Mignolo, 2011) and therefore one that engages in decoloniality (Patel, 2016; Paris & Winn, 2014; Walia, 2013). This examination is important because it sets the stage for being able to think through and see how practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) can be an activist methodology that humanizes research and resists colonial logics.

In the third section, I present how I understand and take up practitioner research
or practitioner inquiry\(^7\) as a theoretical framework and methodology (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) that can resist colonial logics. This decoloniality-related conceptualization of practitioner research is influenced by feminist epistemologies (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012; Harding, 1986; hooks, 1994; Lorde, 1989); postpositivist realism (Campano, 2007; Hames-Garcia, 2011; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) and theories of coloniality, decoloniality and settler colonialism (e.g., Mignolo, 2011, 2012; Patel, 2016; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012; Walia, 2013), particularly in relation to education research and community organizing.

In the fourth section of this chapter, I explore how I carried out practitioner research in the Juntos context, specifically how the concept of being a “practitioner researcher” and the framework of an “inquiry as stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) were central to acknowledging and resisting coloniality during the course of this study. In final section of this chapter, I discuss the methods of this study as shaped by its “practitioner research as methodology to resist coloniality” framework and methodology. I close with a brief exploration of the implications of this chapter.

As a whole, this chapter aims to establish both the methodological framework and methods for this study; to theorize practitioner research through the lens of de/coloniality and in the context of community organizing, and to begin a thread that carries across all the chapters that demonstrates how systematic inquiry (i.e., the taking of an “inquiry stance”) is fundamental to decolonizing practices of researching and organizing.

\(^7\) In this study, I use the terms practitioner inquiry and practitioner research interchangeably. I do this to follow Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle’s example of referring to this methodology by interchangeably using “inquiry” and “research” when addressing it, and therein claiming that systematic inquiry done by practitioners is research.
Part I: Juntos’s Experiences with Outside Research/ers

From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. (Smith, 1999/2012, p.2)

A year into my time volunteering with Juntos and very early into the data collection phase for this study, I sat in the middle backseat of Juntos’s Executive Director Erika’s jeep, as she drove Jasmine (Juntos’s Lead Organizer at the time), Yared (Juntos’s Youth/Fuerza Organizer at the time), a Fuerza youth member and me to Philadelphia’s City Hall. We drove from Juntos’s office in south Philadelphia, after having packed the car with a dozen hand-made banners and a loudspeaker. It was the middle of November 2015 and then Philadelphia mayor, Michael Nutter, had just announced that he would be reinstating Philadelphia police’s collaboration with immigration authorities. His doing so meant that he would be rolling back the Executive Order he had signed back in April, 2014, which had resulted from the groundbreaking organizing of the Philadelphia Family Unity Network (PFUN) Coalition, which had fought very hard to end police and immigration authorities’ collaboration. Juntos was part of this coalition, and along with the rest of its members, had drafted the legislation Nutter signed into law through his Executive Order, making Philadelphia a city with one of the most progressive legislations against ICE and police collaboration in the U.S. As a member of PFUN, today Juntos would be meeting the rest of the coalition, as well as others who supported its goals, and holding a press conference outside of City Hall to challenge Mayor Nutter’s imminent action to rescind his Executive Order.
As we drove, Erika played music that got us pumped for the action, and updated us on recent developments related to the organization’s work. One of her updates was about another university student reaching out to her to see if Juntos would allow him to do his thesis on the organization’s work. Jasmine, Yared and Erika did not seem thrilled about this possibility. Erika emphasized that she would not be welcoming anyone to carry out research at the organization and added, “with you [referring to me] it is different but I just don’t think this could work with anybody else” (Fieldnotes, November 16, 2015). I responded with something like “thank you,” but I did not have a chance to inquire further because we were arriving at City Hall and needed to move quickly to get things out of the car to set up while Erika found parking and joined us.

I remember that moment vividly, when I heard Erika say that a research relationship could not work with anybody else. I felt both pleased and honored that I was welcomed and that there was something special about our relationship. At once I also felt worried. I worried about messing up this delicate relationship; about imposing my research without meaning to; about intruding into people’s lives and practices in discomforting ways for them; about taking too much time from people at Juntos and away from the organizing for something that I felt could easily be seen as an activity that would benefit me most, even when I sought to do this study in a manner that prioritized benefits to Juntos. This critical incident I describe left me wanting to know more about the organization and its members’ experiences with research. What informed the staff’s hesitance to welcome university researchers to the organization and their willingness to allow me in? What was the context and experience of research at Juntos and where would my study fall within it? How might these experiences and conceptions shape my study
and in turn be shaped by it?

A year and four months after beginning to volunteer at Juntos, I began conducting interviews for my study. In them, Juntos members shared why I was welcomed to do my study with the organization, why they decided to participate in the research, and in some cases what they thought about research itself. Their answers, which I explore below, are a reminder that no research takes place in a vacuum and that no research is neutral. Instead, those who participate in it have prior experiences and conceptions of it that are personal, but that also derive from communal and historical experiences with research/ers and universities. These experiences influence the reasons and the way people participate and/or do not in research. Thus, I begin this chapter by providing a detailed picture and analysis of Juntos’s experiences with researchers prior to and during my time as a practitioner researcher there. As I do so, I explore how these experiences illuminate the existence of coloniality, a concept that frames this chapter and that I define below. I hope the picture I set up in the first part of the chapter contextualizes why and how I carried out practitioner research as methodology, while also setting the stage for exploring the coloniality-resisting potential of practitioner inquiry in community organizing contexts.

*A Note on Coloniality*

Before exploring Juntos’s experiences with research/ers, it is important that I first define how I understand coloniality, as this is a central term explored in this chapter in relation to Juntos’s experiences and the role of research in asserting or resisting coloniality. In “Decolonizing Western Epistemology / Building Decolonial Epistemologies” (2012), Latin American philosopher Walter Mignolo, defines coloniality
as “a colonial matrix of power…which is more than colonialism and more than capitalism… both of which are generally constitutive of what is generally understood as Western civilization” (p. 21). He further defines it as “a matrix for management, and control of the economy, authority, knowledge, gender, sexuality, and subjectivity” that is “constitutive of modernity”, meaning that “there is no modernity without coloniality” (Mignolo, 2012, p. 24-25).

Exploring this same concept in her recent book *Decolonizing Educational Research: From Ownership to Answerability* (2016), education scholar Leigh Patel defines coloniality as “perpetuating and refreshing colonial relationships among people, practice and land” (p. 12). Providing more detail into what this means and how this happens, Patel (2016) shares how Caribbean scholar Sylvia Wynter has defined this term:

Wynter (2003) describes coloniality as core to the centuries-long projects of delineating statuses of humanity, and from those categories of human and not, the ability to own land and others. Coloniality has kept stable the core project of material domination, whether through religious- or state-defined delineation of worth (p.6).

Taking up these complementing definitions, this study views coloniality as a Eurocentric, hegemonic and omnipresent colonial logic (inseparable from modernity) that controls and structures our raced, classed, gendered and classed relationships to each other (and thus, our social locations), as well as our relationships to power, to the land and this earth, to knowledge, to borders, to economies, and more. I see coloniality as a concept that explains the origins and continuing sustenance over time of white supremacy
in the United States, and therefore of inequity more broadly. It is important to note that I do not view coloniality as inhibiting the agency of those minoritized and disenfranchised through its existence. In fact, this study and this chapter’s focus on agency and its possibilities for decoloniality will explore the multiple ways that decoloniality is reachable.

Returning back to the opening quote of this chapter by indigenous (Maori) scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012) and to the opening vignette, I believe that traditional research played a key role in facilitating and strengthening colonialism. Relatedly, I believe that today mainstream educational research continues to sustain colonial logics and relationships (i.e. coloniality), as well as the physical ongoing coloniality practices recognized in the concept of “settler colonialism” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012; Walia, 2013).

Through the lens of settler colonialism, coloniality is seen as being not just about colonial logics but also real, ongoing and violent Eurocentric settlement of land, as well as about the displacement of Indigenous and non-Eurocentric epistemologies, ontologies, identities and relationships by Eurocentric epistemologies and whiteness. Settler colonialism is a violent structure that refers to settlers making a permanent home, life and society on colonized lands through ongoing imposition of their sovereignty (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012). Ensuring this permanent colonial logic and physical control requires the reconfiguration of all human relationships with land (so that land and natural resources equal wealth and therefore are owned by settlers); with knowledge (so that Eurocentric epistemologies are superior and objective, and so that knowledge is owned by individuals and its production involves competition and is rewarded with capital); with
other human beings in a manner that positions settlers as superior, natural and exemplary, and where other human beings with non-dominant positionalities and identities (e.g., Indigenous, Black, brown, queer, female, differently abled, and non-Christian) are perceived as “unnatural, even supernatural” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012, p. 6).

The concept of settler colonialism facilitates my seeing how and why racialization, gendering, othering and deficitizing continue to take place today and that these processes are fundamental to coloniality. In a settler colonial context, such as the one we inhabit in the United States, “colonial subjects who are displaced by external colonialism, as well as racialized and minoritized by internal colonialism…occupy and settle stolen Indigenous land” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012, p. 7). Though I do not believe that any land on this earth belongs to any person or group of people, or that anyone has more of a right to own or live on any particular land, recognizing settler colonialism as a physical aspect of coloniality leads me to consider that I, even as a racialized and minoritized immigrant, am implicated in the epistemic and physical violence that everyday exterminates Indigenous peoples’ legacies, knowledge, relationships, histories, lands and livelihoods in the U.S.

Settler colonialism disrupts many assumptions for me. It shows me that every single person is implicated in coloniality. It forces me to grapple with complex structures and relationships between people, and between people and the land, in a manner that is far more expansive and intricate than simply dividing ourselves into oppressor and oppressed, or countering easily recognizable aspects of colonialism. It forces me to recognize decolonization not simply in relation to logics, but also physical terms. It forces me to consider how research methodologies and organizing practices that work
towards decolonization could work towards epistemic and physical change.

Through the analysis of Juntos’s experiences with research/ers below, I argue that these experiences reflect the existence of coloniality (and inherent in it settler colonialism). These experiences also highlight the fact that research is not neutral when it comes to asserting or challenging coloniality. The section that follows demonstrates that traditional research is shaped by coloniality and in turn, reasserts it. It will also show how Juntos’s community members are critically aware of coloniality’s existence, and that they actively resist it through their responses and engagements with research/ers that reach out to Juntos. The rest of this study’s chapters will show Juntos members work to resist coloniality (and in doing so, settler colonialism as well) through their organizing practices.

*Acknowledging Power in Research Relationships*

Most of the interview responses that people gave for why they chose to participate in my study pointed to their desire to enact reciprocity for my volunteer activist work within the organization. At the same time, multiple responses reflected histories and expectations for power imbalances between university-based researchers and the communities they researched. For example, Erick, a then 13-year old Fuerza member, which is the youth committee at Juntos, emphasized how his choice to join my study was influenced by his mother’s (who also joined the study) belief that this was a unique and rare opportunity for him and his family to be in a relationship with someone “important from a university”, “someone who could be of support to a family” (Interview, March 30, 2016). His response reflects the power differential that has and
continues to be present between universities and disenfranchised communities, where
those at the university are often perceived (by others but also self-perceived) as
“important” and able to uniquely wield a kind of power unavailable to others outside of
this location. Often, it is this kind of power that sends the message to society that
academics are more important than community members who lack higher
education/researcher status, or that academics are best and/or uniquely positioned to
support communities due to their superior knowledge and expertise. This is also often the
kind of power that allows academics to enter communities to carry out research in the
first place. This is an understanding of and engagement with power resulting from
coloniality, or colonial logics.

At his young age, Erick is already aware that a researcher from the university is
regarded differently in the world than how he and his family are perceived. His desire to
access this power and to establish a connection with someone who could “help a family”
as a result of their location within the university is void of cynicism. In fact, it is strategic
and wise. From knowing them across multiple settings, I know that he and his mother
hold high regard for the value of education and higher education. I believe his comment
reflects their strategic desire to establish a strong link with a higher education institution,
as they believe that doing so could enhance their social capital (Bourdieu, 1973), and
perhaps therein “help” Erick’s chance to access an educational institution that could open
doors for them to access the knowledge and relationships housed there. This could
possibly lead to more highly regarded educational, professional and social opportunities
for the whole family.

At the date of our interview, I had known Erick for more than a year and a half
because he had been part of a participatory action research (PAR) project with my academic advisor at Penn and our research team, and we had committed to nourishing an ethical relationship with his family and their communities. I had also known Erick’s mom, María, for almost four years, since she had been an ESOL student in a 2012-2013 class that I had co-facilitated in the community as part of the research with my advisor. Over time, she and I have developed a strong friendship through our shared activist work at Juntos. Given Erick and his mother’s ongoing relationship with me and my advisor, I understand why he did not feel (or express) concern about the possibility of a university researcher taking advantage of him and his family. As previously stated, I also understand that his comment about me being “important” by virtue of being an academic is crucial in that it reflects a mainstream (coloniality-infused) discourse about academics and higher education institutions being centrally important in our society.

I also know that, unfortunately, participating in research studies does not often lead participants to newly opened paths to access higher education (along with the knowledge, social capital and general power held there). However, the assumption or hope that this could happen, which is reflected in his answer about his family’s desire to establish a relationship with someone “important from a university” or “someone who could help a family”, is sustained by a power differential between researchers/higher education institutions and everyday communities. In some ways, regardless of how strategic (and incredibly generous) his family’s choice to participate in my study is, the truth is that their involvement cannot be guaranteed to yield access to higher education or its knowledge, power or social capital, or to ensure my ability to “help” their family from within my location as a researcher.
The power imbalance that Erick acknowledged between our different positionings in society made, and still makes me, very uncomfortable. From this discomfort and from my inquiries into this discomfort, I feel moved in my work as a scholar and as a grassroots activist to further understand and address the fact that historical and recurrent power imbalances between researchers and communities – resulting from colonialism, racism, capitalism, sexism, and colonial logics overall – clearly and presently shape the possibility, process, expectations, and outcomes of this, and any, research study.

Though I do not want to be seen as “someone important from the university” because I do not believe someone from this location should have more power than those outside, I am a researcher from the university as much as I am an immigrant activist at Juntos. Further, I acknowledge that I am at once both an insider and outsider to both locations, and how I exist in one place impacts the way I exist in the other. This dualism, tension and complexity are epistemically generative and are important parts of the context of this study. My work cannot be disassociated from the history and reality of colonialism and imperialism, or from coloniality, as those systems relate to knowledge production, uses and abuses of power, the (re)production of the status quo (Bourdieu, 1973), and related disenfranchising and minoritizing of communities locally and beyond (now and across time).

Acknowledging and Attending to Dehumanizing Research

Much like Erick’s expression of trust in me, several people in the interviews I carried out highlighted that other community members whom they trusted had joined my study. This development, in addition to the fact that I am an active member of Juntos,
sent a positive signal to them about my research. This was true for Yared, a 22-year-old Juntos staff member who had been with Juntos for almost two years at the time of our interview and whose family is of mixed-status. Notably, in our conversation she expressed strong cynicism about research/ers in a manner that further strengthened the significance of Erick’s explanation for being part of my research. Yared’s words reminded me of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999/2012) opening quote for this chapter about the connotation of the word “research” and its colonial and imperialist history in minoritized and disenfranchised communities.

I hate when academics come in and tell us, this will be really good for you. I’m like, “What the hell do you know about what’s good for us?! You’ve never even been here, you just have this understanding...” It’s very rare that I trust an academic. Because I feel like it’s just subjectifying our people for books and papers people don’t even read. But I saw that Jasmine and Erika...they trusted you. And I was like, alright, she must be a good person. And then I saw you were continually active at Juntos things. Because Juntos turns down a lot of people who are like, “I want to write a paper”, “I want to do a study”, “Can I talk to someone?” because they haven’t been doing anything at Juntos. I’ve seen you be around...to the point where I am like “I feel like Alicia actually supports Juntos” and I’m willing to support what you’re doing as well. (Interview, May 6, 2016)

Yared’s words speak to the power differential Erick alluded to, but whereas his perception of this imbalance is positive, hers is strongly negative. She is willing to be part of my study but wisely only after carefully examining other trusted community members’ relationship to me, as well as the priorities reflected by my practices at Juntos. She examined me and my research practice in light of how other people who have sought to do research at Juntos have behaved in their attempts to access the community, as well as how she has experienced researchers treating her and fellow community members. In many ways, she is challenging the discourse that Erick and his family have taken up or strategically engaged. She does this challenging by valuing her experience and seeing it
as epistemically productive (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002). She chooses to trust me but has very important reasons to choose not to.

Like the indigenous communities that Smith refers to in her book Decolonizing Methodologies (1999/2012), Yared is cynical about researchers and research. She is concerned with what she calls the “subjectifying” of community members for the sake of the creation of academic products (i.e., “books and papers”) that advance the careers of academics yet are inaccessible and/or not useful to the very people whose work and experiences made them possible (i.e., “books and papers that people don’t even read”). Yared’s word choice, “subjectifying,” is highly significant: it speaks both to “subjecting” a person and community as well as “objectifying” them at the same time. Separately and together, these verbs speak to actions that are dehumanizing in nature.

Yared’s emphasis on the harm that research can do is one that literacy scholar Molly Blackburn (2014) addresses when she says a person and community can be “made less human by having their individuality, creativity, and humanity taken away, as when one is treated like a number or an object” (p. 43). Yared complexly names this damaging objectifying practice while also denouncing researchers’ ability to “subjectify,” or what could be understood as the ability to “dehumanize through the act of research” (Paris, 2011, p.11, as cited by Blackburn, 2014, p.43). She theorizes from experience a new term, “subjectifying,” which is a concept born out of her recognition, and use, of her epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997, Moya, 2002) to make sense of the world. She mobilizes her experiences (Moya, 2002), and those of others whose “subjectification” by research she has witnessed, to shape her/their ways of knowing the nature and risks of research and to name and define a common impactful experience.
By virtue of her decision to trust me and be part of my research, Yared recognizes that not all researchers and not all research by default leads to dehumanization. However, her noteworthy response carefully delineates what kinds of practices make research humanizing, and allows me to learn that her experiences at Juntos have overwhelmingly been with research that dehumanizes. Additionally, her willingness to work with me tells me there is something about my methodology, as a practitioner researcher, that is sensitive and responsive to these subjectifying experiences that are part of Juntos’s reality and history. This is so because Yared’s trust in me does not solely derive from the fact that others trust me. It also comes from the fact that I am a practitioner at Juntos, just as she is, and that my engagement in the organization prioritizes Juntos.

**Coming to Terms with Research Histories and Realities**

While interviewing Jasmine – a U.S. born child of immigrants and then 29 year old staff member at Juntos, who by the time of our interview in March 2016 had been with the organization for almost three years – I learned more about Juntos’s experiences with dehumanizing research, and about the relationship between dehumanization and coloniality. This is a relationship that contextualizes how something like the act of “subjectifying” could take place. As we spoke about these community experiences at and beyond Juntos, and about my commitment to carry out research that responded to these experiences and was not dehumanizing, Jasmine stated, “I think it’s also an opportunity for you to bring something different to research. Because, to tell you the truth, research traditionally is steeped in so much white imperialism” (Interview, March 21, 2016).

Though our conversation veered towards how exactly I was carrying out research
in a manner that was not reflective of white imperialistic ideology – which is something I delve into in the next section of this chapter – we did go back to this point during a second interview less than a month later. In this subsequent conversation, we discussed our experiences with research that reflected this relationship between white imperialism and dehumanizing research. As part of our talk, I brought up that National Public Radio (NPR) had recently published a piece online, widely shared on public media, that showcased research that argues Latina immigrant mothers in the U.S. do not talk as much as white mothers do with their toddlers, and that therefore, Latinx children go to school knowing fewer words than their white counterparts, and therein are less cognitively developed. I expressed my anger to Jasmine about research that claimed that my mother’s practices and the practices of fellow Latina immigrant mothers had caused developmental challenges in their children. I stressed what I considered to be clearly dehumanizing aspects of this study by rhetorically asking the researchers, “Are you saying that our parents don’t talk to us? Are you serious? Are we like animals?... not talk[ing] to each other?” In response, Jasmine added her analysis of this research as racist through her own rhetorical questions: “Are you kidding me? Way to be real freaking racist!” (Interview, April 7, 2016).

Her clear articulation of the racism inherent in this study’s dehumanizing and imperialistic argument – which claims that our Latina mothers do not engage as much as their white counterparts in the communication practices that literally distinguish humans from other, less developed animals, and that, therefore, our mothers induce long-term damage in the development of their children – fully reflects the weight of Jasmine’s earlier argument that “research traditionally is steeped in so much white imperialism”
(Interview, March 21, 2016). Important to note however is that Jasmine is not making a blanket statement about all research and all methodologies. This is clear from her choice to include the distinction “traditionally” to refer to a pattern within mainstream research across time, and to name the existence of “traditional” or “mainstream” research. Though this is not an entirely generalized statement, her insight is extremely valuable because it highlights that there is a well-established tradition of and support for this type of research. It also raises the questions: What research is popularly accessible to people, through social media and formalized public schooling, as well as outside of academic journals meant for fellow academics? What percentage of all research is, in fact, challenging of white imperialist assumptions, and how does this subset of the scholarship reach everyday communities? What power and influence do the most publicized mainstream pieces have in contrast with less traditional critical research pieces?8

Though there were critiques of this NPR piece by education scholars, those unfortunately did not make their way into social media. This fact highlights the role that media plays in facilitating how particular research methodologies and research findings that reproduce the status quo or colonialist logics are more widely accessible to everyday communities than alternative, non-deficitizing research. This also shows us the role that media plays in sustaining coloniality. Though educational research is not purely one thing, the fact remains that traditional or mainstream research does not challenge colonial logics and that it can easily function to assert coloniality.

Thus, this NPR article provides us with an example of some of the ways in which

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8 These are not questions I address in this study but they do highlight the importance of delving into the role of media, particularly social media, in facilitating everyday communities’ access and engagement with research.
“educational research is often complicit in a system that normalizes the achievement and wealth of some while pathologizing and marginalizing others” (Patel, 2016, p. 26). It also provides us with insights about why “populations disenfranchised at the hands of formalized schooling typically look to themselves first to explain their lower status…[in] a process of internalization…. [where they] come to see themselves as damaged” (Patel, 2016, p. 26 explaining Eve Tuck’s (2009) argument). Specifically, a logical next step for Latina mothers and/or educators of Latinx children to take after reading this NPR piece is to privilege white mother’s practices and look down upon and/or shame Latina mothers’ practices.

Although neither Jasmine nor I use the term “coloniality”, I realize as I analyze this interview that we are constantly grappling in our conversation with is existence, effects, and relationships. Like Yared, Jasmine utilizes her facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) to recognize that research is always entangled in coloniality. Once again, though Jasmine does not employ this scholarly term, she clearly refers to its existence and to traditional research’s role in sustaining it.

**Whose Knowledge Counts?**

Extending our analysis of the NPR piece, Jasmine brought up an experience she had during the time Juntos was organizing against the closings of public schools in predominantly minoritized and of color communities in Philadelphia in 2013. This example also demonstrates a relationship between white imperialism and research, or
coloniality and research. In organizing to stop the school closings, she and others from the community attended a public discussion on the matter that positioned an outside researcher as an expert. She explained:

[we were] talking about the state of public education … there was this is a guy, who is not from Philly, and [who] was doing this ridiculous research saying ‘this is why public schools aren’t doing well’… and I was like ‘are you kidding me?’ like, I am actually doing this work, and this guy who is not even from here, and not a part of this fight, not a part of this community, is the expert?

(Interview, April 7, 2016).

Like the research that positions white mothers’ literacy and language practices as the most human, educational and exemplary, the vignette Jasmine shares shows how communities of color who are most affected by inequitable educational policies tend to be positioned at a deficit. In mainstream educational research and public policy discussions, people of color are often portrayed as ignorant and needing to listen to and follow research conducted by someone not from or of these communities that have the most direct experience with issues of inequity. Yared speaks to this recurrent phenomenon that Jasmine denounces when she states: “I hate when academics come in and tell us, this will be really good for you. I’m like, ‘What the hell do you know about what’s good for us?! You’ve never even been here, you just have this understanding’”

(Interview, May 6, 2016).

This trend that both Jasmine and Yared identify, and that enrages and informs both of them, was referred to multiple times by many Juntos members over the course of my research. It is also one I noted in my past work in Rhode Island as an immigrant

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9 I do not aim to equate coloniality with white imperialism. I do, however, believe that white imperialism is part of coloniality.
member of an education and immigrant rights organization that attracted many academics. At Juntos, I paid attention to Yared and Jasmine’s identification of this trend and it shaped the way I engaged in my activist and research work with the organization; I was extra cautious about the ways my research practices in the organization could and/or could not reproduce this trend. Thus, the context and experiences of Juntos with research/ers shaped my subsequent approach to research with Juntos.

How Juntos Members Resist Colonality-Asserting Research

In addition to the experiences and perspectives that Erick, Yared, Jasmine and others shared with me in relation to research, there were a number of situations that I witnessed and was involved in as a Juntos member where outside researchers sought to establish research with the organization that, intentionally or not, were dehumanizing and sustained coloniality. These examples give a fuller account of the context of my organizing and research there. Additionally, I aim to show how the recurrence and persistence of dehumanizing research requests and engagements affect grassroots community organizations like Juntos, drawing attention to the coloniality of mainstream research.

Juntos as a Magnet for Research Requests

As the only organization in Philadelphia that specifically mass mobilizes and advocates for Latinx immigrant communities, and in particular undocumented communities, Juntos is in constant engagement with thousands of members of this heterogeneous population. One of the most important ways that the organization becomes known, and builds a community base with individuals and families in Philadelphia and
beyond, is by responding each week to dozens of phone, social media and in-person requests for resources and support. When they reach out to Juntos, community members may be seeking guidance for addressing challenges related to labor, health, immigration, education, housing, and other human rights. It is important to note that Juntos is not a service-providing or legal-services providing organization, but that its members believe in facilitating access for community members to the resources, knowledge and skills necessary for individual and collective self-advocacy on critical, everyday issues.

Relatedly, Juntos has many issue-specific committees (e.g., immigration, youth, LGBTQ, women) that fluctuate in size depending on the campaigns taking place at any given time and on the related capacity of staff and interest of community members. These committees hold weekly or bi-weekly meetings, workshops and events to engage the larger immigrant and of-color communities in discussions around strategy and organizing. They also draw members from regions in/beyond Philadelphia, including the far Northeast, South Philadelphia, New Jersey and Norristown, which is a small town with a growing Latinx immigrant community that is located right outside of Philadelphia.

Furthermore, Juntos often appears in local and, increasingly, national news due to the organization’s effectiveness in leading and participating in campaigns that counter policies that criminalize immigrants and/or violate their human rights. Frequently, the work involves being in coalition with other local and national organizations who are also tackling issues that affect other minoritized and disenfranchised communities. Thus, Juntos consistently appears in multiple media outlets that go beyond those targeting Latinx immigrant communities in Philadelphia. Lastly, Juntos has established relationships with student groups on university campuses and public schools. These
relationships also connect the organization to young Latinx immigrants across educational settings in the city.

As a result of this multifaceted work, Juntos has a very heterogeneous and intergenerational community base. This visibility also means that the organization is well known to those engaging in research at undergraduate, graduate and larger institutional levels. Thus, as I learned during my time as an organizing practitioner in the organization, Juntos continually receives research-related requests, especially because the organization is perceived as one that could provide academic researchers with direct access to undocumented community members.

To my knowledge, during the seven-month period between July 2015 and March 2016, Juntos received at least five different requests to establish official research relationships or to connect researchers to undocumented community members in order to carry out interviews. However, I am sure additional requests may have been received that were not shared with me, given that I was typically only present in the office two days a week. None of these requests were accompanied by a commitment to devote long-term volunteer time, in-kind resources or funds to the organization or its members, or to have the research outcome or process explicitly, directly, actively and/or immediately benefit the organization or its members. Below I explore the case of two specific requests that exemplify the dehumanizing and coloniality-sustaining experience that these requests imposed on Juntos.
How research can dehumanize despite intentions. In late-July 2015, a professor\(^{10}\) at a local university reached out to Juntos, asking to establish a multi-year partnership with the organization in order to carry out research about the prevention of child abuse in undocumented Latinx communities. Specifically, the professor requested permission to submit a letter of interest (LOI) in early August to a large funder that had sent out a call to fund university-community collaborations on this topic. The letter needed to be sent in ten days and had to demonstrate that a relationship had already been established between Juntos and this university to investigate this issue of child abuse in undocumented communities. Because there was little time between the initial contact and the submission of the LOI, Juntos agreed to have its name included in the letter but made clear that we\(^{11}\) needed more time to make a decision about whether to actually partner. Because I had been co-facilitating the women’s committee since the summer with Olivia Mamá, one of the community leaders of Juntos who had founded that committee, Erika asked me to raise this issue with the committee and co-facilitate with her a conversation between the group and professor about whether to establish this collaboration. It is important to note that the question and discussion was posed to the women’s group, rather than other Juntos committees, because this committee had identified the issue of sexual abuse on children as one that they wanted to investigate and address together.

In mid-August 2015, based on a decision from the committee, I arranged a meeting where the professor would present their proposal for the project to the

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\(^{10}\) Throughout this section of the chapter, I use professor and researcher interchangeably given that I want to safeguard this person’s identity. In this case of this person, they were both a professor and a researcher. I also refer to them using s/he in order to veil their identity.

\(^{11}\) In this part of this chapter, I begin to use “we” when I refer to Juntos since I begin to explore Juntos’s interactions with researchers from my own and shared perspective as a member of Juntos. In the case of this particular instance, at this time I was co-facilitating the women’s committee in the organization and I officially represented Juntos in the interactions we had with this researcher.
community, which would then decide whether or not to participate. Prior to the scheduled meeting, I asked for the researcher to send us details on their proposal and s/he sent us a two-page academic abstract in English for the project. Even as an English and academic jargon-speaking member of the women’s committee, I had to read the abstract multiple times to understand specifics of the project. Knowing that the women’s group would not be able to access the language of this document, primarily because it was in English but also because it was full of citations and academic terms specific to the professor’s discipline, I asked the professor to send us the document in Spanish. What s/he sent back had not translated by a fluent or native Spanish speaker as several of the sentences were confusing and grammatically incorrect. Because of this, I spent several hours translating the abstract again, eliminating as much academic jargon as I could without eliminating important ideas, bringing the text down to a page, and double-spacing it so that people could take notes between lines. I then emailed back this new version to the professor, explaining that the prior version was not accessible to the community (Fieldnotes, August 12, 2015).

In this case, the key documentation that the community needed in order to make an informed decision was not accessible to those members. This reflects Yared’s claim that researchers produce “books and papers that people in the community don’t even read” (Interview, May 6, 2016) because those texts are inaccessible, even if they are about the community, which was the case here since the abstract discussed child abuse within immigrant Latinx communities. This situation also illuminates another trend connected to the points made by Erick, Yared and Jasmine: the time and expertise of academics is traditionally deemed more important in our society than the time of those
who are researched.

Regardless of their intention, this professor did not consider that someone at Juntos would have to translate and edit his abstract to make it accessible to the community. This choice positioned her/his time as more important than that of a community volunteer who would end up taking on this task in order to ensure that the community could have clear information to make a decision. S/he also did not consider that the community possesses important knowledge and expertise that could shape and strengthen the abstract, LOI and, more importantly, the study itself. Instead, her/his abstract and proposed study had already taken shape, in a manner reminiscent of Yared’s distress around outsider researchers telling communities what is good for them, and of Jasmine’s anger about researchers (who are not part of the community) positioning themselves as experts of community issues and needs. A humanizing approach to communicating with Juntos – and one more likely to disrupt coloniality logics and relationships – might have included meeting with Juntos prior to drafting the abstract, LOI and study plan, so that members could have envisioned the project collectively with the university, and therein shared how they would want to be involved, if at all. Additionally, ensuring that all communication took place in Spanish – and/or in any other languages central to the community’s ability to genuinely and comfortably engage – would have also been central to a humanizing approach. Consistent with numerous other choices made in this attempt to establish a relationship with Juntos, this choice to formulate the study without the community’s input is reflective of coloniality.

The evening of our scheduled mid-August meeting, about thirty women showed up with their adolescent and elementary school-aged children. In the previous month,
about eight women had attended our two bi-monthly meetings. This time, the regular participants of our group had encouraged a lot more women in their families and communities to participate, given that this potential partnership addressed a topic about which the women were clearly concerned. I printed copies of the translated abstract at the Juntos office (once again community resources were expended, rather than university resources), and passed these around after everyone introduced themselves. During the first hour of our meeting, before the professor arrived, we spent time reading the abstract aloud and discussing particular sentences.

Based on our discussion, I wrote a list of questions on butcher paper (as they came up) that the mothers posed. Among them: “How is this professor defining ‘abuse’? Will we be in danger of being denounced to police if those who interview us mistake our behavior for abuse? Will our responses be kept confidential? Will Juntos and the participants be remunerated for their time and the resources (time, materials, knowledge) we give to the project? Can individual women make a different study participation decision than the larger group? How will the project directly benefit us and our families? Will the research involve workshops on addressing child abuse in the community? If so, when will those workshops begin? Will other resources we could use be shared? How much time will the interviews and the project itself take? Will we be involved in presentations, curriculum development and publications on the study? If we decide not to participate, will this professor still share the resources s/he already has with us? Or will s/he only share them if we participate?” (Fieldnotes, August 12, 2015). These questions show all that the researcher had not yet considered or documented, having already
submitted an LOI for funding. The questions\textsuperscript{12} also reflect the hopes and expectations that, just like those of Erick’s and his family, these community mothers held in relation to a possible collaboration with a researcher from a university.

When the professor arrived for our committee meeting, s/he had no interpreter. At first, s/he introduced her/himself in Spanish by reading something they had prepared in writing from their phone. The researcher seemed flustered as they read, looking down to their phone. I felt empathy for the professor because s/he was sweating and seemed distressed. The women, however, needed to understand her/him. So they stopped the professor and asked her/him to speak in English and have me translate because the mothers could not understand the researcher’s Spanish. From there, I became the interpreter and recorded further questions and answers on the butcher paper.

The main concerns the mothers expressed were whether they and the community would be able to benefit, early on in the project, from workshops and resources on preventing child abuse, and whether the professor understood that in their countries and communities in the U.S., there were certain responses to child misbehavior (a butt slap, a hand slap, etc.) that were not considered abuse but that, to someone in the U.S., might be labeled abuse. The professor clarified that workshops and curriculum development would be part of the second and third years of the project, and not part of the first year because the first year would be devoted to interviewing them about their current practices. The

\textsuperscript{12} It is important to note that this brainstorming session is typical of the inquiry-based approach in which Juntos members collectively organize. Throughout my time in the organization, I have been part of numerous gatherings where members inquire into issues and relationships together, thinking through expectations, emotions, possible strategies and outcomes related to the issue(s) at hand. I write more about this in Chapter 4 but it is important to highlight that inquiry is fundamental to Juntos’s approach to advocating for and defending immigrant rights.
researcher added that based on analysis of interviews by the research team, workshops would be created and facilitated in later years.

Here, a choice about the research timeline prioritized what Yared (2016) would call “subjectifying” mothers to being interviewed first, before engaging in activities, workshops and resource sharing that the mothers felt were most important. In other words, the priorities of the researcher did not align with those of the community. The community would have to give a year of resources, time and knowledge before accessing the “important” knowledge they expected the outside researcher to have and to share with them.

The second concern was complex and had to do with how the professor and the academic literature that s/he cited defined “maltreatment” and “abuse,” versus how these terms were defined by the community in their everyday lives. This was a particularly difficult issue to discuss because there was the challenge of ensuring translation accuracy between the two languages. Further, there was a specific kind of cultural understanding about parental practices of the Latinx communities present in our meeting regarding child behavior (i.e., what Latinx immigrant communities might consider physical child abuse versus what mainstream society in the U.S. considers to be so) that the professor kept missing as a result of their seeming lack of familiarity with the culturally shaped parental practices of the community, and with their specific terms for defining these.

In part, the professor’s research aimed to understand two specific things: (1) community concepts and (2) practices related to prevention of child abuse. However, the researcher lacked a foundational understanding from which to enter this inquiry with the
mothers. The meeting was a difficult one to facilitate as an impromptu interpreter and I was limited in facilitation moves as a result of this imposed interpreter role. I felt frustrated that the professor had come unprepared (no translator and no note taking on their part), and that they were not from or familiar with the community and lacked knowledge about Juntos itself as a social justice organizing, non-service providing organization. Because so much was outside of the professor’s knowledge base, the professor’s responses and physical expressions demonstrated that s/he was having difficulty understanding the mothers’ central concerns that the research be sensitive to their cultural practices and to the heightened risks they faced as undocumented families. Multiple times in our conversation, the mothers expressed that the researcher’s lack of understanding felt risky and they voiced their concerns about the legal repercussions that positioning them as subjects of this research could yield.

Lastly, it was clear from our conversation that the professor had not thought through many of the logistical details the women wanted to know more about. Specifically, when asked about remunerating the organization for space, resources and community members’ time coordinating the project, the professor did not have concrete answers. While Olivia Mamá and I were preparing for their visit, we had a number of lengthy conversations about our uncertainty regarding the logistical aspects of the partnership. One morning she called me to express her serious concern and anger about “another professor from a university coming to the community wanting to take resources and time and giving nothing back.” She added, “Don’t think I don’t know about these professors from this university! They come and pay $40 per interview and they don’t give anything back to the community. They use us. We don’t even know what they do with the
interviews! This isn’t okay. They get lots of funding for their projects and expect the community to allow them in and for us to carry out tasks without any reciprocity or financial support” (Fieldnotes, August 6, 2016). Olivia Mamá’s anger and frustration reflects yet another aspect of what Jasmine and Yared argued takes place. Olivia Mamá touches on the subjectifying, the power differentials and often dehumanizing use of community members in traditional research processes.

Furthermore, Olivia Mamá specifically unveils yet another aspect of how coloniality logics often guide mainstream research: that minimal funding, if any, goes toward remunerating community members and organizations for their knowledge, labor, community spaces and resources. Juntos had considered this research partnership, partly because the funding was large and for a multi-year project. Given this, Erika, Olivia Mamá and I thought it reasonable that research funds could be used to remunerate the organization for space used to carry out the research. We also thought that the researcher should fund a community member for doing research partnership labor that would take them away from the organizing goals of the organization. Such tasks included carrying out community outreach in relation to the study, coordinating space and schedules for interviews and focus groups, facilitating community meetings between researchers and participants, along with other responsibilities.

Although Olivia Mamá, Erika and I acknowledged that this professor included language in their abstract about valuing the community’s knowledge and building a curriculum based on their expertise, her/his research process did not reflect this stance. This gave Juntos reason to be worried and, soon after the August meeting, the women’s committee decided not to partner with this professor. After we communicated this news
via email, we did not hear back from her/him. Around the same time of our email notification, the funder communicated to the professor they would not be invited to submit a full proposal. The professor then emailed us to let us know that she/he was committed to the project and to working with us but we never heard from her/him again. The researcher’s disappearance demonstrated that the mothers were correct to worry about the professor not sharing resources with Juntos if the study did not take place. As they feared, because the research funding did not materialize, neither did the workshops.

As the fieldnotes above demonstrate, even though there was overlap between what the community wanted to investigate and the researcher’s interests, the interactions that followed signaled to Juntos that, even with good intentions, this professor did not understand our work, the cultural and legal context for the practices or needs of undocumented Latinx immigrant families. S/he also did not demonstrate commitment to clear reciprocity and equity or to ensuring an immediate benefit for the Juntos mothers and the larger organization. In this manner, the researcher presented and envisioned his/her project in a dehumanizing manner that reflected coloniality logics because it prioritized the needs and knowledge of the university over those of the community.

*Examining assumptions about documenting injustice.* The final Juntos research experience I examine highlights how researchers often assume that simply documenting people’s experiences with injustice will lead to societal changes and/or will ultimately benefit the very people who have re-lived their trauma for the sake of documentation and analysis. Tuck (2009) argues that this assumption results from researchers most often having a theory of action “in which expertise and transformation power comes from outsiders” (Patel, 2016, p.43). This valorizing of the researcher’s role is “dependent on
the mythology of external expert as change agent” (Patel, 2016, p.44), where those who are coming from outside to document will have the power to enact positive change. The instance explored next also speaks to how researchers may assume that they have the right to access these experiences. Further, it exposes the assumption that researchers should be trusted with these experiences, particularly when people might still be in danger during the time when their retelling is requested. I highlight this issue because I also struggled with these assumptions as I interviewed people who trusted me with their experiences with oppression and I continue to feel this tension as I write about their lives here. While interviewing people and recording sensitive information, I consistently wondered: Who am I to be allowed access to this precious information? How could I ensure that my having it is worthwhile to those entrusting it to me? And as I write this study, I am consistently questioning: Should I write about this particularly sensitive information? Will my writing about this contribute to bringing about justice? How? Why do I think so?

In late April 2016, Yared, Jasmine and I received an email from Erika that had just three sentences: “Why do people think it's okay to send an email like this? Asking to speak to a rape victim and that I connect them to [them]! I don't even know where to start” (Personal Communication, April 25, 2016). Below this sentence, the following email content was forwarded:

Dear Erika,

I am currently taking a Human Rights and Journalism class at [University]. For our final project, we have been asked to write a story on a human rights issue of our choice. I would like to focus on Central American migrant women who fall victim to rape or sexual abuse while in U.S. Border Patrol custody or at immigrant detention centers. Last month, there was a case of a Border Patrol agent that raped
three undocumented women from Honduras before eventually killing himself in his Texas home. Often these types of stories are underreported. However, the more tragic part is that undocumented women often do not report rapes or seek health services out of fear of being deported. I would like to write a piece telling an individual story along with statistics to demonstrate the more systemic issues. I was wondering if you have contacts with your organization (or any other organization) that could help connect me with a woman to interview for this piece? Any guidance is appreciated. (Personal Communication, April 25, 2016)

The mainstream assumption is that there is an inherent worth in asking people who have experienced or are still experiencing deep trauma to retell and re-live such trauma because doing so “will serve a greater good for mankind” (Smith, 1999/2012, p. 2) or possibly yield future change is clearly demonstrated in this typical email request. It is a request that I think is pervasive in academic work. This was not the first or the last email that I witnessed Juntos receive in which a likely well-meaning researcher, who is unknown to the community, asked to interview undocumented people who had experienced sexual assault, human trafficking, or other traumatic experiences. Furthermore, as Erick’s comment showed earlier in this chapter, this mainstream discourse can lead community members to trust that sharing their lives with academics could end up yielding support, justice and/or positive change.

As a researcher, educator and social justice organizer, I struggle with these sets of assumptions. I do believe that documentation and systemic analysis is necessary in order to document and provide proof that injustice, abuse and inequity take place. Without a doubt, this belief “is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training” (Smith, 1999/2012, p.2). However, I do not believe that change comes solely or directly from documentation of injustice, particularly when conducted from outside of the communities affected. It seems to me that traditional research is focused on documentation and analysis, but not necessarily on leading to or taking action. I also
question who has the right to document the retelling of injustice. Ironically, this assumption about the preeminent value of documentation does encourage the subjectifying (Yared, 2016) and re-traumatizing, often by outsiders to their lives, of people who have been marginalized, minoritized, disenfranchised and abused.

Additionally, if this assumption about the value of documentation was correct, these stories are not always and perhaps not likely to be retold in a manner that is transparent to those who lived through them. Most often, these narratives are shared through the lens and voice of someone with the privilege of not having lived through these challenging experiences. This again reflects the likelihood of coloniality in research methodologies and that research can dehumanize even in its aim to push forward a vision of justice. Erika is clearly weary of and enraged by this dehumanization, as reflected by her comment, “I don’t even know where to start” (Personal Communication, April 25, 2016). Importantly, she resists coloniality by not facilitating access for the researcher and by discussing this incident with us during our staff meeting that week.

**Being responsive to history and context.** In relation to outsider researchers seeking to enter our space at Juntos to carry out research, the experiences and reflections of Erick, María, Yared, Jasmine, Erika and Olivia, as well as my shared experiences and observations as a member of Juntos, remind me that research cannot pretend to be neutral in its purpose and its means of engaging knowledge seeking or knowledge production. The truth is that no research is neutral (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Smith, 1999/2012), and no research exists outside of colonial legacies and logics (Patel, 2016).

This section has shown that researcher choices about methodology and methods
are incredibly telling of ideologies and logics. As such, these choices always contribute to particular political and racial projects (Omi & Winant, 1994) as well as particular coloniality projects, regardless of intentions. As Palestinian scholar, Edward Said (1993), wisely states,

> Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imagining (p. 7 as cited by Walia, 2013, p. 9).

In other words, neither the choices of research participants nor researchers ever occur outside of the existence of coloniality.

What I argue, based on the data I have analyzed above, is that researchers seeking not to dehumanize through their work need to invest time and relationship energy into learning what history and experiences people in the contexts they wish to study have with research. Of equal importance is honoring, being sensitive and responsive to these experiences, assumptions, expectations and concerns, and establishing meaningful relationships that involve much more than research activities. In this way, researchers can demonstrate sincere commitment to the well-being of those who from whom they learn through research projects.

**Part II: Key Components of Research that Resists Coloniality**

A vital set of questions that arise from the above analysis of Juntos’s multiple experiences with mainstream research/ers and in relation my study are: How could my practitioner inquiry methodology (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) be responsive to
Juntos’s experiences? How could it address coloniality and work towards decolonizing research? These are large questions that this study as a whole will address across its chapters. However, engaging them requires that I first clarify what I understand decolonizing research to entail in order to then describe how practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) can be a methodology that resists coloniality.

Thus, below I draft a set of research components of coloniality-resisting research that I draw from arguments in scholarship about the decolonization of research (Paris & Winn, 2014; Patel, 2016; Smith, 1999/2012), of educational projects (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012) and of epistemology (Isasi Diaz & Mendieta, 2012; Mignolo, 2012).

**Centering Researcher Reflexivity**

Across literature on methodologies that resist coloniality, a consistent argument is made for strong researcher reflexivity that challenges dominant assumptions about the motivations for and value of research. Specifically, Smith (1999/2012) advocates for researchers committed to decolonizing research to address questions such as “Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it? Who has designed its questions and framed its scope? Who will carry it out? Who will write it up? How will its results be disseminated?”(p. 10). This also involves asking what voices, ways of knowing, experiences, and relationships are shadowed or ignored by our study frameworks and, in turn, what they prioritize and why (Patel, 2016; Smith, 1999/2012; Weheliye, 2014). Therefore, it is not enough to ask what is included in the study’s framework and process, but we also must consider what is not there and why.

Reflexivity that addresses coloniality is also attentive to the ways in which
conceptualizing positionalities as static and through binaries asserts coloniality and ignores the realities of settler colonialism (McMillan Cottom, 2014; Patel, 2012). Lastly, I believe coloniality-resisting research must attend to how it directly counters white supremacy. This is how I argue that methodologies that resist coloniality would be accountable to people of color who, in differing degrees and manners, are affected every day by the prioritization of whiteness that coloniality and settler colonialism ensure.

**Seeing Knowledge as Local and Research as Context-based**

I believe that in order to engage in decoloniality, knowledge must be conceptualized as local, shaped by history, and as public, instead of as something to be owned. This is so because “coloniality, with its thirst for universal truths, values placelessness and view[s] knowledge as objective, as residing above time and space” (Patel, 2016, p. 61). This is a point that draws on Tuck & Mackenzie’s (2015) contention that coloniality shapes conceptualizations of objectivity as scientific and as achievable only through the study of issues and places from the positionality of an outsider.

Thus, research should be seen as always being shaped by the location, histories, perspectives, time and human dynamics with and in which it takes place. Positivist objectivity could be rejected as a goal of research in favor of seeking out multiple perspectives from those with minoritized experiences in order to gain a more complete view of reality (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002). Re-conceptualizing knowledge, research and objectivity in the decolonial manner that this component puts forth is consequential because it moves researchers away from understanding the world through decontextualized universal truths imposed by coloniality. In doing so, coloniality
assumptions that sustain oppressive structures like white supremacy would be rejected, and rigorous knowing from a multiplicity of subaltern perspectives would help researchers gain a complex understanding of reality (Ghiso & Campano, 2013; Mignolo, 2011).

**Aiming to De-link and to Envision and Build an Elsewhere**

Mignolo (2012) argues that one cannot decolonize (physically end what has been referred to in this chapter as settler colonialism), without engaging decoloniality. Decoloniality, as theorized by Mignolo (2011), is concerned with unsettling and uprooting coloniality (colonial logics or colonial matrix of power), whereas decolonization, as it is conceptualized by Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012), is concerned with unsettling and uprooting the physical realities of settler colonialism (owning and equating land with wealth, physical and social control). Thus, in order to bring about decoloniality and decolonization, a completely different epistemic foundation must be established. This foundation would center being in “harmony and reciprocity” instead of the coloniality logics of “competition and meritocracy” (Mignolo, 2012, p. 25; Walia, 2013). I argue this epistemic foundation would also have to uproot the supremacy of whiteness.

According to Mignolo (2011, 2012), this new epistemic foundation would result from a “delinking” from colonial logics and from any known western epistemology, system and structure (e.g., capitalism, socialism, communism). In order to delink, he argues that one must be “epistemically disobedient” and engage in “border-thinking” to change “the terms of the conversation and not only its content” (Mignolo, 2011, para 6).
In changing the terms through border thinking, one engages in “knowledge making and transformation at the edge, in and of, the disciplines” (Mignolo, 2012, p. 42) to go beyond merely improving the status quo. From/in these borders wherein subaltern and non-dominant knowledges lie, one unlearns colonial logics to intentionally build and to physically and epistemically bring about a decolonial “elsewhere” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012, p. 36).

An aspect of this border-thinking process that I find extremely valuable is that it privileges subordinated knowledge and “situates thinking geographically, suggesting that there is a pluriversality (Mignolo, 2011a, p. 71) of locations from which to generate knowledge” (Ghiso & Campano, 2013, p. 266) and delink from coloniality. This relates back to the component above regarding the importance of understanding knowledge as always linked to geography, and of knowledge seeking benefiting from the involvement of multiple perspectives that center the ways of knowing of those with the most experiences with epistemic erasure or violence.

Conceptualizing a process of decolonization that attends to coloniality logics and physical settler colonialism realities, as well as to the need to envision an elsewhere, Walia (2013) argues,

Decolonization is more than a struggle against power and control: it is also the imagining and generating of alternative institutions and relations. Decolonization is a dual form of resistance that is responsive to dismantling current systems of colonial empire and systemic hierarchies, while also prefiguring societies based on equity, mutual aid, and self-determination. (p. 275)
Thus, decolonization necessarily involves epistemic and physical de-linking, as well as pluriversal prefiguring of a completely new system in order to take direct action to its “point of nonreturn” (Mignolo, 2012, p. 36).

**Research for Decolonization**

From across the components above – centering researcher reflexivity; seeing knowledge as local and research as context-based; and aiming to de-link and to envision & build an elsewhere –and from the earlier explorations in this chapter of settler colonialism and coloniality, I believe that the physical process of decolonization is much less simple than just ejecting everyone who occupies indigenous land. Instead, I see it as a process that requires us to come to terms, every day and over time, with how complex our relationships are to each other, to knowledge and to this earth. I also believe that it entails being attentive to how methodologies center or uproot white supremacy.

I see decolonization as a process that requires us to embrace fallibility and to do the hard work of collaborating with others, particularly with those whose experiences of inequity provide different views from those normalized by mainstream coloniality discourses, and to prefigure relationships, systems and values that completely de-link from settler colonialism, coloniality and white supremacy.

It is an uncertain process in that there is not a simple, clearly defined set of features for the “elsewhere” we seek. As such, this process forces us to grapple with uncertainty (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lytle, 2000) as we de-link through decolonial reflexivity, through conceptualizing knowledge as collective and geography-based, and through the enactment of caring relationships with each other, knowledge and the land. I
believe these relationships must be grounded in values that de-link from coloniality, such as those of mutual aid, interdependence, equity, plurality, and protection of the earth and of all humanity.

Part III: Practitioner Inquiry Can be a Methodology to Resist Coloniality

In this section, I define how I have conceptualized practitioner inquiry as the methodology of this study and as one with the capacity to resist coloniality and engage decoloniality. As I describe this methodology, I relate it to the coloniality-resisting research components above and lay out how I applied it in the Juntos context throughout the research process of my study.

Practitioner Inquiry

Practitioner inquiry is a methodology or theory of knowledge that for many decades has been employed by education practitioners (individually and often collectively, as part of inquiry communities) to systematically learn and theorize from their own practice with the aim of improving their practice and the world around them. Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan L. Lytle (2009), who are seminal scholars and leaders in this methodology’s theorization and development in North America, define practitioner inquiry as:

A conceptual umbrella for the many versions, variations, hybrids, and genres of inquiry that have the following eight features in common: practitioners as researchers; assumed links among knowledge, knowers, and knowing; professional contexts as sites of study; emphasis on communities, networks and other forms of collaboration as the central social structure that fosters and sustains
inquiry; blurred boundaries between inquiry and practice; new conceptions of validity and generalizability; systematicity in terms of data collection and analysis; and efforts to make the work public and open to the critique of a larger community (p. 118).

As a practitioner inquiry study, this research has taken up the eight features noted in this definition in ways that have specifically aimed to resist coloniality. Below, I lay out the ways in which these eight features are iterated in my study.

My definition of practitioner inquiry conceives of organizing as an educational practice (Foley, 1999; Horton & Freire, 1990; Oakes, Rogers & Lipton, 2006), which is a claim further illuminated across the chapters of this study. As education practitioners, immigrant rights activists and organizers are conceptualized in this study as “knower[s] and agent[s] for educational and social change” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.37). As such, they are most knowledgeable about their contexts of practice, and from their epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) – particularly as immigrants engaging in what Mignolo (2011) has termed “border-thinking” – they generate local knowledge as knowers, learners and researchers of their own contexts and sites of practice. Such knowledge can ultimately become “public knowledge” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993 as cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 42) that can impact policy, practice and social change beyond its specific location into wider contexts. In its entirety, this view of the relationship of knowledge, knowers and knowing profoundly resists coloniality. This is so because it rejects the colonial logic of knowledge as universal, placeless or objective. It is also so because it views knowledge as public and
not as something to be owned or held only those in locations or with identities privileged by coloniality.

In this manner, this study regards me, as an activist and organizer at Juntos, along with each of the rest of the community members who participated in my study and who also organize for immigrant rights at Juntos, as practitioners of organizing who produce influential “knowledge of practice” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), which informs our movements’ practices and its theorizing around organizing, social justice, political learning and teaching, among much more.

Additionally, as members of a shared community of practice at a local community organization which is part of regional and national organizing networks deriving political strength from being able to involve consistently large numbers of people in the practice of organizing, this study conceives of us (organizing practitioners) individually and collectively grappling everyday with questions, theories and lessons that arise from our practices about ways to understand and improve our everyday actions. Through this view, our knowledge production is seen as a communal process and not as an individualized process, as coloniality or colonial logics would define it.

Given that organizing is a practice that requires recurrent strategizing, shifting and re-shifting of approaches to bringing about social change, I believe that it is a practice where the “blurring of lines between inquiry and practice” is very prevalent and in fact is a necessity. This means that often the practice of (an) organizer(s) is actual systemic inquiry about the workings of oppressions and our own assumptions about this for example, or about learning and/or teaching of particular skills, political narratives or
specific information that transform the ways we, in Juntos’s context, inquire together as organizing practitioners, and therefore the ways in which we collectively generate knowledge and bring about change.

Further, this study conceptualizes validity and generalizability as stemming from what Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (2007) have named democratic validity, or “honoring the perspectives and interests of all stakeholders” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 44) and from process validity or “using appropriate and adequate research methods and inquiry processes” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.44). This is one of the most coloniality-resisting aspects of this methodology because it rejects traditional and dominant coloniality-logics-infused notions of what makes a study valid and impactful in terms of its contributions to global knowledge about the world. This study’s democratic and process validity, instead, make this study most concerned with ensuring the methods and inquiry process of this research honor the perspectives and goals of those involved in the study. Part of ensuring the validity and generalizability of this research then involves making this study “public and open to the critique of the larger community” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 44-45) of organizing and education practitioners at Juntos, and beyond to others affected by the claims made here.

Parts of the public nature of this study involved presenting it mid-way through its course at an education conference with a research participant and fellow practitioner with me. It also involves presenting and discussing the research at Juntos with those who shaped the study and are impacted by its findings and implications.
Lastly, this study was fully shaped by Lytle’s (2000) “Practitioner Research Framework” (Appendix A). This means as a practitioner researcher, I recurrently engaged in deep reflexivity around my and this study’s legacy; location/positionality; ways of knowing; orientation; methods; community; and neighborhood. This level of deep researcher reflexivity is one of the aspects of this methodology that makes it most powerfully resistant of coloniality. This is because Lytle’s (2000) conceptualization of practitioner inquiry’s framework leads the researcher to ask questions that get deep into issues of power, knowledge and ideology, such as:

“Where do I come from? What are my social, cultural, political and educational frameworks? What traditions or disciplines do I come from and how/why does this matter? (Legacy). Who am I to be doing this work? What is my positionality on a continuum from insider to outsider? Is the research on/with/for? How is my positionality defined by others? [Who are the “others”]? (Location/Positionality). What assumptions am I making about knowers and the nature of knowledge?; What do I understand as the relationships of knowledge and practice? How do I position myself/others as generators of knowledge? (Ways of Knowing). What am I studying? What is my purpose [in doing so]? How the questions that frame my study evolve throughout the process of the inquiry? (Orientation). What counts as data for my study? What ethical issues will/may arise during this study? (Methods). What is the social organization of the work? What are the communities to which I belong? Why do these matter? (Community). Who am I talking to in my research? Why does this matter? (Neighborhood). (Lytle, 2000, Appendix A)

As a whole, this study’s application of practitioner inquiry (Lytle, 2000; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) centers deep decolonial researcher reflexivity, and strives to de-link (Mignolo, 2011) knowledge seeking from Eurocentric assumptions about knowledge, relationships between people and our practices and immediate contexts, and between each other, among much else. I believe this iteration demonstrates practitioner inquiry is a methodology that can resist coloniality and work towards the decolonizing of research.
This study holds as its central concept the construct of “inquiry as stance,” coined by Cochran-Smith & Lytle in the 1990s, and theorized by them as a “grounded theory of action” (2009, p. 199) and “habit of mind” whereby inquiry informs all aspects of a practitioner’s work (2009, p.121). Through its application in this study, I argue it is a fundamental component to my iteration of practitioner inquiry that is thoroughly coloniality-resisting because it places practitioner/researcher reflexivity and its unique ability to produce knowledge for social change at the heart of this study.

As education practitioners, and in context of this study, organizing practitioners, taking an “inquiry stance” means engaging in a continual process of systematically challenging dominant assumptions and logics about knowledge, practice, and relationships between and among people and structures, and as noted in the section above, as conceiving of “democratic purposes and social justice ends” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 145) as goals of our practice. In both individual and collective manners, engaging inquiry as stance also involves including others, who share our practice and/or are affected by issues related to our practice, in our inquiry process, so that our inquiries are informed by and attentive to the perspectives of others most affected by our practices.

According to Marilyn Cochran-Smith & Susan L. Lytle, (2009), there are

…four central dimensions of the construct of inquiry as stance…(1) a perspective on knowledge that rejects the formal knowledge–practical knowledge dualism and instead puts forward a conception of local knowledge in global contexts; (2) an expanded view of practice as the interplay of teaching, learning, and leading, as
well as an expanded view of who counts as a practitioner; (3) an understanding of practitioner communities as the primary medium or mechanism for enacting inquiry as stance as a theory of action; and (4) the position that the overarching purpose of practitioner inquiry is to provide education for a more just and democratic society. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 126).

In describing the main features of practitioner inquiry in the section above, the dimensions of “inquiry as stance” are briefly reviewed (the chapters of this study will explore them in greater depth). However, it is important to highlight here that “inquiry as stance” rejects the dominant dichotomy between formal knowledge (conceived through coloniality logics as residing in university or academic spaces) and practical knowledge (seen through colonial logics as separated from formal knowledge and as less valuable knowledge held by common communities). In rejecting this dichotomy, this construct highlights the “dialectic of knowing and acting” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, p. 122). I believe working from this dialectic can also be conceived of as “border-thinking” (Mignolo, 2011), which is required in de-linking from coloniality logics about knowledge and practice. Below, I consider in greater detail how I took up “inquiry stance” – in the context of my research on my own and shared practice at Juntos – as an organic and counterhegemonic or coloniality-resistant theory of change.

Taking an Inquiry Stance Into My Practice At Juntos

Claiming an inquiry stance as a practitioner researcher at Juntos for me has meant taking up a permanent critical orientation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) to my own and shared practices as a volunteer activist/organizer at Juntos. As a researcher seeking to
learn from the literacy, educational and organizing practices of Latinx immigrant communities, this has consistently led me to slow down to “make the familiar strange” (Erickson, Florio and Buschman, 1980; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009) in order to learn from my own and shared practice.

In relation to my deep concern with decolonizing approaches to knowing and doing, I find taking an “inquiry stance” to be a powerful means of decolonizing logics and physical realities. “Inquiry as stance” de-centers certainty and the idea that bounded decontextualized universal knowledge exists or is possible (see “Seeing Knowledge is Local and Research Context-Based” in coloniality section above). Instead, this stance centers uncertainty and fallibility, while framing knowledge as experiential, relational, local, collective and personal. It engages in what I see as “decolonial reflexivity” (see “Centering Researcher Reflexivity” component) regarding our positionalities, herstories, inquiries, theories, practices, and goals (Lytle, 2000).

In the process of blurring the boundaries between inquiry and practice by placing them in a “mutually generative dialectic” (Campano, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), an “inquiry stance” illuminates new ways of thinking, knowing, and engaging in and learning from our practice in order to collectively build better practices and futures. I find it particularly powerful that an inquiry stance “conjoins theories of how to change things with theories of what needs to change and indeed assumes that these are inseparable” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 124), and that these theories arise from feminist approaches to conceptualizing our experiences, social locations and emotions as epistemically valuable (Alzandúa, 1987; Diaz-Strong, et al., 2014; Griffiths, 2009; Lorde, 1984). “Inquiry as stance” leads us, as practitioners in the world, to see ourselves as
knowledge producers, and to always be willing and ready to re-conceptualize what we know, how/why we know it, and how we break with the inequitable status quo.

Unlike stances to research and knowing that assert coloniality and, therefore, stay away from unsettling structures and assumptions that solidify the status quo, I believe “inquiry as stance” can facilitate the ability to decolonize research (Patel, 2016; Paris & Winn, 2014; Smith, 1999/2012). This is in part because this stance centers individual and collective decolonial reflexivity regarding our practices and research, while making reflexivity the very means through which to seek and make sense of knowledge.

Relatedly, taking up a collective “inquiry stance” as part of inquiry communities and/or in relationship to others whose lives, identities, experiences, practices and perspectives are disenfranchised and located at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) – as has been done in this study – is a powerful decoloniality process. Through such a process, practitioner researchers can actively work to de-link (Mignolo, 2011, 2012) from what is familiar in favor of a pluriversal (Mignolo, 2011) construction of new “elsewheres” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012). As pointed out by literacy scholars Ghiso and Campano (2013), “theories of coloniality and practitioner research share a premise that the research process is more valid when it encompasses multiple perspectives, including those generated on the border of different spaces” (p. 255). Thus, the validity of this coloniality-resisting study is strengthened by the fact that it puts forth pluriversal perspectives from grassroots educational and organizing practitioners from the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007).
Ultimately, taking an “inquiry stance” into my practice as a volunteer organizer/activist at Juntos and as a practitioner researcher in this immigrant Latinx community has facilitated my conceptualization and application of practitioner inquiry as a methodology that resists coloniality. I see this stance as one clearly oriented towards the decolonization of inquiry, and therefore towards the decolonization of our physical relationships and realities. Below, I explain how and why practitioner research came to be the methodology of this study and how the features of this study, including methods and data analysis, reflect my conceptualization and employment of practitioner inquiry as a methodology that can resist coloniality.

**Being a Practitioner First**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I was a volunteer activist/organizer at Juntos for a year before I began carrying out research on my own and shared practices within the organization. Officially, my title was that of an intern. During that first year as a practitioner, I spent at least one full day each week (often more if an event or action was taking place) at the Juntos’s office, carrying out tasks (individually and collectively) that contributed to organizing Latinx immigrants in and around Philadelphia for their rights. These roles and tasks included translating internal and external documents, providing simultaneous interpretation at events, drafting grant applications and representing Juntos alongside others in meetings with potential funders. It also involved giving one-on-one support to Latinx immigrants who came to the office looking for guidance for registering their kids in school, challenging labor, housing and other abuse, or helping to find loved ones who had gone missing while crossing the border. Furthermore, I contributed to the management of Juntos’s online presence and interaction with community, created an
informational video about Juntos that could also help raise funds for its work, traveled with Juntos members to other cities and states to strategize with other Latinx organizations and larger diverse coalitions organizing to defend and protect the rights of immigrant and other disenfranchised/of color communities, prepared for and participated in local and regional protests and marches that defied racist and xenophobic laws and practices by elected officials, co-facilitated the women’s committee alongside an undocumented community leader while the committee was active, and built relationships with community members, encouraging them to join Juntos.

This list is not comprehensive but it is intended to provide a broad picture of what I mean when I identify myself as a practitioner at Juntos during that first year. Overall, my practice involved a wide range of tasks that played a part in the larger collective project of organizing immigrant Latinx communities in and around Philadelphia. As mentioned in Chapter 1, during my first year as a volunteer, Erika, the staff and I knew that I would eventually develop my study with Juntos. However, how the capacity of practitioner research as a methodology would be responsive to Juntos or the experiences of its members was not clear to me when I first began volunteering there. Therefore, I spent that first year focused on becoming familiar with my own and shared organizing practices as part of Juntos, learning what the organization and its members’ experiences were with research/ers, and talking with Erika about possible topics and research methodologies that would be responsive and respectful to the various experiences and needs of Juntos and its communities.

Towards the middle of that first year (Spring 2015), I began having more explicit conversations with Erika about the framework of practitioner research. We discussed how
carrying out this type of research would allow me to prioritize my continued practice at Juntos while also systematically inquiring into the ways that Juntos’s members, myself included, collectively organized for immigrants’ human rights. This approach would also ultimately enable me to offer Juntos documentation of and insights from our and the organization’s work in order to enhance it.

Across the first and second years of my time at Juntos, I was able to discuss with Erika, Jasmine and Yared, along with the additional eight community members who over time joined the study, about how this approach to research positioned our community members as experts in producing knowledge about Latinx immigrants experiences of injustice, organizing, community literacies and education, among many other topics. Our conversations included sharing my desire to counter dominant conceptualizations of whose knowledge counts and where knowledge is located (Ghiso & Campano, 2013, p. 235; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Most importantly, our conversations highlighted that I would carry out this study in a manner that prioritized supporting Juntos and its members.

I began talking with fellow Juntos organizers/activists about the features of the study in the spring of 2015 and was able to share and discuss a few versions of my presentation slides for my study proposal before defending it in October 2015. Thus, the process for deciding on and shaping this methodology involved having conversations with various Juntos staff and members about this study’s conceptualization of organizing as an educational practice. We also discussed viewing ourselves as education and organizing practitioners with unique insights and knowledge about education, inequity, immigration, power, political organizing, art, and other topics.
It is important to note that viewing Juntos’s practices through the lens of literacy was not inherent to the organization’s work. Thus, the conversations I had with community members and staff about this study’s conceptualization of literacy as an ideological social practice (e.g., Street, 1984; see Chapter 3), were not aspects of my work to which people were immediately responsive. One way in which I often explained my interest in studying the literacy practices mobilized by our organizing involved considering what might result from K-12 and community educators learning about the multiple and rich ways in which our immigrant Latinx communities utilize literacy for advocating and protecting our own and others’ human rights. Juntos staff and community members knew I was an education doctoral student in reading/writing/literacy, and though this lens did not become one through which Juntos began to make sense of its work, its members did demonstrate a desire for U.S. school systems, educators and administrators to develop a much better understanding of the literacy and educational practices of their children, families, and communities (see Chapter 3 for more on this topic).

**Being a Practitioner Researcher**

In the second year of my time at Juntos when I carried out this study (November 2015 - November 2016), I spent at least two full days a week in the office (more when events took place) and my practices grew to include co-facilitating weekly immigration committee meetings, representing Juntos whenever needed during press conferences and media interactions, helping plan and carry out “know your rights” workshops, volunteer trainings and legal clinics for undocumented community members, and participating in
strategically developing campaigns and annual organizational goals internally and also in national convenings.

During this second year, Juntos staff and members knew I was also a researcher aiming to learn from our practices through the lenses of literacy, popular education and intergenerational learning. However, I was first a practitioner and the research was always understood to be in service of our practice. Early in that second year, all three members of Juntos staff decided to join my study, allowing me to observe their practices and eventually interview them. Throughout the following months, eight additional community members allowed me to observe their practices and interview them while we collectively organized together. Yared noted how this process of my being a practitioner researcher felt for her when, during a member check in Fall 2016, she said, “When I talk about research being done well, I talk about the work you do at Juntos; you were first a member of the community before a researcher to me. You were doing community work and then one day you were like, ‘How about I interview you?’ and I was like, ‘Yeah! You are doing research too!’” (Member check, November 1, 2016). As reflected in Yared’s comment, my research over that second year was carried as a practitioner; therefore, being a practitioner and a researcher were one and the same. This means that I interviewed people as a fellow Juntos member, rather than as a stranger to them or an outsider to our work.

In general, the roles of practitioner and researcher were part of one blended practice. That said, while being a practitioner researcher at Juntos, I was always concerned with not imposing or “subjectifying” anyone to research. I believe this stemmed from my awareness of the ways research could easily assert coloniality and my
desire to carry out a practitioner inquiry study in a way that did not do so. I also realize that my recurrent attention to this resulted from my taking an “inquiry stance” on my positionalities and assumptions in this space. As explored in Chapter 1, I know that though I am an immigrant woman and do belong to the heterogeneous immigrant Latinx community in the U.S., I am also not undocumented and not from Philadelphia. Furthermore, due to my class and position as a graduate student, I am also to various degrees an outsider. Thus, I constantly grappled with the inside/outside dialectic (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) in this context and, at different times, I had conversations with Juntos members about this dialectic.

Lastly, though the study did not involve the creation of “inquiry communities,” which Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) define as practitioner communities

...structured to foster deep intellectual discourse about critical issues and thus...[as] spaces where the uncertainties and questions intrinsic to practice can be seen (not hidden) and can function as a grist for new insights and new ways to theorize practice... (p. 37)

along the course of the study I did share with those involved in the inquiries and issues that were coming up for me. I also checked in with others about what was rising up for them as we organized. This resulted in conversations about, for example, the ways organizing at Juntos engenders leadership development, how intergenerational relationships take shape in the organization, or ways in which our political discourses change across the years. At times, we were able to collectively discuss some of these issues during staff meetings or in informal conversations.
For example, during spring of 2016, Erika, Jasmine, Yared and I considered meeting every few weeks to create art together to help us process and ask questions about our practices and emotions, and about the directions of our work as inquiries and issues rose up. Unfortunately, the pace of our organizing prevented us from taking up this practice. Nonetheless, I learned that the process of being interviewed for the study did provide a space for staff and Juntos members to slow down and consider why and how they carried out their practice in the ways that they did, how they had gotten there (their herstories, experiences, and locations), where they felt and wanted to be heading, and their questions that they hoped this study project could address. Speaking to these instances where people got to stop out from the rush and urgency of our everyday work to do the interviews and reflect on their practice, Jasmine shared, “I was having that conversation with Erika last week and I was saying that as organizers we don’t do it as much, and one of the things that I’ve been very appreciative with you interning is that you bring it up to the forefront” (April 7, 2016 interview).

While re-reading this interview, along with parts of other ones where Juntos members and I talked about slowing down to process and learn from our practices, I realize that I often struggled with translating the term “inquiry” and the concept of “inquiry stance” in our community space. Part of this is because I felt that these terms came across and felt academic, and I was hesitant about imposing academic language. I notice across many of the interviews that others and I often use the term “reflection” instead of “inquiry,” and I am aware that reflecting on our practices is not the same, and it is not as complex, as inquiring into our practices. This is a point of dissonance for me as a practitioner researcher because I would have liked to have provided a clear
explanation of what I understood to be differences between these two processes. However, I realize that an important part of being a practitioner researcher has been figuring out what “inquiry” and an “inquiry stance” mean, particularly in this context, and how to become comfortable talking about these ideas and concepts. This confusion or misunderstanding appear to be a necessary part of embracing fallibility and discomfort as a practitioner researcher.

Importantly, what I show in this study is that even if the term that gets used is “reflection” and not “inquiry,” the norm at Juntos is for people to raise and address questions that come up from our experiences and from organizing together, to pay attention to what these questions are over time, and to challenge dominant assumptions about knowledge, relationships, and discourses. It is true that doing so largely does not happen in the context of slowing down. In fact, it often happens as part of the fast paced practice of organizing. A key lesson from grappling with what “inquiry” and “inquiry stance” mean in relation to grassroots organizing practices is visible in Jasmine’s assertion to me during a member check in November 2016 when we specifically talked about the idea of “making the familiar strange.” Jasmine powerfully argued, “The world is so messed up and we can become numb to it, or so familiar with our practices, so reflection is radical; stopping routine, and thinking about issues [related to our practice] is a radical act. Don’t lose sight of that” (November 20, 2016). Her claim highlights how critical and complex this act is at Juntos and how regardless of the term used to describe it, this “making the familiar strange” can in fact work to de-link and re-envision as a radical act.
Opening Up to the Larger Community as a Means to Resist Coloniality

As briefly reviewed earlier, one of the shared features of practitioner inquiry studies is that they pursue “efforts to make the work public and open to the critique of the larger community” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 118). In the case of this study, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to present aspects of this study alongside one of Juntos’s community leaders, María, at the Annual Ethnography in Education Forum at the University of Pennsylvania in February 2016. As part of our presentation, María and I agreed that she would share how she and her children engaged in intergenerational learning and teaching as part of their organizing to shut down The Berks Family Detention Center (Berks) outside of Pennsylvania (see Chapter 3).

In preparation, we spent an entire day at the Juntos office choosing pictures and videos to put on slides, writing text that would accompany these pieces, talking about what we were learning and wanted others to learn, and also practicing the presentation. This was a complex process that reflects the ways in which this study resisted coloniality. First, it involved my sharing with María what was striking to me about our work at Juntos in relationship to literacy practices and intergenerational education, and it involved her giving me feedback on my analysis and providing new insights. Second, it also resulted in her writing her understanding of her children’s views on their participation in Juntos’s organizing, as well as María being willing to open up her family’s perspectives and actions to academic public critique. All of these aspects of our planning together directly challenge dominant assumptions and practices about where knowledge comes from, whose knowledge counts, the relationship between knowledge and practice, and what makes a study rigorous and valid.
Crucially, there was a moment in this preparation process where María seemed emotionally distraught. Though we checked in when it came up and she assured me that she was okay, I still felt that something was wrong. The morning after this happened, María called me and explained that she had been feeling upset because she had not been certain that was okay for her to share in the presentation what her son, Erick, had told her in private about what he thought and felt about the campaign to close Berks. She had worried about how she was representing him in her writing and how she was representing her family as a whole. She worried she had not involved her husband in deciding to publicly share their children’s experiences. Thus, after we finished preparing the presentation the night before, she showed what she had written about her and her family’s intergenerational literacy and teaching/learning practices to her son, daughter and husband. She asked them to tell her if what was there portrayed them appropriately and accurately, whether they had a different analysis or anything to change, what they thought about her representations and whether they would give her permission to share it publicly. She explained to me that she had been questioning who she was to share experiences and actions that were not hers, and that she could not do it without approval from her family. She added that though she did not include anything about her husband, her kids were his too, and she had no right to represent them without his input. As I write now, these reflections remind me so much of those that the researchers who studied her Mother’s and her indigenous community’s language and cultural practices in Mexico clearly did not take up.

I thanked María profusely for being so honest with me and showing me an exemplary way of being very careful about how to represent those who trust us with their
insights, experiences and emotions. I apologized for making her feel it was okay for her to make public what her children had communicated to her, regardless of my intention not to pressure her. In ways that demonstrate resistance to coloniality, María very carefully challenged her assumptions about her right to represent others close to her and the approach that she had taken. In her process, she challenged my own assumptions and approaches as well. Through her detailed explanation of the emotions that led her to take her stance, I experienced (beyond just understanding) that taking an “inquiry stance” alongside others, in locations different than ours, much more powerfully challenges colonial logics than taking this stance on my own. Though María was not using the language of practitioner inquiry or coloniality, she was raising and following sharp counterhegemonic questions regarding knowledge, representation, human relationships, and positionality. I feel honored that María trusted me and that our trust facilitated her teaching me this lesson.

María joined me at our presentation at the Ethnography Forum with her son, daughter, and one of her closest friends, who is not a member of Juntos. She mentioned wanting her friend to know more about her work. Before our presentation, María gave me a beautiful card and I gave her a book of Mario Benedetti poems that I had since my first year as an immigrant here, which addresses trust and friendship, particularly in the context of migration. A fundamental take away from our collaborative work to make parts of this study public is that this study’s methodology that – as a stance to living, learning and knowing – privileges building and nourishing relationships of care and trust that can engender de-linking from coloniality and building accountable ways of knowing and being with each other.
Part IV: Methods & Data Analysis

Though I have mentioned aspects of my methods and approach to data analysis in the sections above, I provide here an overview of what these processes entailed. Throughout this study, I took fieldnotes and photographs related to my own and shared practices at Juntos. I also collected artifacts related to the work of the organization and traveled with its members to Harrisburg, Arizona, Chicago, and Baltimore for regional and national gatherings and actions. Additionally, I kept track of Juntos’s media presence, and of the media coverage of key events in the movement’s life locally and nationally, in order to have a complex understanding of the context for and impact of Juntos’s actions, media appearances, and general strategies. As part of my iterative analysis approach to this work, I wrote analytical memos every three to four weeks during the course of my research and recorded audio memos every week.

Lastly, I carried out open-ended interviews (see Appendix B) with eleven fellow Latinx immigrants, ranging from 13 to 40 years old, who are members of Juntos and who contribute, on a daily basis, to the organization’s work in the Philadelphia area and beyond. Two thirds of those interviewed are, or until very recently were, undocumented and all are members of mixed-status families. During each interview, I asked each person to suggest questions that I should ask them and others about their practice and about Juntos so that the interviews would reflect the inquiries of those taking part in the study and not only mine. I also asked them what they would hope this study could contribute to the organization, about ways in which I could make the knowledge I gathered here useful to all of us in our movement practice, and to the organization as a whole. In some cases, people I interviewed suggested that I collect particular artifacts or look at the data
through particular themes (art, for example) or with particular inquiries in mind, such as, “How has our discourse on immigrant rights changed over time? What have been key moments in our campaigns? What could the organization do to prevent burn out?”

After each interview, I conducted member checks (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Erlandson et. al., 1993). To do so, I shared a full transcription of the interview with the interviewee along with a first draft of my analysis notes so that each person would have the opportunity to read these texts themselves, comment on my analysis, reflect on their practice, take out or add sections, and, in general, be part of the analysis process. During this session, I also asked clarifying questions if necessary (see Appendix D) and double-checked that participants wanted me to use their real names in the write up of this study, which all participants confirmed, noting they do not want to hide their immigration status. Though everyone read full transcripts of their interviews, I was not able to have a member check conversation with one person (Erika) given her hectic schedule. As part of this study, I conceptualized member checking as an analytical tool for resisting coloniality and not only as one that enhanced the validity of this study.

Guided by practitioner research’s framework (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lytle, 2000), my data analysis was intertwined with data collection in such a way that analysis took place as data was collected. Overall, I worked from the belief that, “research takes place in spirals, in a process of continuing reflection and re-thinking” (Griffiths, 2009, p. 89). Relatedly, I paid careful attention to the impact that my emotions “ma[de] in the process and outcome of the research” (Griffiths, 2009, p. 91), so that emotions were epistemologically valuable (Alzandúa, 1989; Lorde, 1983; Diaz-Strong et al., 2014).
In the immediate months after ending my fieldwork, I utilized qualitative coding software (Atlas ti 1.0.51) to code through all of the interviews, member checks, fieldnotes, memos, pictures and artifacts that I had collected. I coded these thematically (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) based on deductive codes related to the central question of this study, such as “literacy practices” and “organizing practices,” and also through inductive codes that rose up from the data, such as “intergenerational learning,” “communal pedagogies” and “intersectionality.” As I coded, I wrote analytical memos across themes in order to note patterns, new questions, and also make the data more manageable. Additionally, I wrote “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of data that stood out as exemplary per theme, as well as of data that puzzled me.

As I coded, identified patterns, wrote thick descriptions and drafted analytical memos, I asked myself, “What themes or issues are addressed? How does this relate to the way this theme/issue has been addressed by other data? What questions does it raise for me? What emotions does it raise for me? What am I unsure about and how could I find out more? What might explain the patterns I am noticing? As I prepare to write about these patterns and findings, how might I represent this issue and/or this person and why? Whose knowledge am I privileging and why, and whose am I not noticing as I identify patterns and draft findings? How am I carrying out analysis that is decolonizing and productive for creating a new “elsewhere”? What might coloniality logics be erasing for me? How am I understanding issues of diversity, difference and in/justice (in relation to social identities and locations)? What assumptions am I questioning or not questioning? What might this tell me about the practice of teaching, learning, organizing, and inquiring?” This is a non-exhaustive list of questions, but they are rooted in
conceptualizing “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) as a potential tool for what I believe is decolonial reflexivity.

**Conclusion: What Might Practitioner Research Want? What Might It Seek?**

Recently, the latest issue of the Critical Ethnic Studies Journal (Vol 2. Issue 2) arrived at my house and I was able to read its introduction, “What Justice Wants,” by editors Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. Moved by this inquiry and pondering the various directions this chapter has taken, I have been asking myself, “What does practitioner research want? Why am I moved to understand what this methodology/framework/stance wants? What is the ‘so what’ of what it may want? For whom is this argument? What is my hope regarding its life?”

As I think through why I want to make the point in this study that practitioner research can resist or lead us to resist coloniality logics, particularly in community organizing contexts (such as that of Juntos) where traditional research continues to reassert coloniality, I keep returning to the concern that is so palpable in the first part of this chapter about traditional research’s role in (re)producing coloniality logics (Patel, 2016; Smith, 1999/2012; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012). As someone who has spent significant periods of my life engaged in grassroots activist practice and in heavily theoretical academic practice in ways that overlap but sometimes feel separate, I am terribly concerned with what research does in and to our world. I am concerned about research being a colonizing or coloniality force, regardless of intentions. I am concerned with how research or systematic inquiry can be useful to social movements and activist practice.
As a whole, I believe that thinking through what practitioner research may want, what it does as a framework/stance, and what it has the potential to do, can be useful to others in education and beyond who think, want and act (as researchers, activists and organizers at once or as one or the other) to resist coloniality (its logics and physical realities). I believe engaging in this exercise, and pushing forward the argument that practitioner research resists coloniality, could encourage others to see and take up an “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), or to embody an ongoing state of pondering, of asking of questions (instead of only formulating answers) that illuminate hidden and forgotten logics, histories and legacies in ourselves, and in our practices and lives. I believe “inquiry as stance” facilitates inquiring into alternatives (Simon & Campano, 2013) to coloniality, into possibilities and visions of the actual act (and not the metaphor) of decolonization (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012), and into the answerabilities (Patel, 2016), delinkings and epistemic disobediences (Mignolo, 2011, 2012) required of resisting and eventually fully breaking apart and from coloniality.

The second part of this chapter was extremely difficult to compose and organize because for months I was concerned with answering with certainty. Truthfully, it was challenging to take up an “inquiry stance” in relation to the potential ties between coloniality and practitioner inquiry because the colonial logics of thinking that knowledge could be certain and bounded overwhelmed me. Being so concerned with answering often closed up windows and opportunities for insight, and it was not until I opened myself up to fallibility, uncertainty and discomfort (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lytle, 2000) that I was able to envision and write the chapter.

What I aim to demonstrate across this chapter and this study is the importance of
asking questions from our practices and locations and of seeking questions that lead to
questions and not definite answers. Furthermore, pursuing inquiries collectively with
others in multiperspectival ways as part of inquiry communities and relationships is
perhaps the most humanizing and coloniality-resisting thing we can do. Finally, I hope to
show that in taking an “inquiry stance,” we might one day end up “elsewhere”.

CHAPTER THREE: INTERGENERATIONAL CRITICAL LITERACIES AS COMMUNAL PEDAGOGY OF RESISTANCE

As linguistic anthropologist Norma Gonzalez (2001) might describe it, we are constructing pedagogies and a particular intergenerational family education to meet the exigencies of borderlands living... Thus, I search for a language to express this education, this teaching and learning located always in the “somewhere-in-between”. Indeed I search for a theory that... might capture these fleeting embodied reinventions of teaching and learning across generations and between hierarchies of difference, I search for a theory that may illuminate the space not only of mere survival but of creative meaning-making, improvisation, and ambiguity as performed every day through ...living narratives (Villenas, “Pedagogical Moments in the Borderlands,” 2006, p. 151).

During the summer and Fall of 2015, I co-facilitated Juntos’s women’s committee with Olivia Mamá and Olivia Hija. Olivia Mamá is one of Juntos’s undocumented leaders and the mother of Olivia Hija, the co-founder of Fuerza (the youth committee), and an undocumented youth leader in the organization. I took on this organizing role after Erika noted that Olivia Mamá and Olivia Hija were very busy and wanted organizational support to facilitate a new committee, where women from our heterogeneous communities could come together to discuss and organize around issues pertaining to their lives, identities and oppressions as Latina immigrants.

In order to establish the women’s committee, Olivia Mamá and I talked multiple times about her and Olivia Hija’s ideas, and together we created a women’s committee group called “Juntas”, which is the female-gendered word for “together” in Spanish. In our conversations about the need to get more mothers and daughters in the community to

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13 Because both mother and daughter are named Olivia, throughout this study I refer to Olivia, the mother, as “Olivia Mamá” and to Olivia, the daughter, as “Olivia Hija”. This is how the community at Juntos tends to refer to them, so I honor that approach and name them here in the same manner.

14 At the time, there were three other committees meeting every week or every two weeks at Juntos, depending on the schedule of members. These included the South Philadelphia immigration committee and the Norristown youth committee (both facilitated by Jasmine), Fuerza (the youth committee) and the LGBTQ committee (both facilitated by Yared), and in the past there had been a committee of Parents (facilitated by a past staff member), which had led the community’s organizing against the school closings in Philadelphia in 2013.
organize for their rights, the Olivias emphasized how their lives had transformed after Olivia Hija had become involved at Juntos and eventually convinced her mom to join her, despite Olivia Mamá having initially prohibited her from being part of Juntos. Still, Olivia Hija defied her mother’s mandate and co-founded (with Miguel and another undocumented youth) the Fuerza youth committee in 2011. Through the committee, she began organizing with other undocumented youth to get access to higher education (PA DREAM Act) and to challenge the mass closings of public schools in Philadelphia.

Numerous times Erika called Olivia Mamá to ask that she join them at actions, telling her more about the organization and its approaches to ensuring undocumented people would be safe at protests and events. This only made Olivia Mamá angrier, as she did not understand how her daughter could listen to Erika and not to her. After much tension between them and about six months after Olivia Hija began organizing at Juntos, Olivia Mamá joined her daughter at Juntos. In a six-minute video I made in Spring 2015 about Juntos’s work, the Olivias shared the details of this coming together:

Olivia Hija (in English): When I first started coming here I was afraid. I couldn’t even openly say that I was undocumented. But all this organizing work that I have done with them [Juntos] has made me really embrace who I am, really be proud of being Latina, really be proud of my community. I remember when I started organizing my mom was really afraid of what was going to happen to me. I remember…the first rally that I went to was on Love Park and I was holding a banner, I was in front of the rally, and I was shouting: “Undocumented and Unafraid!” and I remember my mom…she started crying and she was chanting “Undocumented and I’m Afraid!”

Olivia Mamá (in Spanish): They were screaming “Undocumented and Unafraid!” and I was screaming, “Undocumented and I’m Afraid!” because I was very scared of being there. And I was very scared of everything that could happen but I said: ‘OK. If they are here fighting for what they want, fighting for the right to an education to which they have a right, then even more reason for us to have to support them. But it was a breaking of chains. It was very difficult, very difficult.
It is not easy as a parent to overcome all those fears and say ‘OK. I will support you.’

Olivia Hija: And that was the beginning. That was when, like my mom said, the chains were broken. Because like I already told you, after that day I always talk about her because I’m truthfully very proud of the change that took place, how she has had the valor of overcoming that fear and that anguish. I can show you pictures: she has gone to speak to senators, she gives interviews, she now says what she believes, so she always makes me feel proud of her giving interviews and talking to people. (Sustain Juntos Video\textsuperscript{15}, 2015, min. 0:38-2:58)

The Olivias’ recounting of their story shines light on the intergenerational aspect of our movement for immigrant rights. It stresses how transformational it is to witness your parent or child learning and changing, breaking their chains alongside you and alongside others, teaching you how to defy oppression, making you feel proud. It also provides a window into the tensions between families and people that can arise from this learning and mobilizing process. Their story shows how complex, high-stakes, emotionally challenging and also gratifying intergenerational organizing can be. The Olivias are not the only parent and child to experience familial tension when one becomes active in the movement and another one does not, nor are they the only ones to get deeply involved at Juntos as members of the same family. However, in their participation, they have made it a goal to support other families and individuals in the breaking of chains that they describe above. In getting to know them for Juntas, it was clear to me that founding this committee would be part of facilitating their goal.

Thus, in late Summer 2015, Juntas got going with an online page, and in-person meetings. Between six and eight undocumented Latina immigrant women began to attend Juntas’ hour-and-a-half meetings every two weeks. Mothers brought their young children, who played and read books among us while we met. Whenever possible, Olivia

\textsuperscript{15} Video can be retrieved at https://vimeo.com/126955689
Hija, and one of the other mothers’ teenage daughters, also joined. Most of the mothers and daughters who came were friends of Olivia Mamá. I also invited María (Erick’s mother), who had been in a community ESOL class I had facilitated a few years back. She participated in Juntas with her daughter, Itzel, who was in then in pre-K.

María’s and my friendship began in the ESOL class but it blossomed as we participated in Juntas and later in the south Philly immigration committee. Over time, María, her children and I took trips together to the children’s museum, had dozens of picnics in the park, and shared pictures of our days when we did not see each other. Olivia Mamá and I also became close friends after we began Juntas, originally discussing the committee and eventually enjoying lunch dates together, and keeping in touch by phone on days we did not see each other. Starting with Juntas, the Olivias and María began to build a friendship as well. Often, when talking with one of them, they would praise the other one, and in committee discussions, they always encouraged the other. In this way, the Juntas committee sparked intricate friendships among us, which spanned the rest of the work we did together at Juntos, well after the Juntas committee went to sleep. This mutual care made our learning from each other deeply relational, and our organizing together nourishing of a communal sense of being.

Each Juntas committee meeting began by sharing “our news”¹⁶: how we were feeling that week and any concerns we had based on our day-to-day lives since we last

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¹⁶ I learned about this activity, originally named “Class News” from Elsa Roberts Auerbach’s Making Meaning Making Change: Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL Literacy (1992) book. Given that I knew committees were conceptualized at Juntos as educational spaces, this activity to center the sharing of and learning from people’s experiences each week seemed fitting. Later, when I participated in the immigration committees in south Philadelphia and Norristown, I learned that committees at Juntos organically started with people sharing current “news” from their lives each week, so that this popular education tool was already a natural part of committee structures.
met. Across our first set of gatherings, for example, we discussed learning English in the context of our lives as part of our committee work. We also decided to have educational workshops around the prevention of child abuse and sexual assault in our communities, as well as on mental health support related to these experiences. In our discussions, the women shared testimonials, stressing the need to learn more about preventing abuse and wanting to teach others about these issues so that the knowledge would become communal. Our meeting structure involved devoting the last part of our sessions to learning about the current work of other committees, and on specifying tasks we wanted to take on to address issues we had identified, and/or related to other Juntos committees and events.  

During a Juntas meeting in summer 2015, Erika brought an audio recording that she had snuck out of the Berks Family Detention Center when she had visited undocumented mothers and children incarcerated there. Many of the mothers were currently on a labor strike to protest their captivity. Berks, as those organizing to shut down the center call it, is a detention site for undocumented mothers and children that is operated by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) on behalf of Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and located in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Every day, Berks is able to incarcerate up to 96 immigrant children and mothers (National Immigrant Justice Center, 2015). Each of the people being held there has an

17 Based on these decisions regarding workshops, I set out to bring a sexual assault and child abuse mental health counselor who works in a local organization to our committee to give workshops. I also looked into getting formally trained on these issues, so I could better support our committee work. Juntas stopped meeting regularly in late Fall 2016 because Olivia Mamá began taking ESOL classes in another section of the city during the evenings that our group could meet and none of the other women in the committee felt ready to co-facilitate with me. After a discussion as a committee, we decided to wait until Olivia Mamá finished her Winter class and was able to co-facilitate with me. Everyone supported her enrolling in this course and it was understood the committee would return. Olivia’s ESOL evening classes continued through my time at Juntos, so I did not co-facilitate the committee again during my time as a Juntos intern.
open asylum case being reviewed by the United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS). According to U.S. immigration policies, children cannot be held for longer than 20 days (Lee, 2015); however, there are mothers and children inside who have been incarcerated for more than 450 days and some children have been jailed as young as one month old and through their first years of life. Among the many human rights violations experienced by children and mothers at Berks are the sexual assault of a mother in front of her child by a Berks staff; mothers being made to work for one dollar a day in order to be able to purchase basic items like soap; families being fed expired moldy food, and an unaddressed outbreak of shigella, a contagious gastrointestinal illness that spread quickly among the children being incarcerated (Vourvoulias, 2016).

During the summer of 2015, mothers at Berks began carrying out a work strike in order to call attention to their and their children’s plight. Juntos learned about the abuses they experienced a few months before this strike and has since been a leader in the #ShutDownBerks Coalition, which is made up of multiple local and regional organizations working to close the Center.

The audio that Erika played during our Juntas meeting was an incarcerated mother’s testimonial about the abuses she and others were experiencing inside. In it, she recounted both the instance of sexual assault and the ongoing appearance of a fungus in children’s genitalia that had been affecting the children for weeks and had not yet been treated by staff. At that summer meeting, María began to cry while listening to the recording and walked out of the room a few minutes in, saying she could not listen anymore. Soon after, Erika stopped playing the audio, sparing the women from listening to the whole testimonial.
Once María returned, Olivia Mamá noted that the mothers and children locked away inside Berks could have been any of them. She asked us not to pity those robbed of their freedom but to recognize the valor and defiance of injustice that carrying out a labor strike showed. She urged the group to show up for these families and to protest at Berks. María emphasized how important it was to have learned that Berks exists, and to understand its existence as representative of well-cemented racism, to see this as more than inhumane punishment for crossing an imposed border. Olivia Hija agreed with her mother’s and María’s statements and encouraged all the women to tell everyone in the community about Berks. A few women told us they could not go to Berks County to protest; they had to pick up their kids at school in the early afternoons or could not take off from work. Erika brought up having a poster-making session, so that people who could not protest at Berks could still contribute to shutting it down. All agreed to take part in such a session (Fieldnotes, July 8, 2015).

The stories above highlight how Latinx immigrants at Juntos – in this case Latina immigrant women across generations and citizenship status – engage in critical literacy practices (Auerbach, 2005; Freire, 1970; Knight et al, 2006) such as testimonials (Latina
Feminist Group, 2001) to facilitate a communal pedagogy for organizing against oppression. They also provide key insights into how critical literacy practices are mobilized intergenerationally towards a resistance of injustice grounded in relational learning.

Based on analysis of instances like the ones portrayed above, this chapter will show that through the events, actions and campaigns that arise from Juntos committees, Latinx immigrants learn from and teach each other in order to together build shared intergenerational knowledge, a communal sense of being and action for the defense of their rights. Furthermore, this chapter will argue that in this context, critical literacy practices facilitate a communal pedagogy of resistance, and in turn, that this pedagogy nourishes the critical literacy practices that sustain it.

I use the term “communal pedagogy of resistance” to mean the pedagogy enacted in homes and communal spaces (i.e., community organizations, streets and parks) that grows from the facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), or the critical consciousness and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) of oppressed people at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). A communal pedagogy of resistance is enacted in the in-between spaces where these communities (such as Latinx immigrants) dwell, in order to do the following: 1) expand our sense of who belongs in our families and communities; 2) to enhance our sense of being interdependent and interconnected to others in a shared communal being; and 3) to learn from each other’s differing experiences of oppression across generations, communities and beyond blood-relationships in order to build and act on a vision of justice that protects all of us.

Altogether, in this chapter and in the study overall, I argue that critical literacy practices
and a communal pedagogy of resistance are the central means through which Latinx immigrants organize intergenerationally for their rights.

In order to make this exploration most cohesive and clear, the analysis in this chapter is largely focused on the literacies and pedagogy of the #ShutDownBerks Campaign, which was introduced in the opening story above. During my time as a practitioner at Juntos, this campaign was at the forefront of the organization’s work, so I had the privilege of closely participating in it. This chapter will also briefly examine a number of local organizing practices outside of the Campaign, particularly when these examples enhance the analysis of Juntos’s intergenerational mobilization of critical literacies and communal pedagogy of resistance.

In the section that follows, I review the theoretical arguments and concepts that frame this chapter and Chapter 4. Next, I analyze central instances of Latinx immigrants’ intergenerational engagement of critical literacies and communal pedagogy of resistance at Juntos during the #ShutDownBerks Campaign and beyond. I close with a brief review of this chapter’s findings and their relationships to Chapter 4, where Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance will be examined through lenses of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Lorde, 1984) and intermeshing (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) in the context of regional and national Juntos organizing with communities within and beyond those who identify as Latinx.

Theoretical Framework

As presented in the introduction, over the last decade, organizing for immigrant rights in the United States has been largely intergenerational, particularly among Latinx
immigrant communities (e.g., Bloemraad & Trost, 2008, 2011; Gonzales, 2014; Pallares, 2015; Pallares & Flores-Gonzales, 2011; Wilkin et al., 2009). Given this feature, and alongside my research questions on how Latinx immigrants organize for their rights and how literacies are mobilized in this process, I review scholarship in the following areas: 1) key arguments and concepts related to intergenerational political socialization among immigrants; 2) intergenerational literacies and learning; 3) critical literacy and education; and 4) organizing as educational practice. Altogether, this section will show how existing theories on these issues have shaped my study, and how my research builds and/or contributes this intersecting body of work.

**Intergenerational Socialization, Learning & Mobilization of Latinx Immigrants**

I begin this theoretical overview by defining the concepts used in this chapter and in the dissertation to study intergenerational organizing in the context of immigrant rights. I do this in order to locate this study and clarify its terms. Political science scholars studying immigrant organizing use phrases like “build political power” (Terriquez & Kwon, 2015), as well as terms like “political socialization” (Bloemraad & Trost, 2011; Terriquez & Kwon, 2015; Wong & Tseng, 2008) and “political mobilization” (e.g. Bloemraad & Trost, 2011), to refer to the process of organizing. These terms are not defined identically but they are understood to be part of the overall process of becoming and being politically organized alongside others.

Specifically, based on research on the 2006 Mega Marches for immigrant rights that mobilized 3.7 to 5 million people across the United States (Bloemraad, Voss & Lee, 2011), Bloemraad & Trost (2011) define “political socialization” as “the process of
acquiring or developing attitudes, values, beliefs, skills, and behaviors related to public affairs and politics” (p.181). Relatively, they define “intergenerational mobilization” as “the processes by which people acquired information, were spurred to participate, and joined in the [2006 Mega Marches] protests because of their family interactions” (2011, p. 182). Using these two definitions, this study views political socialization as an educational process and as necessary to the process of political mobilization. Thus, these two concepts are employed interchangeably with “organizing” in this chapter.

Further, both political science researchers studying political mobilization in relationship to families, and educational researchers studying learning in family contexts, use terms like “intergenerational”, as well as phrases like “top-down” (to refer to parents shaping children’s engagement), “bottom-up” or “trickle up” (children shaping parent’s engagement), and “bi-directional” (parents and children influencing each other) to discuss learning, socialization and mobilization dynamics across generations within families. Thus, these are also conceptualizations of socialization and learning that guide this study and that are used in this chapter.

Analysis in this research builds on the claim that the political socialization that takes place among immigrant families in the U.S. (including Latinx immigrant ones) is bidirectional (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008, 2011; Pallares & Flores-Gonzalez, 2011;

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18 In a footnote (p.196), Bloemraad & Trost (2011) highlight that sociologists of childhood (e.g., Orellana, 2001; Thorne, 1987) have noted their reservations regarding the use of the term “socialization” because they believe this term disregards the agency of youth and assumes this process to be about being prepared for the future and not about the present. Bloemraad & Trost (2011) choose to use this term because it is the prevalent one used in literature on the topic they call “political learning”. Like them, in this framework section I use this term due to its crucial use in the literature. However, in the rest of the chapter I resort to “organizing” as a way to capture both political learning and action. I mention these terms here and include this footnote to be clear that my research is in conversation with political scientists studying the political socialization and mobilization of immigrants in the U.S.
Terriquez & Kwon, 2015; Wong & Tseng, 2008; Wilkin, Katz & Ball-Rokeach, 2009). Building on this work, this chapter is grounded on the challenging of prior research on this topic which, based on studies with U.S. born populations, conceptualized a top-down model (Greenstein, 1965; Torney-Purta, 1967) and later of a “trickle up effect” (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). Like the studies on immigrant socialization and mobilization noted above, this study views families as “sites where information, networks, and institutional experiences can be pooled…[and as sites that] allow bidirectional political socialization across generations and [that also] facilitate the interactive process of political learning, opinion formation, and mobilization” (Bloemraad & Trost, 2008, p. 525). This means that in this work, families are conceptualized as fundamental sites of teaching, learning and action for immigrant rights.

In their study of immigrant political socialization, Terriquez & Kwon’s (2015) have argued that this political learning bi-directionality is accentuated when immigrant youth are involved in activist community-based organizations. The findings presented in this chapter respond to questions raised by these scholars, as well as by Wong & Tseng (2008), about the role of activist community-based organizations in the political mobilization of immigrants, as the data here presented is contextualized in the work of Juntos as a community-based organization that mobilizes youth and adults together.

My research posits that civic engagement and political action among Latinx immigrant families is not confined to the intergenerational interactions within traditionally defined family units but that it also involves interactions and teaching and learning among people from the same household, neighborhood, and larger community (Wilkin, Katz & Ball-Rokeach, 2009). This is an argument that Wilkin et. al. (2009) also
made based in prior research that contends that the process of migrating and settling in the U.S. produces changes in traditional Latinx immigrant family structures (Domínguez & Watkins, 2003; Kibria, 1994; Menjivar, 2000 as cited by Wilkin et al., 2009, p. 392), and that these have led to the existence of households that are “composed of a combination of friends and relatives” (Wilkin et al., 2009, p. 392). According to these authors, these transformations require us to conceive of Latinx immigrant families beyond traditional family unit definitions and to take up conceptualizations that incorporate additional arrangements, such as “single parents, civil unions, grandparents as caretakers, and other configurations” (p. 390).

This point is consequential for the framing of my study because it raises the question of how individual and collective political mobilization is influenced by relationships among people within, but also well beyond traditional and alternative family units. In the women’s committee, for example, all of the mothers were part of non-traditional family structures, sharing households with other mothers and families, including members of their partner’s family, or renting rooms in their apartments and homes to immigrant non-relative individuals without family nearby, so that together they could pool resources to meet rent, utilities, etc.

As analysis in this study will show there are a set of issues that this nascent body of research on intergenerational political socialization of immigrants must give increased attention to, mainly: 1) that many Latinx immigrant family units also feature non-traditional configurations; 2) that there are Latinx immigrants who do not have family in the U.S. and therefore do not become politically socialized or mobilized here through
local familial relationships\textsuperscript{19}; 3) that relationships between people outside of traditional and non-traditional family units can play powerful roles in shaping the socialization and mobilization of Latinx immigrant individuals and families; and relatedly, that 4) how Latinx immigrants themselves conceptualize of “family,” of their “community”, and/or of “their people” impacts why and how they learn and mobilize politically.

Based on these points, this study centers family units (traditionally and non-traditionally conceptualized) as well as the intergenerational learning and political mobilization relationships that exist outside of genetic bonds. In important ways, my work then builds on Wilkin et al.’s (2009) concern with the interactions between people who are part of the same social network and larger community. Conceiving of the process of intergenerational learning as central to the socialization and mobilization of Latinx immigrants, this study also builds on literature that argues that intergenerational learning may be conceptualized more broadly as a process where “a wide array of participants [engage in] learning and teaching each other…[and] “include[s] more than the family” (Gadsden & Hall, 1996, p.6; Gadsden, 2002). It also understands that intergenerational learning is a process that may be “informal…[and] no longer transmitted by the family alone and, increasingly, [one that] is occurring outside of the family” (Bratianu & Orzea, 2012, p. 604 citing Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008, p.31). Newman & Hatton-Yeo (2008)

\textsuperscript{19} Though this study will note examples of this in Chapter 4, here I want to consider in this argument the case of an undocumented man in his fifties who is a member of Juntos and has been in the U.S. for more than twenty years, without having children or remarrying. I met him in November 20, 2014, the night that then President Obama announced his executive order on the expansion of DACA (providing temporary relief to a selection of undocumented youth) and introduction of DAPA (temporary relief to a group of undocumented parents of U.S.-born children), at a Juntos gathering. After the announcement of the order, local media interviewed him and I translated for him in this interaction. In his interview, he emphasized that he had been here for decades and none of the executive orders would provide deportation protection for him. Yet he celebrated this opening for others and remained committed to keep organizing until everyone was protected from criminalization and deportation. He is an example of the many people who do not become politically socialized into the immigrant rights movement in the U.S. through familia ties here.
have referred to this intergenerational learning dynamic that extends beyond the family as “extrafamilial” (p.31). This is an idea that I take up in this study as I show that Latinx immigrants organize through a communal pedagogy of resistance that facilitates intergenerational and extrafamilial learning that is multidirectional.

In relation to these expansions of family and intergenerational relationships, this study further investigates how immigrant Latinx communities define who belongs to their family, community or “their people” and how this may influence their political mobilization. Speaking to this issue, Pallares & Flores-Gonzalez’s (2011) scholarship on the immigrant rights movement that led to the 2006 Mega Marches in Chicago argue that its organizing was framed by the “common referent of family”, including “family preservation” and “family separation” (p. 161). Further, they note that in the mobilization for immigrant rights, many immigrant youth “take a more encompassing definition of family that includes notions of “my people” as an “all encompassing term that includes co-ethnics, other U.S.-born Latinos, and immigrants of any legal status” (p. 172).

Moreover, Pallares & Flores-Gonzalez (2011) also posit that this expanded notion of family, of community and therefore of one’s own people, is related to the racialization of immigrants, particularly of undocumented immigrants (citing Chavez, 2001, 2008; Santa Ana, 2002). They add that this racialization process and the related conceptual expansion of one’s family and one’s people often lead Latinx youth to understand that “most Latinos are affected by immigration” (p. 172). Rooted in this scholarship, my study also contends that racialization processes shape how Latinx immigrants (youth and adults alike) locate and relate to other people within and across generations, as well as how they conceptualize family, and what family means in the struggle for their rights.
In addition, my analysis will contribute to the argument — made by Amalia Pallares in her book *Family Activism: Immigrant Struggles and the Politics of Noncitizenship* (2015) — that in organizing for their rights, Latinx immigrants expand their sense of family, so that “family has become a site of collective identification, bonding communities that do not easily have a shared collective identity” (p.134), of “challenging the categorizations of deserving and underserving by blurring the previous boundaries, and of representing a more inclusive community of all the undocumented” (p.135). By looking at ways in which Latinx immigrants mobilize literacies and a communal pedagogy of resistance to expand their conceptualization of who and how someone belongs to their family, as well as what their conceptualization of family is, my study will show that family encompasses those “with whom we build a common cause” (Hames-Garcia, 2011; Lorde, 1984), and consider its implications.

*Literacy as Social Practice*

Central to understanding the relationship between intergenerational learning and the political mobilization of Latinx immigrants, this study is concerned with examining literacy in the context of this organizing process. Literacy is here defined as ideological sociocultural practice (Heath, 1984; Gee, 1992; Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007; Street, 1984). This is a conceptualization of literacy put forth by New Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars who build on Paulo Freire’s (1970) argument that education is ideological to posit that literacy reflects and is shaped by power, culture, identities, local and mainstream privileged practices and ideologies. Thus, literacy in this dissertation is not understood as a neutral or “autonomous” skillset that can be transferred from one person to another and that has cognitive consequences (Street, 1984). Instead, literacy here is
conceptualized as critical sociocultural practice shaped by the identities of those engaging in them, and by the ideological contexts and goals in which these practices occur.

**Intergenerational & Critical Literacies**

Similarly, the concept of “intergenerational literacies” employed in this work follows from a sociocultural and ideological understanding of literacy. It is focused on how sociocultural and ideological literacies facilitate and are involved in “the transmission of knowledge and behavior from one generation to the next” (Gadsden, 2002, p. 259), as well as from earlier generations to older ones within and beyond the family unit. Therefore, this study pays attention to the bidirectional (e.g. Terriquez & Kwon, 2015) and extrafamilial (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008) dynamics of intergenerational literacies as they relate to the political learning, socialization and mobilization in Latinx immigrant communities.

Importantly, although I do believe that literacy and education are ideological in that their practices reflect and put forth particular political visions of the world (Freire, 1973), this dissertation does not explore literacy as a liberatory tool, or as having liberatory consequences in and of itself. Instead, in this chapter I explore what happens when “literacy is mobilized or education is shared in the context of a political project” (Auerbach, 2005, p.363), specifically the Latinx immigrant-led political project of defending and advocating for human rights.

Though critical literacies have been widely defined by educators and scholars over many decades (e.g., Bishop, 2016; Janks, 2010; Morrell, 2008; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Vazquez, 2004), this study holds that critical literacies are those used to
“read [and re/write] the word and the world” (Freire & Macedo, 1987) through careful attention to issues of power, oppression and in/justice.

In addition, this study builds on the conceptualization of “critical literacies” as “feminist affirmations and interventions” (Knight, Dixon, Norton & Bently, 2006, p.41). This is a conceptualization that Knight et al. (2006) compose based on their linking of Chicana/Latina feminist epistemologies, pedagogies and methodologies (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Delgado Bernal, 2006; The Latina Feminist Group, 2002; Sandoval, 2000; Yosso, 2005) to the Freirean and New Literacy Studies definitions of literacy and critical literacy noted above. As “feminist affirmations and interventions” (Knight et al., 2006), critical literacies in this dissertation are demonstrated to be essential to Latinx immigrants’ engagement in “intersectional analyses…[that] unearth how interlocking oppressions operate on multiple axes (Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; The Latina Feminist Group, 2001)” (Knight et al., 2006, p.41) in their communities and lives. It is important to note that the use of the term “critical literacies” in this study encompasses the notion of literacy as critical social practice that was reviewed in the section above.

Chicana/Latina Feminist Pedagogies

Borrowing from Knight et al (2006), I believe that critical literacies are fundamental to what feminist Chicana scholars have referred to as “Chicana/Latina feminist pedagogies” or the “culturally specific ways of organizing teaching and learning in informal sites such as the home... [which] embrace Chicana and Mexicana ways of knowing and [which] extend beyond formal schooling” (Elenes, Delgado Bernal, Gonzalez, Trinidad & Villenas, 2000 as cited by Delgado Bernal, 2006, p. 114). I
conceptualize Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance as belonging to the family of Chicana/Latina feminist pedagogies in that they take place in informal communal learning sites and center feminist ways of knowing and being that arise from the *borderlands* (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007).

**A Resource Orientation to the Educational Practices of Immigrant Communities**

Lastly, this study follows from a growing and vital body of knowledge that takes a resource orientation to the educational, linguistic and literacy practices of immigrant students and families (e.g., Moll, Gonzalez, Amanti, 1992; Campano, Ghiso, Welch, 2016; Campano, 2007; Gallo & Link, 2014; Ghiso, 2016; Delgado-Gaitán, 2005; Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez & Villenas, 2006; Rivera & Laván, 2012; Trueba, 1988, 1991; Zentella, 2005). The findings I present in this study aim to deepen our understanding of the complexity and richness of the communal literacy practices and pedagogies of Latinx immigrants across generations and heterogeneous identities.

**Organizing as an Educational Practice**

Lastly, this study views organizing as educational practice. In their conversations on education and social change documented in the book *We Make The Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change* (1990), organizers and critical educators Miles Horton & Paulo Freire argue that organizing is not only a political process but an educational process as well (p.118). Specifically, they argue that “education is before, is during, and is after” the process of organizing, and that organizing is “an educational process and product” (p. 119).
Similarly, combining organizing and adult education, in his book *Learning in Social Action* (1999), Griff Foley argues that “some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to work out ways to do something about it” (p.1-2). This concern with the learning that happens in the process of social action is also present in scholarship on organizing (e.g., Moses et al., 1989; Sen, 2003; Walia, 2013).

Furthermore, education scholars, such as Oakes, Rogers & Lipton (2006), have argued that organizing is “community learning based on a “curriculum” of common interests” (p.107) that builds towards transformative equity. Similarly, literacy scholar Elizabeth Bishop (2015), who studied the literacy practices of youth organizers in New York City, contends that youth activists’ organizing “engage[s] in forms of critically literate praxis through continual processes of ideological inquiry, critique and strategic social action” (p.34 citing Ginwright & Cammarotta, 2007; Larson & Hansen, 2005). Importantly, Bishop argues that literacy and education research would benefit from “learning about and refining pedagogical models based on organizing” (Bishop, 2013, p. 183). Building on the literature included here, my research views organizing as educational practice. This belief is the fabric of this study on the educational practices of Latinx immigrant organizing. Findings from this research will provide insights into how intergenerational critical literacies and a communal pedagogy facilitate organizing, or how organizing is an educational practice that involves critical literacy.
Part I: The Critical Literacies of Juntos as Communal Pedagogy of Resistance

In this section, I examine how Latinx immigrant communities through Juntos mobilized intergenerational critical literacies in the context of the #ShutDownBerks Campaign. I explore how these literacies facilitated a communal pedagogy of resistance that sparked mobilization for this Campaign.

**Critical Literacies that Affirm Justice and Intervene Against Oppressions**

Based on conversations across committees about the detention of families and children at Berks, and the need to start up the #ShutDownBerks Campaign, Juntos hosted a community poster-making workshop with local artist Michelle Angela Ortiz\(^\text{20}\). The morning of the event, about thirty children, youth, parents and elders came together to create signs that we could all carry with us and hold high during what would be the first of many coalitional protests of the detention center over the next year and beyond.

As I joined those in the room that morning, Michelle asked us to gather together in a circle and think of words and images that we wanted the women and children inside to see when they looked out the window and saw us protesting the Center. She asked us to consider this question: What images, words and sentences could send strong messages to both the incarcerated children and mothers, as well as to those keeping them there, and why? Following this, Michelle asked us to get into smaller intergenerational groups, and to reflect together on this question in order to come up with different ideas for the images and words for individual posters that each group would make. In small intergenerational

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\(^{20}\) Michelle Angela has done multiple intergenerational art projects with Juntos. Her website michelleangela.com provides videos and greater detail on these projects.
groups, people began charting out ideas on paper, considering words, images and colors, discussing final designs and making the posters.

By mobilizing critical literacy practices to communally create political posters defying immigrant detention, Latinx immigrant children, youth and adults collectively intervened against anti-immigrant, imperialistic, racist, sexist, homo/transphobic discourses and abuses. They also affirmed, in Spanish and English, their own and the detained Berks families’ humanity and power. The posters, not all pictured below, are examples of a central argument of this dissertation: that Latinx immigrant critical literacies are integral to these communities’ communal mobilization.
Across the following year, I heard numerous reflections from community members on that morning’s literacy event (Heath, 1983). As will be shown below, María’s analysis of why and how she took part in this session, as well as Olivia’s explanation of the poster she made with her daughter, detail the ways that the poster making as a critical literacy event functioned as a “feminist affirmation and intervention” (Knight et al., 2006) that was central to the communal pedagogy of resistance that is at the core of Juntos’s immigrant rights organizing. Their shared experiences also provide insights into the important role that art plays in shaping the literacies, learning and organizing of these communities.

Reflecting the complexity of Juntos’s communal pedagogy, the Berks posters-making pedagogical session involved listening to parts of the audio testimonial from a detained mother, learning about additional unjust conditions and laws pertaining to this
situation. It involved exploring together the role played by anti-immigrant and imperialist discourses in the creation and maintenance of border walls and detention centers. It also included sharing additional testimonials of abuse and of defiance in small groups, and learning from each other about these in order to select images and words rooted in real experiences of oppression which would powerfully respond to injustice. Thus, this process entailed mobilizing critical literacies as feminist affirmations and interventions that lead to a communal pedagogy of resistance.

As seen in Figure 3.3, this literacy event resulted in feminist affirmations such as “My Tears Are Not From Pain, They Are From VALOR”; “Chosen Families Know No Borders #Undocuqueer”; “Our Voice Is Our Weapon” and “The Wall Might Be Tall But My Freedom Is Higher!” It also resulted in feminist interventions, such as “LIBERTAD”/ “FREEDOM”; “Abuse, Exploitation and Mistreatment Must Stop Now!” and “Stop Deportations Now!” Alongside the affirmations, these interventions acknowledge and respond to multiple oppressions that intersect, mutually shape each other and intermesh (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Crenshaw, 1991; Hames-García, 2011; Lorde, 1984, Lugones, 2014), which is an issue that will be further examined in Chapter 4. Some of these oppressions include, for example, homophobia and transphobia as intermeshing with xenophobia and racism, as seen in the #undocuqueer affirmation poster in Figure 3.3. Another affirmation and at once intervention, which acknowledges and resists the fusion of oppressions, is the one shown in the “My Tears Are Not From Pain, They Are From VALOR” poster in Figure 3.3 because it challenges the discourse that undocumented immigrants, particularly women, are weak and/or are victims to be pitied.
During my interview with Olivia Hija and Olivia Mamá – who are pictured in Figure 3.3 holding the “My Tears Are Not From Pain They Are From VALOR” sign they made together – Olivia Mamá brought up this poster. The process of making the poster had involved discussing personal experiences of oppression. As part of this process of learning and building together with others, she had shared a testimonial about her reaction to hurtful assumptions about her as an undocumented single mother. In our conversation about the meaning behind the poster, she demonstrated her facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) and her mestiza identity, or her being at the crossroads of racism, classism, sexism and patriarchy (Sandoval, 1998).

First, Olivia Mamá noted that often people will demonstrate pity towards her and towards our immigrant community, assuming – in ways she finds sexist, classist, paternalistic and reflective of racist and imperialistic dynamics – that she and families like hers are to be pitied, especially if she is seen crying. Though she acknowledges she does feel a lot of pain as an undocumented single mother, she sees pain and crying as part of her humanity. She does not see it as something that makes her less strong or capable, or as her being less than someone else, or in a position that is void of agency. The poster’s text is a direct intervention in this troublesome dynamic and fusion of oppressions because it says: “My tears are not from pain, they are from VALOR” (Figure 3.3). In other words, her tears demonstrate her humanity, power and agency as an undocumented single mother raising two children on her own.

She further explains the sign by saying: “sometimes you don’t cry out of pain but because you are feeling so angry and so you say to yourself ‘I am going to fight!’” She continues, “We can fight! We are very many and if a few of us start we can become many
more"21 (Interview, April 6, 2016). In her explanations of the act of crying and how it is and could be perceived by others, she emphasizes that feeling sad or angry can be mobilized for individual and collective social action, and for envisioning a larger populous movement. Made from the epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) of an intergenerational group of people at the borderlands, this poster is a critical text that challenges dominant deficitizing assumptions about women, women of color, women of color who are single mothers, undocumented mothers, and undocumented immigrant communities (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014). It is thus protective of many communities at once.

Overall, as a literacy event, or what literacy anthropologist Shirley Brice Heath (1983) has called “any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role” (p.386), this poster making session facilitated Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance. This is so because it shows Latinx immigrant children, youth and adults learning together in a community space based on each other’s testimonials. They are learning in a manner that mobilizes their facultad, or critical consciousness and epistemic privilege, and in a way that is inclusive of differences in identities and experiences while expanding a sense of communal interdependence and building a shared envisioning and acting upon injustice.

Critical Literacies that Expand Communal Sense of Being

The relationship between critical literacies and Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is reflected specifically when María (one of the undocumented mothers who

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21 This conversation took place in Spanish and I translated it into English.
was part of Juntos’s women’s committee) explains why she brought her son, Erick, to the collective literacy event of poster making that morning. She says,

I had asked my son to come with me to the activity where we created signs as a way for him to live with the community, to know how we think, how we work, how we help each other within the community, so that he does not stop speaking the language. He is learning about our culture, about our customs and learning more in order to be just. (Interview February 22, 2016)

María’s explanation highlights how essential the act of engaging in an intergenerational critical literacy practice with others is to the process of taking part in communal learning and teaching across generations, particularly in regards to learning/teaching about the cultures, practices and customs of Latinx communities and about solidarity and interdependence. When María says: “He…is learning more in order to be just”, she is speaking to the goal of organizing, or of the “communal pedagogy of resistance” for immigrant rights, which involves people seeking to be “just” through collective teaching, learning, envisioning, building, mobilizing and making possible a more “just” world. Her explanation shows that this critical literacy event functioned as a tool for engaging in an intergenerational and communal pedagogy of resistance in order to, alongside others, become more just, and thus, turn our world into a more just place. Reflecting Latina feminist epistemologies (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Sandoval, 2000), María’s enactment of this pedagogy foregrounds the learning of Latinx immigrant communities’ culture, customs and language [Spanish].

Getting further into additional intergenerational and communal aspects of this pedagogy that takes place through this literacy event, María adds:

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22 This interview was originally in Spanish and I translated it for the purpose of this chapter.
I brought my daughter so that she will learn from the example we set as parents fighting for justice, fighting for something good. I want her to learn this from her early years. This country is not like ours; many customs and ideologies are different from ours. As a mother and an immigrant, I want my children to learn that there is much injustice in the world…. Families who are being detained in these facilities deserve freedom. Not everything in this country is bad but as immigrants we do not have equality, we must fight for our equality! (Interview February 22, 2016)

In her position as a mother, as an indigenous woman and immigrant, we see clearly how María conceptualizes this critical literacy event as importantly contributing to her goal of teaching her children to see her own and other parents’ actions in fighting for justice, as exemplary. Engaging in this critical literacy event together provides an opportunity for children and youth to learn from the culturally informed actions of their elders as they learn that there is “much injustice in the world.” María aims for her children’s participation in intergenerational literacy events to offer them a means to “fight for…equality!”. Like Olivia Mamá, she engages critical literacies in a way that affirms Latinx immigrant agency.

Significantly, María is careful to state that she wants her children to learn from others beyond herself in this space. In doing so, she is expanding the definition of family, and expanding the relationships of learning/teaching beyond the bi-directionality of parent↔child. She consistently uses the pronoun “we” (“we must fight”; “we do not have equality”; “example we set as parents”; “how we think”; “how we work”; “how we help each other”) to refer to herself as belonging to a larger community, and to refer to her children learning from the larger “we”.

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23 This interview was originally in Spanish and I translated it for the purpose of this chapter.
In this way, she alludes to the fact that the learning she is encouraging, and therefore the teaching that takes place here, is not limited to bi-directional relationships between parents and children within one family, household or setting (Wilkin et al, 2009; Gadsden & Hall, 1996; Gadsden, 2002; Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008). Instead, her recurrent “we” points to the multidirectionality of intergenerational learning (Gadsden & Hall, 1996; Gadsden, 2002) in an expansive extrafamilial (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2009) community that is interconnected and interdependent.

Protest as Pedagogical Site of Communal Resistance

A week after the poster-making session, about fifteen Juntos members traveled by bus to Berks and joined other community members who belonged to organizations that are part of the #ShutDownBerks Coalition. From the women’s committee, Olivia Mamá and María, along with Olivia Hija, were able to make the trip. María came with Itzel, and they each held a poster made during the session with Michelle Angela (see Figure 4).

Figure 3.4. María holds “Hope” poster at #ShutDownBerks protest in Summer 2015. In this figure María (center) and her daughter (right) hold the posters made intergenerationally at Juntos workshop with local artist Michelle Angela Ortiz. This photograph was taken by Steve Pavey (stevepavey.com).

María’s poster features a black silhouette of her profile and it is the same one used for the VALOR poster Olivia described. In this poster, there are also tears falling down
her face but the only word that accompanies the image is “HOPE”. She created this sign
with her teenage son Erick, not pictured here, and with the Olivias. Describing the poster
to me during a conversation we had in February 2016 to prepare our presentation at the
Ethnography Forum, María said: “as community members we chose these words and
these images to show that even in our lowest moments there is always hope… ICE cannot
take away our hope to be free” (Fieldnotes February 22, 2016). Her poster is a feminist
affirmation of her and the larger community’s power in the face of a state apparatus that
everyday strives to take away their hope.

Everyone at the protest cried a lot but doing so only fueled our hope. Most of us at
this Berks protest had never been there before. While we were there, some of the detained
children and mothers were led out of the building with staff to a small grassy area to the
right of the detention center. Though far from us, we could see the children and the
mothers waving at us, demonstrating they could see us. At one time, a chant got started
that energetically repeated this statement: “El que no brinca es migrante!” or “Whoever does
not jump is a member of ICE!” which we chanted while jumping up and down. During
this particular chant, the children and mothers detained who were outside and could see
us also began jumping up and down with us as the chant got repeated.

This was an incredibly moving moment, as there was direct communication
across the invisible border that separated the incarcerated families from those of us
protesting their detainment across the street from them. María, Itzel, Olivia Mamá and
Olivia Hija, and dozens of other community members were crying while chanting,
jumping, and holding up their signs. Our chanting – itself a critical literacy practice –
kept us moving despite how distraught we were.
Feeling the heaviness and energy of this moment again as I write, I realize that I had never in person seen children incarcerated. I never imagined I ever would. The sight of detained children and mothers, who could not walk towards us and leave with us on the bus back to Philly, was profoundly heartbreaking. The protest chants and songs we screamed and sang, which are also critical texts composed and expressed as feminist “affirmations” and “interventions” (Knight et al., 2006), allowed us to affirm the humanity and the hope of the mothers and children, as well as ours, while also intervening in, and interrupting, the solitary and harsh nature of immigrant detention through the collective act of, along with those incarcerated across the way from us, jumping up and down and chanting to call out ICE/injustice.

**Music Making as Critical Literacy Practice for Communal Resistance**

Another critical literacy event took place at the Berks protest when an intergenerational Mexican folk music group called *Son Revolta* started playing son jarocho music. *Son Revolta*, which in English translates to a play with words that more-less means “They Are Revolt”\(^\text{24}\), got started in 2014 by Yared, and fellow Latinx community musicians, as a project of Juntos. Since then, they have been running workshops at Juntos for Latinx immigrant youth and adults on learning how to play son jarocho using *jaranas*, the string instrument of this type of folk music from Veracruz, Mexico, and other folk instruments. These educational sessions involve the collective and intergenerational writing of popular *sones* (songs/melodies), *décimas* (ten-line stanza

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\(^{24}\) In Spanish, “son” means, “they are”, but also means “song”. “Revolta” alludes to the word “revolt” but also to dancing and general merriment.
poem-songs), and other songs that reflect the personal and political experiences of the people playing the music.

These songs are often collectively written through the re-writing of already existing collective sones written by other people, across histories and lands, drawing from their lives in struggles for equity and justice. Because this is so, when *Son Revoltura* members write sones and décimas, they are often crossing borders to establish ties between the struggles elsewhere and those experienced in their locations and lives.

The playing of *El Son de la Guacamaya* (The Macaw Song) by *Son Revoltura* at the Berks protest became a critical literacy event that disrupted the invisible border between the incarcerated families and us. As the retelling of this moment below will show, this critical literacy event affirmed our shared humanity, agency and hope. It strengthened the sense of shared being and feeling between the incarcerated families and protestors singing. Yared, who was not there that morning, was told about this moment by multiple people in the community and by members of the band afterwards. In their recounting, band members stressed how much they had learned from this critical literacy event about movement building through music. Yared here recalls what took place:

They were playing “El Son de la Guacamaya” [the macaw song] and “la guacamaya” has an estribillo [refrain] in it que dice [that says]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vuela vuelo vuelo</td>
<td>Fly, fly, fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vuela palomita</td>
<td>Fly little dove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si me has de querer mañana</td>
<td>If you are going to want/love me tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vámonos queriendo ahora</td>
<td>Let’s start loving/wanting today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vuela vuelo vuelo</td>
<td>Fly, fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vuela sin tardanza</td>
<td>Fly without delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mientras dura es la vida</td>
<td>While life is tough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugar tiene la esperanza</td>
<td>A place for hope exists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vuela vuela vuela Fly, fly, fly
Como yo volé Just as I flew
Mientras me llevaban presx While they were arresting me
Y yo sin saber por qué Without me knowing why
(Member Check Interview December 20, 2016).

She continues,

When they were singing “vuela vuela vuela”…. people on this side [protest side] of the detention center started flying [moving their arms like wings] and when the [detained] families started hearing “vuela vuela vuela” and seeing people flying, they started flying too! And I remember people from the Son group coming back afterwards and being like, ‘Oh my God, Yared! This was one of most beautiful things I’ve ever experienced!! You know, the families were flying with us! Our music was moving people, and uniting people and together we were fighting through it [the injustice]!’ And it was a beautiful moment, to see the members of the group realizing music can be a tool of…esperanza [hope]. (Member check, December 20, 2016)

In Yared’s retelling of the transgressive (hooks, 1994) critical literacy event that took place, she portrays how this music-facilitated literacy practice crushed an invisible border and built transformative and expansive community and hope between protesters and incarcerated families. As such, these literacies were “feminist interventions and affirmations” (Knight et al, 2006) used to re/read and re/write the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Further, we see how these facilitate teaching and learning about the integral role of music in/for resisting oppression. As Yared’s recounting of the impact this moment had on the community members/musicians shows, these critical literacies of music-making facilitated a communal pedagogy of resistance.

Since its founding at Juntos, Son Revolta has become a folk band that participates in Juntos’s and fellow activist organization’s protests and actions. In doing

25 In this stanza of the song, we see the neutral “x” being added to the end of a gendered verb in order to make it neutral, non-gendered, in the same way that the “x” is also put at the end of Latinx to be inclusive of the wide range of genders that exist in our Latinx communities. Chapter 4 addresses will address this language practice. However, I here want to highlight how this language practice expands who is part of our community in a way that is most inclusive of the heterogeneity of genders in our Latinx immigrant family.
so, the band’s popular poetry and music consistently facilitates critical literacy events that bring together differing communities and elevate shared hope. María and her family were not members of Son Revoltura back in summer of 2015 when this Berks protest happened. However, sometime after this protest, Erick began joining the weekly classes held at Juntos. Over time, his mother, little sister and eventually his father joined the band, as well. As a family, with fellow Son Revoltura intergenerational members, they have played in protests and gatherings in Philadelphia on social justice issues that span varied oppressions. Some of these have included a set of protests related to the disappearance and killing of the 43 Mexican students in 2014 by state police and drug cartels in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, and a protest against the “No” vote on the Peace Accords in Colombia in 2016. Thus, as part of Son Revoltura, Yared, Erick, Itzel, María and her husband mobilize critical literacies in ways that address other interrelated struggles beyond immigrant rights.

During my conversation with Yared about her analysis of the role that music plays in movements for justice, particularly son jarocho in the context of immigrant rights, she shared:

For one I think music creates community…[son jarocho] is a music that is intended to be played together, not to privilege one voice or one sound but to have everyone contributing to its creation. Making everyone a part of the creative process, we learn to build and grow together. It’s created a lot of community within us but then also it brings other people along, or it always makes the effort to, so no matter who is present it’s not meant to be exclusionary in any way. It’s not performance oriented. It’s ‘we are playing and you can play, too! Come be a part of this with us!’ (Member check, December 20, 216)

In her detailed description of the nature and practice of son jarocho music, images of communal composing and performance for a sense of shared belonging stand out. These
critical literacy practices, which involve re-reading, re-writing and collective singing
communal testimonials and shared knowledges of resistance does not foreground any individual and it does not exclude anyone. Its process is about inclusion, solidarity and shared building across borders, oppressions and histories. In this way, they reflect the approach to organizing of Latinx immigrant communities at Juntos.

The critical literacy practices mobilized by Latinx immigrants in the Juntas committee, the poster-making art workshop, the Berks’s protest’s chants and music, and the Son Revoltura workshops and crossmovement practices, were all facilitative of a communal pedagogy of resistance. They were also emotionally moving, and emotions are incredibly important sources of knowledge (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Dias-Strong, Luna-Duarte, Gomez, Meiners, 2014; Griffiths, 2009; Lorde, 1984) at the borderlands, and equally valuable sources of action. As Yared highlights below, being emotionally moved leads people to be physically move, to feel, learn, transform, and act:

Music creates hope and inspiration. For one, it moves people. It moves people physically, like ‘oh there’s a song and you’re dancing and you’re singing,’ but it also moves people emotionally. As you write things, and replay certain chords, those are things that strike people in certain ways and move people in certain directions. (Member check December 20, 2016)

It is in this being moved emotionally in “certain directions” through the communal re/writing, replaying, singing and belonging that change and action come about. This is shown when María is emotionally moved while listening to the audio recording of the mothers at Berks, for example. It is also visible in the flying and singing la guacamaya together across the invisible border between those incarcerated at Berks, feeling emotionally moved. In many ways, Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is rooted in mobilizing emotion and hope.
At Juntos, what I believe is at the heart of its organizing is a communal pedagogy that consistently centers and enables this kind of emotional and physical moving. This is a moving that is fundamentally communal because it is oriented towards shared belonging. It is this emotional and physical moving that I believe allows people to reach into, or get further in touch with their facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) or the critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) that results from our shared being at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007).

Lastly, as demonstrated by the critical literacy events and practices analyzed above, this pedagogy is part of a cycle in which critical literacies and a communal pedagogy of resistance consistently nourish each other with the goal of transgressing borders and building a powerful communal sense and movement for justice.

*Intergenerational Learning About Solidarity and Communal Being*

As intended, this first summer 2015 protest of Berks made it to the news. From there, the momentum was built for establishing a long-term coalitional campaign. The critical literacy events through testimonials, art and music that took place in preparation for and during the protest facilitated long-term lessons central to Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance.

A few weeks after our return from that first protest at Berks, Erika asked me whether I had heard what Erick, who was 12-years old at the time, had said to her upon our return from the Berks protest. On a separate occasion, Yared asked me the same thing. Erick’s words to his mother were reverberating around the community. Thus, when
I interviewed María in February 2016 after she had been to Berks twice, I asked whether she could share what Erick had said to her after her first visit to protest the Center. Pointing at the picture of the “HOPE” poster (Figure 3.4 above), she said:

The day this photo was taken, my son wanted to go to this march but he could not come because he did not want to miss school. But when I returned home with my daughter, my son told me he had watched the news and felt disappointed that we'd left the center leaving the families behind, and that we had not done more than to protest. He said to me: ‘Why did you not cross onto the side of the families to be with them? Why did you not challenge that law that doesn’t let you stand on their side?’ Hearing these questions from my son made me feel ashamed of myself but also proud that my son was teaching me about equality and freedom. He was teaching me how to really act in solidarity. (Interview, February 22, 2016)\textsuperscript{26}

Erick’s critical questions to his mother, which signal to his inquiries about what it means to be in, and show, solidarity, are an example of one effect that the intergenerational teaching and learning that happens at Juntos has on those organizing together. As part of his involvement in Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, Erick is inquires into what can actually be done in instances of injustice. Further, María very clearly acknowledges that, as his mother, she learns from his inquiries about “equality and freedom” about “how to really act in solidarity”.

Similarly, when Erika and Yared told me about these questions, we all noted that Erick was teaching us a lot through this response to our first visit to Berks. In a conversation with Erika about Erick’s response, Erika reflected: “He is so young and he is so clear...[he’s asking]...‘what’s it going to take?’” (Interview, April 25, 2016). His feelings of disappointment, and María’s feelings of shame, were emotions that we all experienced as well, when walking away from the detained mothers and children and getting into buses to head back to Philadelphia. We asked ourselves: What would it look

\textsuperscript{26} This interview was originally in Spanish and I translated it for the purpose of this chapter.
like to really demonstrate solidarity with these detained children and mothers? When I asked Erick about his comments to his mother, he said:

I gave her [his mother] my opinion, that they should’ve crossed to support the children and do something that could be significant to those at Berks… and I thought that before I came to know Juntos I was only a simple child, without many ideas, just doing my school work and getting my grades, but that since being at Juntos’s workshops I began to get interested in these issues… and from you all I have learned to be strong and not to stay silent, and to say what we have to demand. (Interview March 30, 2016)27

As his response demonstrates, Erick has raised these inquiries about solidarity as a result of his communal learning at Juntos, just as his mother intended. In turn, his inquiries are taken up by his mother and by many of us at Juntos, showing that intergenerational learning and teaching at Juntos is multidirectional and extrafamilial, taking place from community to child (Juntos to Erick), parent-to child (María to Erick), child-to-parent (Erick to María), child-to-community (Erick to Juntos), community to multiple members and back and around again. This communal learning and teaching at Juntos is facilitated by the critical literacies practices of Son Revoltura, the communal chanting at the Berks protests, and the poster-making art workshop, for example, and these in turn facilitate the communal pedagogy of resistance that nourished further critical literacies. As part of this cycle of intergenerational critical literacies and a communal pedagogy of resistance, Erika, Yared and I shared Erick’s inquiries with others. In the case of the next example of teaching and learning at Juntos, they led to a communal action of resistance.

Our organizing caused the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) to revoke the center’s license. About a month later, at a subsequent protest in February 2016 –Erika, and two other people who are also part of the #ShutDownBerks Coalition,
crossed the invisible border between us and the detained children and mothers at Berks. Once on their side, they hugged all the children and mothers until police arrested them. Erika’s action in many ways demonstrates her having taken up Erick’s solidarity inquiry.

![Figure 3.5. Incarcerated women and children at Berks Family Detention Center. The top two pictures in this figure show women and children deprived of their freedom standing outside of the Center. They are not being allowed to be with the protestors, to walk outside the center freely or to leave. The bottom two pictures show Erika and two other community members (one from Juntos) walking across the invisible border dividing us to hug the women and children.](image)

Whether intentionally related to his questions or not, Erika’s crossing to hug the families certainly played an educational role in the cycle of intergenerational learning and teaching for justice that is central to Juntos’s organizing. Reflecting on the impact of this day, Erick shared:

Since my mom told me what happened, I felt worried and happy at once because something that could be done, something that wouldn’t be easy to do but that could be done, was able to be done. I was also worried because they [the police] took her [Erika]. And I was thinking that it could have been my fault because of my comment, but things are being fixed [Erika’s arrest had resulted in a citation] and they [DHS] finally took their [Berks’s] license away, which is something we all worked for a lot. (Interview March 30, 2016)
Here, we see how Erika’s act of defying the invisible border teaches Erick that
“Something that wouldn’t be easy to do but that could be done, was [in fact] able to be
done”. This is the kind of lesson that is integral to movement building because it teaches
those in the struggle that inquiries into, and envisioning of, justice are productive and
play key roles in bringing about change. Erick feels worried and at once happy that his
speaking up, which he’s learned to do from his mother and others at Juntos, could have
led to Erika getting arrested. In this way, he is coming to terms with the impact and
emotions involved in raising and taking up inquiries and action upon those inquiries,
which is central to the process of engaging in a communal pedagogy of resistance.

Providing additional details on the pedagogical mark of this protest for Erick, and
for others who witnessed and discussed this action at the protest, María shared:

During this Monday’s protest, two women from the community did just what my
son had wished would happen. When he saw this act of defiance of ICE, this
daring challenging of an unjust law, he was proud (and sad and worried, as well)
that two women were arrested for hugging these imprisoned families. He said to
me: ‘what they did gave us a good example of how to demonstrate solidarity.
How good that they crossed the line! How good that they put themselves in their
shoes, how good that they did not worry about crossing that line. I feel proud to
be a member of this community, of being surrounded by people who show
courage, this act makes us see that we are powerful’. (Interview February 22,
2016)

In his comments to his mother, Erick, repeatedly uses the pronoun “us” to refer to his
belonging to a larger community that has learned from this action. His wording connects
back to the way his mother expressed her desire for him to learn from the communal
“we” to which they belong. Like her, Erick describes the learning that took place as being
communal, as part of a “we all” as he describes it, as well.
Furthermore, Erick demonstrates his understanding that Erika’s actions, along with two others, were not reflective of one individual’s demonstration of solidarity or courage. In these comments, he implies that the collective action Erika took is reflective of the courage, and ability to show courage, of the larger community to which he proudly belongs and which surrounds him (i.e., “I feel proud to be a member of this community, of being surrounded by people who show courage”). Thus, he conceptualizes of Erika’s action as a communal one. Through Erick’s consistently referring to himself and to Erika as being part of a larger whole, this teaching and learning is reflective of a communal pedagogy of resistance. As such, it is multidirectional, extrafamilial and stems from the knowledge (facultad) and communal being at the borderlands.

**Part II: The Dimensions of Juntos’s Communal Pedagogy of Resistance**

Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance has multiple dimensions. Thus, in this final section, I examine these. To do so, I explore instances of learning and teaching that go beyond the #ShutDownBerks Campaign.

**Relational, Intergenerational and Inquiry-Based Dimensions**

Considering her overall reasoning for being part of the #ShutDownBerks Campaign, and describing Juntos’s critical intergenerational literacies and communal pedagogy as ones that she shapes, alongside others, through her participation, María offers the following insights:

Through these community activities I am teaching my children to not be selfish in the future, to not be racists, to know how to see things for what they are, to learn the laws and customs but to also be just and to support others. We all need each other. Those are the reasons why we created this sign [the Hope poster] and went to this detention center. (Interview February 22, 2016)
In her reflection, María mobilizes a communal pedagogy of resistance that is intergenerational, anti-racist, challenging of individualism, and rooted in a sense of interdependent being and connection to our epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) and critical consciousness or facultad (“to see things for what they are”). In her statement “we all need each other,” her and her children’s lives are conceived as interdependent to others people’s, and as being part of a larger communal being. Her explanation shows that María is teaching her children to be in touch with their facultad and to feel their interdependence to others highlights that “to survive at the Borderlands, you must live sin fronteras [without borders]” (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007, p.217).

Maria’s argument about our human interdependence reflects the need to “undo the borders between each other” (Walia, 2013) as we work to defend each other’s rights. Connecting to this argument is this study’s finding that the communal pedagogy of resistance at Juntos is relational and intergenerational. As such, it is grounded in our building intergenerational relationships of interdependence and trust with those with whom we inquire into oppression, and with whom we resist domination.

Yared – who co-founded Son Revoltura while interning at Juntos during college and was Juntos’s Youth Organizer in 2015-2016– spoke to this relational learning during our interview. As we spoke, she emphasized the communal aspect of learning at Juntos, which expands our sense of who belongs to our people. She brought up the example of discourses used to criminalize and divide immigrants amongst ourselves to emphasize that learning based on relationship building, and on collective inquiry, leads to a type of
transformation that is much more profound than learning through top-down and non-relational pedagogies. She said:

I think part of the education [at Juntos] is not just “What are our community’s rights?” but “What are peoples’ human rights as a whole?” So, one of the common rhetorics that was used for a long time around immigration was the idea of “we are not criminals” and we [at Juntos] have tried so hard to move away from that because, What are you doing when you are calling other people criminals? It’s been cool seeing how our community has also shifted out of that and how you see people who maybe used to say those things, and now don’t, and are starting to move people who do say those things out of it… It’s not something where you’re like, ‘You’re wrong! Don’t say that!’ It’s something where… as you begin to trust someone, as you begin to see what other people are saying, you begin to catch onto it and you begin to learn it and it becomes internalized through relationships, and not through this dynamic where one person with authority tells everyone else the way it has to be… it’s education that’s built around relationships and that makes it so much stronger than ‘I learned it out of a book’ or ‘I learned it from a person who told me this is how it has to be’. It’s more like, ‘I experienced this and now I believe it in a different way’. (Interview May 6, 2016)

Yared here gives a detailed description and explanation for Juntos’s relational and inquiry-based dimensions of its communal pedagogy of resistance. This is seen when she shares examples from communal and inclusive inquiries that Latinx immigrant communities at Juntos take up: “What are people’s human rights as a whole?” and “What are you doing when you are calling other people criminals?” which are questions that speak to the communal, and that grow from the more local and exclusive inquiry of “What are our community’s human rights?”. They are also inquiries that expand our sense of who our people are (Hames-Garcia, 2011; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014). In the example Yared describes, this pedagogy sparks inquiries regarding the criminalizing of community members who have had contact with law enforcement, and get us to question what happens when we deem their lives less worthy.
Further, though these inquiries take up and put forth a critical stance, they do not involve the practice of shaming or calling people out who are in different places of learning or of accessing and getting in touch with their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya) or facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). In not practicing shaming, this relational aspect of this communal pedagogy of resistance nourishes the building and flourishing of trust over time, and of an inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), where people become open to questioning their assumptions on a regular basis, welcoming uncertainty and taking up questions that lead to more questions.

Through the relational building of trust and a permanent inquiry stance, lessons about equity and justice become “internalized through relationships” and through listening to, and taking up, differing perspectives and questions from one’s own. Thus, this communal pedagogy of resistance embodies organic “popular education” (Freire, 1970), where there is not one “one person with authority tell[ing] everyone else the way it has to be,” or shaming people who hold perspectives that are not “most critical.” Instead, people come to experience and internalize lessons through trusting relationships that lead to taking up new inquiries, and knowing “in a different way.”

**A Note About My Learning About Popular Education from Shared Practice at Juntos**

There are a number of critiques of critical pedagogy or “popular education” as originally put forth by Paulo Freire (1970) and later built upon by many others. Some of these critiques argue that “popular education” requires an already critically conscious
facilitator leading others toward a particular “most critical” location or perspective that such a facilitator already holds (e.g., Ellsworth, 1992; Martin, 2001). For some time after reading these critiques in graduate school, as a popular education facilitator, I felt a deep concern grow in me about whether actual Freirean “popular education” existed or was possible. I constantly looked back at my own facilitation of Freirean ESOL classrooms, trying to figure out whether I had been one such self-righteous facilitator who shamed my students into “growing their critical consciousness” or one that instead (or in addition to this) was facilitating top-down education with “progressive goals.”

As a practitioner at Juntos, I participated in (versus facilitated) “popular education” (Freire, 1970) grounded in relationships of trust, which involved analysis of personal and communal experiences between people that are different from each other and have different perspectives. I never witnessed anyone shaming anyone else around their stances on our movement, even when dominant discourses, like “we are not criminals” (among others), were expressed by members of our communities. For example, once while at the office discussing the assumption that men should propose (marriage) to women, I expressed to Jasmine my great distrust of Catholicism and of religion in general. Without any impatience in her voice, she told me she shared my critiques of Catholicism, particularly when it comes to our rights as women to make decisions about our bodies and lives, but that still, Catholicism was important to her. She explained how it related to her social justice work and to her identity as a Latina. Jasmine, like me, proposed (marriage) to her partner and though she has important critiques about Catholicism, she does not view being Catholic as a sign of her being less
critically conscious, and neither do I, even as I continue to inquire into Catholicism and social in/justice.

I write more about this practice of not shaming in relationship to Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance in Chapter 4. There, I draw from examples of our committee work and beyond. But the question of whether “popular education” (Freire, 1970) is possible, and whether it is always shaped by the existence of a facilitator who is most critical (and also whether I unknowingly am such a top-down facilitator), was a central and personal inquiry I carried as a practitioner at Juntos. The very research question of this study, “How do Latinx immigrants organize for their rights?” rose up from my practice as a popular educator in the context of ESOL classes for immigrant rights, from this concern about how justice is brought about by people with very different identities and experiences of oppression who share the experience of being Latinx immigrants. And so, as a practitioner at Juntos for almost two years, I kept asking myself, “How does organizing take shape here and what is its relationship with popular education?” This was so especially because Juntos self-describes as a popular education organization.

As I write this chapter about Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, I am learning that relationship building and communal inquiries lead people to reach into their facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) without shaming or being ashamed. I am learning from my own shared practice as a popular educator and learner at Juntos that organic popular education is possible. Perhaps what has not been written about enough by practitioners and researchers are the places in the process of raising inquiries together and listening to each other’s perspectives, including those that express dominant oppressive discourses,
where people greatly disagree and yet keep on building together, eventually moving each other.

Thus, in this chapter and in Chapter 4 I strive to pay attention to this complexity in the process, to a tension between people that actually allows them to learn from each other, versus turn away. Though I express certainty in these chapters (for example, my belief that popular education is possible), I do feel uncertainty, and therefore my inquiry continues. However, my practice at Juntos did not make me feel I held a higher understanding of oppression than others there, or that I had all the answers. I did not feel others held a higher understanding either. In many ways, the stories of our relationships and our inquiring and learning at Juntos in these chapters explore how we learned from our differing standings, and from the conflicts between them. And this inquiry into communal learning from different locations helps me understand my practice as a popular educator (and learner).

Moving forward, below Erika Guadalupe provides another example of the inquiry-based and relational dimensions that Yared, María, Erick and I describe above. Erika Guadalupe is a self-identified queer young organizer, artist and activist in her mid-twenties, who until recently was undocumented, and who is on the Board of Juntos. She has been organizing with Juntos as a volunteer for over four years. She shares:

I think when I first got involved in the immigrant rights movement I was in high school, and all the stuff I would see, all then narratives I would see, were the DREAMers: “these are our future, blah blah blah”. So for me, for a long time, that was the only way I could think. I was like ‘Oh, we’re DREAMers! We are the people that immigration reform is for!’ But gradually, as I got older, partly because of my parents who are both undocumented, and [because] my dad had a criminal record for DUIs cuz he had substance abuse issues…I was like ‘there’s also…these immigrants who aren’t being considered’ and I think I really saw that, too, at Juntos. When it [Juntos] was like, ‘it’s not just the DREAMers that we’re talking about anymore’. And I think that Juntos did a really great job cuz
originally it was very much that kind of narrative, and within the last couple of years I think they’ve gone way beyond that to make sure that everything is inclusive. I think a big part of that is because there are people like Olivia there, Olivia [Mamá]. All the moms, the dads, who are like, ‘No, we are here too!’, ‘We are here for our kids but we are gonna be left behind when immigration reform comes and it doesn’t include us’. (Interview August 24, 2016)

In this interview excerpt, Erika Guadalupe explains how her relationship with her parents, one of whom has a criminal record and is undocumented, along with relationships with others at Juntos, over time led her to feel that the DREAMer discourse she had been taking up was exclusive and hurtful to people she loved and trusted. Thus, these relationships got her to take up an inclusive discourse that did not throw undocumented parents under the bus\(^2^8\). She recognizes her dad and Olivia Mamá as people who belong in her community, as examples of “all the moms and dads” who “get left behind” in the DREAMers discourse, and people she trusts who shape her relational and inquiry-based learning.

An organizing instance that exemplifies upholding the worthiness of undocumented parents, undocumented youth and undocumented individuals with criminal records all at once is the civil disobedience that Juntos members did on July 3rd, 2016 to call for a moratorium on all deportations. This is an action that led to Erick (who was then 13 years old) and Lluli, an undocumented Latina mother in her 30s, getting arrested. This civil disobedience was a product of Juntos’s relational, intergenerational and inquiry-based learning. Below, I examine how this action came to take place, particularly how it was possible only after tension between people who trust and love each other was faced, and how this event exemplifies a consequence of Juntos’s

\(^{2^8}\) In the years I spent at Juntos, I also was part of conversations that questioned the movement’s mainstream exclusion of undocumented individuals, without children here, who are not included in DREAMer discourses, DAPA discourses, or discourses around who deserves to be or who belongs in the United States.
communal pedagogy of resistance.

When Erick began to become involved in Fuerza as a 12 year old back in 2015, he mentioned to his mother that he did not want to keep participating because he was not an immigrant. Conversations in the committee revolved around this shared experience and though he knew his mother and father are immigrants, he felt he could not speak from an experience of migration that he had not had. However, he kept going to Juntos’s events and, as examined in this chapter, over time Erick has come to feel he has learned a lot at Juntos through his relationships with people there, and his time in Fuerza. He has also taught us a great deal through his inquiries about solidarity, among much else.

Around Independence Day in Summer 2016, Erick took part in a civil disobedience action that involved blocking a main avenue in downtown Philadelphia. This was part of a national set of direct actions calling for a moratorium on all deportations after President Obama’s (Nov. 20th 2014) executive order expanding DACA (i.e. DACA+) and introducing DAPA was struck down by a tie in the U.S. Supreme Court. Blocking 15th St, and literally interlocked with Erick was Lluli, along with two other community members. In being locked to each other while they sat blocking downtown, Erick’s and Lluli’s lives were literally and completely interdependent and interrelated to each other’s. In sitting in the heat chained to Lluli, Erick – as a U.S. born child of immigrants – expressed in the way he most powerfully could, his solidarity with Lluli, his parents, and all other undocumented individuals who are at risk of deportation. His action demonstrates his ability to relate to the greatly differing experiences of others who, unlike him, are immigrants, and to see himself as part of this larger

29 These community members did not participate in my study, so I am not naming them here.
intergenerational community. That day, both Lluli and Erick got arrested, along with the two other community members interlocked to them.

Figure 3.6. Not1More Moratorium Now actions across U.S. on July 3, 2016. This figure shows that direct actions took place in Philadelphia (PA), Nashville (TN), Chicago (IL), Phoenix (AZ), Atlanta (GA), Santa Ana (CA), New Orleans (LA) and Hartford (CT). Juntos picture showing Erick and others is at top left. The post says: “Today we celebrate a different kind of independence. We celebrate movements that are independent from the political parties and loyal to the people. #Not1More means not one more. Shout out to everyone fighting to #DismantleICE.”

Figure 3.7. Erick and Lluli engage in civil disobedience July 3, 2016. The image also shows Juan Carlos (on left) holding a
sign that says: “How many more years are we going to wait?” while Olivia Mamá and María (at center) hold a large banner that says: “Dismantle I.C.E. Moratorium on Deportations Now!” Lluli’s daughter and Erick’s sister stand side by side between Juan Carlos and María.

Figure 3.8. Erick and Lluli getting arrested on July 3, 2016.

Figure 3.9: Olivia Hija embracing Lluli’s and Juan Carlos’ daughter on July 3, 2016. This picture was taken by Michelle Angela Ortiz right after Lluli got arrested.

Figure 3.10. Itzel holds a sign for Erick outside of where he is jailed. Itzel’s poster, which she and her mother made for him says (in Spanish): “Erick: You are not alone, we are always together. Hang in there”.

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Like Erick, Lluli had not wanted to become involved at Juntos back in 2011 when her husband, Juan Carlos, began to get active in the organization. As was the case with Olivia Mamá and Olivia Hija, Juan Carlos and Lluli had many heated discussions around his choice to publicly speak about being undocumented and to also participate in a civil disobedience early in his Juntos involvement, where he risked arrest and therefore risked having serious interactions with police and ICE. However, over time Lluli began accompanying Juan Carlos to Juntos workshops and actions, often with their daughter, Fernanda, who is now in elementary school. Juan Carlos has also been on the Board of Juntos over many years, along with Erika Guadalupe. I got to know Lluli and Juan Carlos more closely when I facilitated the immigration committee in late Spring 2016, after Jasmine transitioned out of her position as Lead Organizer at Juntos, and during a time when Lluli and Juan Carlos came to committee meetings every week.

Through her relationship with her husband and others at Juntos, Lluli has learned that individual actions for change benefit the whole community. In our interview, she
reflected on Juan Carlos’ civil disobedience action years back, and on what she has learned being part of Juntos since then. She said:

What he [Juan Carlos] did, he did for us, for our daughter and for me…I did not understand it [before]… because I did not understand what he was doing [at Juntos]…but now I have learned that we have to be the ones to make change… We are always at risk of everything: of being stopped by immigration, of being discriminated against at every moment, of dealing with many problems like not being treated equally, so…. change comes about from one’s own actions and sometimes one has to take risks. (Interview, September 14, 2016)

Explaining why she chose to risk arrest at the civil disobedience in Summer 2016, Lluli added:

When they asked me if I wanted to be part of the action, I said ‘Yes, I do want to take part…not for me but for my community and primarily for my daughter… And when they arrested me I did cry because my daughter saw how they did it, but I realized this could be a reality [in the future]…and that helped me open my mind more because...you are fighting for the community, not only for yourself, but for all of the community, and so it is good that all in the community get involved, that we begin to take action for what we want, because if we don’t fight we are never going to achieve anything. (Interview, September 14, 2016)

Through her words, Lluli emphasizes the risky actions she took were for the protection of her family but also for “all of the community,” a stance that reflects a sense of communal belonging and interdependence. She understands that communal value is one Juan Carlos held when he risked arrest, and she notes she could only understand this after she became involved at Juntos and saw what organizing entailed. This learning from shared experience, versus from being told something is so, is what Yared described in her explanation of Juntos’s relational learning. From relationships at Juntos and from the experience of getting arrested in front of her daughter, Lluli has come to “open her mind more” and learn that those at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) cannot avoid daily risks and oppressions, and so one must face them, for “the whole community.”

30 This interview was in Spanish and I translated it into English for this chapter.
Overall, Olivia Mamá’s, Erick’s, and Lluli’s insights, as well as this moratorium on all deportations action, all speak to the consequences of the communal pedagogy of resistance that mobilizes extrafamilial (Hatton-Yeo, 2008) intergenerational learning that is multidirectional (Gadsden & Hall, 1992; Gadsden, 2002): this pedagogy can lead people who were in strong opposition to activism around immigrant rights and in tension with loved ones around their differing stances, to mobilize their facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), or their inner ability to resist and defy their own and others’ oppressions. These examples of intergenerational learning and action demonstrate that this communal pedagogy of resistance can lead to a type of leadership that is also communal.

**Communal Leadership for Resistance**

Juan Carlos and Lluli provide insights below highlighting the importance of communal leadership, where those most affected learn from each other and together become leaders (across generations) with a communal vision of resistance from the *borderlands* (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), one completely disconnected from political parties. They explain,

Juan Carlos: We have to create what no one else will create for us. Politicians use us as objects as we learned with President Obama, and so we have to create our own hope. For this to happen we have to tell others to get working with us because there is no one better than us to do this… Many people want to help us, American people with great intentions…and we are grateful for the work of others who do not have the problems we have, people from here. But they are not the ones who face this problem. Crossing a desert is no small thing, crossing a desert involves risking our lives, and so we need leadership prepared to lead this very big work with great commitment to all in our community. We have to follow the [leadership] from within our community…like Olivia and her daughter, who as a young person has great leadership qualities…

Lluli: And María, who has gotten Erick involved…I admire Erick so much, he is so impressive, and now they are involving his little sister, who is always putting her grain of sand when we make posters [for actions]…
Juan Carlos: And Erika whose parents are Paraguayan immigrants, and they have taught her a lot, so she and her family are exemplary…. We need to grow leadership from below, really from below…

Lluli: Maybe our own children with their different experiences [from ours] will be able to also represent us all in this battle…my daughter [who was born in the U.S.] just told me ‘Mami, when I grow up I will be as brave as you, I will do an action like the one you did’ and that for me is wow…tomorrow she will be the change… thinking not only of herself but of her community.

Juan Carlos: We have to lead together by example…teach ourselves and others…being part of workshops, talks, inviting other people to [committee] meetings…We need leadership that truly knows the problems we face, leadership out of the experiences we have lived. (September 24, 2016)

In their conversation, Lluli and Juan Carlos describe many aspects of an intergenerational and communal leadership that I believe results from Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance. One of its aspects is found in the emphasis on looking to each other, across differences and generations, for models of how to lead this work. For example, Lluli and Juan Carlos note their respect and admiration of others at Juntos whose learning, teaching and action they consider exemplary and whose intergenerational stories have been featured in this chapter. They allude to the tight bonds and relationships that have blossomed at Juntos as people work together, building a shared sense of being and of mutual protection.

Juan Carlos and Lluli also praise the leadership that children of immigrants, such as Erika and Erick, take on as part of their community. In their doing so, they emphasize the importance of nurturing intergenerational leadership. Lluli specifically views her daughter, who like Erika and Erick was born in the U.S., as someone who she expects will one day lead in a way that cares for everyone in the community based on her experiences of struggle alongside her undocumented parents. Their recognition that these
U.S. born members of the Latinx immigrant community can be part of the communal leadership that propels the movement forward is important. This is so because their being born in the U.S. does not place them outside of the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) where people who have “crossed deserts” are. I think this is because Lluli and Juan Carlos recognize that though children of undocumented immigrants who were born in the U.S. have citizenship privileges that make their lives much different from those who are undocumented, these children still struggle with their parents, as Fernanda did when her mother was arrested (for example). They still have unique insights (or epistemic privilege) “from below” regarding the struggle of undocumented immigrants, as members of mixed-status families who grow up immersed in this struggle.

In his expression of gratitude about the well-meaning supports that “Americans” offer the immigrant rights struggle, Juan Carlos also clarifies that though their help is appreciated and is part of a communal organizing, these individuals should not lead the movement. By making this statement, he differentiates between “Americans”— who I believe here also means white U.S. born people – from the U.S. born Latinx Americans who grow up within mixed-status families, their lives being shaped by the undocumented “crossing of deserts” of their family members and by the unique problems they face, as Juan Carlos puts it. Therefore, the leadership of these Latinx youth can still grow “out of the experiences” of oppression that shape their families and the wider Latinx immigrant communities.

*Building a Home at the Borderlands for Our Heterogeneous Communities*

Latent in the conversation Lluli and Juan Carlos had above is the racialization
process that the wider community experiences, regardless of documentation status, as
well as the recognition that our community is large and heterogeneous, and that thus,
people have to teach and learn from each other through “workshops, talks…[committee]
meetings” in order to build leadership together, from our differences. Referring to the
shared racialization and heterogeneity of our communities, as well as connecting back to
Yared’s argument that Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance does not involve
shaming, Erika Guadalupe shares:

I think what I liked the most about Juntos is that I could go there and I could
actually see the community that I was really part of, you know? It’s not just
college students my age, but there was people who looked like my family, people
that looked like my cousins. And I really loved how calm I felt there all the time. I
just felt that there were people there that I understood, and that understood me,
because we had grown up the same way sort of thing, you know? And that was
really nice, because I think that sometimes in organizing spaces it’s kind of like:
‘who is the most woke?’ or whatever, but I never had that sense at Juntos. It was
like ‘I’m here for my community and you are my community, so I’m here for
you’ kind of thing. …And you can really see the community at Juntos and the
people that we fight for, so whenever I’m at Juntos I see tons of different families,
tons of different people with different situations. For me that’s just so powerful:
that they can bring so many different kinds of people together despite how
different our community is, how diverse the Latino community is in Philadelphia.
But I think they manage to make a home for people, which I love. I feel very at
home when I’m there. (Interview September 24, 2016)

Erika Guadalupe’s description of this sense of communal being emphasizes a shared
racialization process, as well as the great differences of identity, oppression and therefore
experience that exist all together in the Latinx immigrant community. Her visualization
of what Juntos is able to do through its communal pedagogy of resistance is powerful: it
shows that Juntos brings people together across differences and nourishes “a home for
people” at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) that is not about calling people out on
whether they are “the most woke,” meaning the most critical.
Erika Guadalupe’s statement “I feel very at home when I’m there” is one that is exemplary of an emotion I heard many others express in relation to Juntos, one that is present across the multiple testimonials of intergenerational learning and teaching showcased in this chapter, and one I felt myself (as a Latina immigrant with citizenship status) throughout my time there. At Juntos, we meet each other where we are across identities, oppressions and experiences, and our communal pedagogy of resistance yields a communal leadership that foregrounds a sense of responsibility for our shared wellbeing that is fueled by the epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) and critical consciousness or facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) of those among us who have crossed deserts, and who are most affected by the in-between-ness and harsh struggles of life in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the critical literacies and pedagogy of Latinx immigrants’ organizing for their rights at Juntos through the analysis of a multiple of examples of intergenerational learning, within and beyond families, for social action. Through the exploration of Juntos’s literacy-infused and pedagogical committee work, the critical literacy practices of the #ShutDownBerks Campaign, and the tensions and complexities of learning and teaching across generations and identities examined in the context of the moratorium on all deportations action, this chapter argued that Juntos’s organizing is facilitated by a communal pedagogy of resistance. Further, the stories of intergenerational and extrafamilial learning examined in this chapter demonstrate that a communal pedagogy of resistance yield a type of leadership that rejects individualism and knowledge as neutral and universal. Instead, this type of leadership centers communality
and the foregrounding of all knowledge being uniquely shaped by people’s experiences. As such, this communal leadership privileges the experiences and knowledge of those most oppressed in our shared living at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007).

As a chapter built on the premise that organizing is an educational practice, its analysis provided further evidence of this, aiming to show “how much goes into organizing…[how] our community is filled with experts [who are] in mutual relationship[s] of learning from each other” (Jasmine Interview, April 7, 2016). Thus, this chapter highlighted the complexity of the pedagogy that facilitates this organizing, showcasing examples of the various dimensions – relational, intergenerational and inquiry-based – that form Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance.

Further, this communal pedagogy of resistance is intergenerational, extrafamilial and multidirectional. It is focused on expanding our sense of who our people are (Lorde, 1984; Hames-Garcia, 2011; Lugones, 2014) and nourishing communal leadership from the epistemic privilege and facultad of those undocumented and most oppressed (across other identities and experiences fused with this immigration status) at the borderlands. Additionally, in this chapter the case was made that critical literacies, as critical social practices (e.g., Street, 1984) that make feminist affirmations and interventions (Knight et al, 2006), facilitate this pedagogy and that in turn this pedagogy gives rise to more critical literacies.

Building on this chapter, Chapter 4 will consider how this communal pedagogy of resistance is shaped by relational learning with people and organizations beyond the local Juntos context, and will provide further insights into the ways this pedagogy addresses
the intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991) and intermeshed (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) identities and oppressions that are part of our heterogeneous communities and movement for change.
CHAPTER FOUR: COMMUNAL PEDAGOGY OF RESISTANCE AS TRANSLOCAL DIALECTIC INQUIRY

Difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening (Lorde, 1984/2007, p. 111).

In what way do I contribute to the subjugation of any part of those who I define as my people? (Lorde, 1984/2007, p. 139).

To the immigrant *mexicano* and the recent arrivals we must teach our history. The 80 million *mexicanos* and the Latinos from Central and South America must know our struggles… Other than a common culture we will have nothing to hold us together. We need to meet on a broader communal ground…The struggle is inner: Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian – our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn must come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007, p.109).

There are hundreds of us at this national convening of Latinx immigrants in Chicago, Illinois. It’s the middle of December 2015 and we have come together from all around the country to launch “Mijente,” meaning “Mypeople” in English, a political home and network for our Latinx communities in the U.S. Twelve us of from Juntos are sitting with other folks from Philadelphia who represent Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer (LGBTQ) organizing in our communities. We sit at dozens and dozens of round tables, all close to each other, filling up this large high school cafeteria in the Latinx neighborhood of Chicago. It’s Sunday morning and we have been here since Friday evening. A long road trip home begins tonight so that Juntos community members can make it back to work by Monday afternoon.

Like folks in the other groups, our Philadelphia table inquires into what we want to share with other organizations about our vision for our people, so that collectively, with all of Mijente, we can create a shared vision. Jasmine begins, “Why are we putting more money on the border to kill more people? We know what politicians want but what
Paula\textsuperscript{32} answers, “Well, we all want the same: we want legalization,” to which Jasmine responds, “So we want a step towards citizenship?” Olivia Mamá then says, “We want legalization without distinctions because they distinguish among us. For example, if you don’t have kids here. And DAPA [Deferred Action for Parents of Americans] is good for nothing because with it you are marking me like a dog. And I’m not a dog. I don’t want marked papers. If I’m going to get given something, let it not be crumbs because my money moves your country! And it doesn’t move it with crumbs!”

We sit silently for a few seconds and Erika asks, “So perhaps we are asking for something more than immigration reform?” and Paula says, “Yes, we are always going to want more…” Erika interrupts, “Yes, but this is our opportunity to think about our vision and ask for the maximum.” Paula then responds, “Well, the Republicans don’t want us because they think that once we become citizens we will ask for welfare support,” to which Olivia adds, “Those are their excuses!” Then Jasmine says, “The reality is the ones getting welfare are the wealthy!” Paula continues, “We don’t forget the Republicans gave immigrants amnesty in the ‘80s, we know how to thank political parties…” and Erika interrupts, “But none of the parties care about our community. It’s not about asking or begging a [political] party. It’s more, ‘These are our demands.’”

“Well, then we want the closing of jails,” Paula then continues. “Getting all people out of detention!” Erika adds. “We want all people who’ve been deported brought

\textsuperscript{31} This dialogue took place in Spanish and English, and at times in Spanglish. I’ve translated the conversation into English here for the purposes of this chapter. The conversation was also much longer than what this excerpt shows but I’ve shortened it here in order to provide a short vignette that shows what this inquiry-based dialogue looked like in this national context.

\textsuperscript{32} This is a pseudonym because I did not ask this Juntos member to join the study. She does not live in Philadelphia and I had fewer opportunities to get to know her but she has been part of Juntos for more than three years. Her husband faced deportation proceedings years back and Juntos was able to get enough attention to his case and enough organizing done to stop his deportation so that he was able to remain with his family outside of Philadelphia.
back to the U.S. and we want open borders!” Miguel contributes. “That people with felonies and criminal records don’t have their rights taken away,” Erika Guadalupe affirms. Olivia Mamá then states, “They should move all the funds they are using to run detention centers into education, so everyone can finish school and go to college…They must understand that our voice is much more than being able to vote. Even without [an electoral] vote, our voice has weight! We have changed laws and we can achieve justice!” As we inquire together into what a vision for our people would be, we create a list of demands for the U.S. government that would get us to our vision. I scribe quickly while folks ask questions of themselves and of all of us in the group, and together we brainstorm.

Jasmine raises another question, “And do we want to speak about other identities? We’ve been focusing a lot on this issue of immigration but at this conference we’ve been talking about a lot more than just immigration. We’ve been talking about our rights as women, as students, as parents, as part of the LGBTQ communities, as workers, as…” Olivia interrupts, “But we’re speaking as Mijente, not as, ‘You are gay, you are white or you are black.’ We’re generalizing by saying, ‘no more deportation centers, no more deportations,’ not specifically for one person or group, but in general for all.” Quickly, Miguel responds, “Yes, Olivia, and I will say that I am in agreement with talking about all of our community, but it’s important to name specific communities that often get erased, right? Because often we talk and say we are talking about everyone, but if we don’t mention identities of every person and group, then it’s easy for some communities
to be erased.” Mercedes contributes, “The same thing happens when we talk about reform and we don’t talk about parents but only about the children. The very same thing happens to other communities, too.” I then suggest, “Well, what if we say we want criminalization of all of our different communities to stop and talk about the specific communities that are criminalized?” Miguel responds, “Right and…” but an announcement about how much time we have left in small groups interrupts us.

“Can you put down converting fossil fuel jobs to green jobs?” Jasmine asks while I transcribe and the loud announcement continues. “Some cities provide care for immigrants with HIV but those are the progressive cities and it’s not the national standard. It has to be the national standard,” Pedro (a non-Juntos community leader from Philadelphia) contributes. And Jasmine tries again, “What do we want for women? What do we want for workers?” And from there our dialogue continues and we include labor and reproductive health rights of women, mental healthcare for all immigrants and all oppressed communities, an end to trans detention and to the school to prison pipeline.

Erika brings up the idea of doing a large action at the upcoming 2016 Democratic National Convention (DNC). Every person at the table expresses support for this idea. I mention my concern that people in the U.S. don’t know their history, that there is no teaching in schools about the ways the government has and continues to cause forced migration across the world. I suggest that we do something to teach all attendees at the DNC snippets of history, perhaps part of the timeline of U.S. foreign involvement and immigration history. Olivia Mamá agrees with this and offers another idea, “Why don’t

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33 She is a Juntos member from Norristown but she was not part of my study so I have given her a pseudonym here.
34 This person did not participate in my study, so I have given them a pseudonym here.
all of us from Mijente at the DNC wear the same t-shirts that say things like, ‘Without papers, my voice has weight?’” Erika adds, “Yeah, with a felony, my voice has weight!” and Miguel says, “Queer, my voice has weight! And so on with different identities.” Then Olivia Mamá asks, “And what about creating two large banners, two large flags, that have all of our organizational logos and identities all together, so that they know we are all united in one voice?”

We continue with ideas for the DNC and as we finish the demands list and an initial vision for interrupting the DNC, the larger group comes back together. Olivia Mamá and Miguel agree to speak for our table. They share the demands slowly, so that the simultaneous interpreters can translate into English. Together, Olivia Mamá and Miguel tell the big group that we want to do a large action with everyone from Mijente at the DNC in Philadelphia in 2016. Everyone cheers. As Olivia Mamá reads, the room roars following each demand. After sharing our vision with the full town hall of fellow activist community members, the room breaks into applause.

Other groups share their demands and visions after we do, and the session closes with a key demand that was heard across the large group discussion: “That no one speaks for us! Black and Latinx and Indigenous and trans and poor and with criminal records: we are ALL one.” Finally, we agree that this statement reflects our shared stance: “Whatever happens in 2016, our vision has to be inclusive of our communities. We need more people of color in leadership and if you are not pro-Black, pro-LGBTQ, pro-women, pro-Indigenous, pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-Latinx, we will get you out of power.” Over the course of the day and the coming months, we continue the
conversations with organizations and individuals who are part of Mijente regarding how we will come together to disrupt the DNC and build a shared vision for our people.

The vignette above raises many issues regarding Juntos’s relationships to other organizations in its region, across the country and in the national context, particularly when it comes to learning from each other about all of the interconnected issues that need to be considered as we organize together. Further, this example shows that composing a shared vision for our people brings up differences of opinion and conflict because our envisioning draws upon our different identities and experiences of oppressions. Inquiring into the issues the dialogue above raises, this chapter addresses the following questions: (1) How is Latinx immigrant organizing through Juntos influenced by relationships to regional and national activists, communities and social justice organizations, and how does Juntos’s organizing also influence these regional and national social justice arenas? (2) What are the intergenerational teaching, learning, critical and coalitional literacy practices that are mobilized in the process of forging these translocal relationships for action? And more broadly, (3) How is Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance informed and shaped by, relationships to regional and national communities and
organizations? (4) What results from these translocal, dialectic and coalitional relationships and affiliations?

To address these interconnected inquiries, this chapter is framed by and builds on the conceptualization of organizing as critical educational practice (Foley, 1999; Horton & Freire, 1991; Oakes et al. 2006). It is also rooted in the argument that Latinx immigrant political mobilization (e.g., Bloemraad & Trost, 2011; Pallares, 2016; Pallares & Flores-Gonzalez, 2011) through Juntos is brought about through the communal pedagogy of resistance introduced in the last chapter, which is facilitated by and facilitates community members’ critical literacies (Auerbach, 1989; Knight et al, 2006; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Further, this chapter employs the concept of coalitional literacies, or the “critical social practices whereby community members enact language and literacy across cultural boundaries in order to learn from others, be reflective with respect to social location, foster empathy, cultivate affective bonds, and promote inclusion in the service of progressive change” (Campano, Ghiso, Yee, Pantoja, 2013, p. 315). In the context of Juntos’s work alongside others, this concept of coalitional literacies illuminates an additional aspect of the literacies mobilized as part of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance: it demonstrates how “literacy may be used to construct shared visions and see oneself as a part of a larger community” (Campano et al., 2013, p. 322).

An additional theoretical framing of the issue of Latinx immigrant organizing in the U.S. is added in this chapter through an analysis steeped in theories that address the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins & Bilge 2016), multiplicity, and intermeshing (Hames-García, 2011; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2003, 2014) of identities and oppressions. Grounded in this layered framing, this chapter will analyze key examples of gatherings
and workshops that Juntos’s members led and/or participated in and that shaped and were shaped by their dialectic relationships (Lorde, 1984) and collective inquiries (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) with other activists and social justice organizations across the United States.

Through this analysis of what I argue are translocal dialectic teaching, learning and inquiry practices in/for action, I show how Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance expands beyond local practices to involve the forging of regional and national activist relationships that conceptualize of social identities as mutually constitutive (Hames-García, 2011) and of oppressions as intermeshing (Lugones, 2003). Therefore, these dialectic relationships nourish a communal pedagogy of resistance that centers values of mutual interdependence and an expansive sense of who our people are, while being inclusive of and powered by the epistemologies that result from the heterogeneity and differences among “our people.” Thus, I argue that Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance – which arises from the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), is facilitated by and facilitates critical literacies (Auerbach, 1989; Freire, 1970; Knight et al. 2006), and which take place in informal learning spaces, such as school cafeterias, streets and parks – is dialectical, inquiry-based, intergenerational and results from and leads to an engagement with the movement for immigrant rights as a local, translocal, intermeshed (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) human rights movement.
Theoretical Framework

In order to understand how the relationships between Juntos and other organizations and communities are formed, as well as what their consequences are, particularly in terms of teaching, learning and inquiring for justice while attending to the complexity of identity and oppression, below I lay out how theories of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), multiplicity (Hames-García, 2011) and intermeshing or fusion (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) of identities and oppressions are understood in this chapter.

Intersectionality

Arguments regarding the fact that people’s identities work together—and therefore that the systems of oppression that shape their experiences function together as well—have been made by feminists-of-color since at least the early 1980s (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Davis, 1981; Lorde, 1984). Notably, in her 1980 essay titled, “Age, Race, Class and Sex,” Audre Lorde wrote,

Somewhere, on the edge of consciousness, there is what I call a mythical norm...

In america, this norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian, and financially secure. It is with this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society. Those of us who stand outside that power often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions around difference, some of which we ourselves may be practicing. (Lorde, 1984, p. 116)

In this excerpt, and in her later claim in a 1982 lecture called, “Learning from the 60s,” where she states, “There is no such thing as a single issue struggle, because we do not
live single-issue lives” (Lorde, 1984, p. 138), Lorde puts forth a strong argument for the conceptualization of identities and oppressions as interrelated, interdependent, and, as Latina philosopher Maria Lugones (2003, 2014) would later argue, as “intermeshing.”

The metaphor most widely cited, however, to signal an interaction among identities and between oppressions is that of “intersectionality.” This term is most attributed to legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw’s (1991) analysis in her seminal Stanford Law Review article, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color.” Crenshaw’s complex examination of intersectionality, particularly as related to the structural oppression and daily violence against women of color in the U.S., has become fundamental in social justice analyses and activism. This is so because her argument establishes, much like Lorde’s, that our identities do not exist or function separately from each other (e.g., being a woman, being middle class, being queer, being black, being an immigrant), but rather that they interact and that our experiences of oppression and privilege depend upon how various systems of oppression (e.g., sexism, classism/capitalism, homophobia, racism, xenophobia, ableism) shape people’s lives differently according to their particular set of identities within the political context in which they exist.

Ultimately, this argument has been very powerful because it highlights how analyses of injustice and mobilizations against it that disregard interactions among identities and between oppressions cannot ever capture, address or undo the greatly differing levels of structural injustice experienced every day by people. This disregard specifically erases the intricate experiences of injustice of those with multiple non-dominant identities. In this erasure, oppressions are further cemented.
Intersectionality is important in this chapter’s framework because, as forthcoming analysis will show, a number of Juntos members specifically use intersectionality to conceptualize identities and oppressions in the context of their engagement in social action. In addition, intersectionality is also used in larger national conversations among Latinx social justice organizations with which Juntos has been involved.

There are critiques and expansions of this concept that argue that “intersectionality” does not sufficiently explain the complexity of how oppression and identities work together (e.g., Lugones, 2014). Other critiques have pointed out that intersectionality is increasingly claimed as an analytical framework in studies or social justice projects regardless of whether they address the relationships of oppressions or identities to each other (Hames-García, 2011). Data analysis in this chapter will show that although Juntos members often use the term “intersectionality,” the organization’s overall work is best captured by conceptualizations of identities and oppressions as mutually constituting one another and fully intermeshing. Thus, I frame this chapter with the two terms that more aptly signify the mutual constitution and fusion of oppressions and social identities: multiplicity (Hames-García, 2011; Lugones, 2003) and intermeshing (Lugones, 2003, 2014).

**Multiplicity and Intermeshing**

In *Identity Complex: Making the Case for Multiplicity*, ethnic studies and post-positivist realist scholar Michael Hames-García (2011) conceptualizes multiplicity by positing that social identities not only intersect but mutually constitute one another. He defines multiplicity as,
The mutual constitution and overlapping of simultaneous experienced and politically significant categories such as ability, citizenship, class, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexuality. Rather than existing as essentially separate axes that sometimes intersect, social identities blend, constantly and differently, expanding one another and mutually constituting one another’s meanings. (p. 13)

Hames-García’s definition is rooted in Latina philosophers Linda Martin Alcoff’s (1988) conceptualization of identity as a political position and on Maria Lugones’ (2003, 2014) argument that identities are categories of oppression and that they intermesh or fuse. Speaking to the implications of multiplicity, Hames-García (2011) reminds us that, “domination benefits from the naturalization of social identities as discrete groups that do not overlap” (p. 20). This naturalization, which I believe is very much (re)produced by coloniality logics (e.g., Mignolo, 2011), leads us to perceive and attempt to address our oppressions as completely separate from one another’s.

Therefore, Lugones (2014) and Hames-García’s (2011) arguments demonstrate that when we see (analyze) and act (mobilize) based upon the fact that each person’s identities (and the oppressions linked to them) are inseparable and that they mutually constitute one another, opportunities for inclusive, coalitional, and decolonial challenges to domination become possible and more effective. In order to see and take up these coalitional opportunities, these scholars argue that we must first see that, “the conditions of our lives are connected to and shaped by the conditions of other’s lives” (Lugones, 2014, p.73).
A crucial consequence of intermeshing (Lugones, 2003, 2014) as an analytical tool that is inclusive of multiplicity is that it can facilitate the building of coalitions and movements that recognize and value our differences while also unifying us against oppressions that intermesh. This is visible in the opening vignette of this chapter and is essential to understanding the Latinx immigrants’ organizing depicted in this chapter. Intermeshing is also decolonial, as argued in Chapter 2, in that it rejects well-established colonial logics that view us as separate from each other.

Drawing on Lorde’s (1984) argument in her *Sister Outsider* essay, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” Lugones (2014) writes, “Lorde is not celebrating a coalition that arises from a denial of power differentials, but one that arises from within resistances to power at all levels of oppression” (p. 77). Her analysis of Lorde’s call puts forth the belief that coalitions and inclusive movements that conceptualize identities as intermeshing do not deny differences in our experiences or oppressions, but instead focus on forging resistance from all the levels of oppression that we experience. Lugones (2014) adds that these intermeshing-acknowledging coalitions that recognize and value our differences allow people to learn from each other’s theorizing and resistance to better know how to support and not undermine each other. Lorde (1984) eloquently argued for this visualization of movements when she said, “Difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic” (p. 111). This chapter will focus on this crucial dialectic between differences, which is derived from coalitional relationships that draw on difference as sources of creativity and fundamental knowledge to inform and enact change.
In their writings, Lorde (1984), Hames-García (2011), and Lugones (1994) all speak to the question of who our people are, as it relates to the larger issue of collectively addressing intermeshing oppressions alongside people with different identities and experiences. In Chapter 3, Erika Guadalupe and Yared speak about experiencing Juntos as an organization that is inclusive of our communities’ heterogeneity and nourishing of an all-encompassing home or shared family. Further, based on María’s and Erick’s consistent reference to a larger “we,” as well as the various inclusive artistic aspects of the #ShutDownBerks Campaign, I argued that Latinx immigrants organizing through Juntos were building an expansive definition of our people that is inclusive of the heterogeneity of the Latinx communities in the U.S. Additionally, in the opening vignette of this chapter, Juntos is working with others to critically forge an even larger inclusive yet non-homogeneous vision for our community within a national context, in a manner that recognizes and builds on the differing identities and oppressions that form our communities (e.g., “Queer, My Voice Has Weight!” and “Without Papers, My Voice Has Weight!”).

The name of the organization itself, Juntos or “together” in English, reflects this stance of communal being, of interdependence and interconnection, as well as the need to unite in defiance of oppressions. Drawing on Lugones (1994), who builds on Lorde (1984), Hames-García (2011) argues, “One’s own people are those with whom one has made a common cause” (p.xvi). This claim is central to this chapter, which examines the dialectic and inquiry-based forging of relationships across locations, identities and language for social action.
Translocal and Dialectic Teaching and Learning Practices

Below, I examine instances of the building of translocal, dialectic, and inquiry-based teaching and learning relationships amongst Juntos and Latinx immigrants, as well as with other organizations and activists across the U.S. I begin with examples from Juntos’s participation in Mijente’s national convening, relate them to Juntos’s local practices, and then move on to Juntos co-hosting and participating in a regional Human Rights Tribunal in Philadelphia.

Critical Coalitional Literacies Facilitate and Are Facilitated by a Communal Pedagogy of Resistance

As referenced in the opening story of this chapter, in mid-December 2015, Olivia Mamá, Olivia Hija, Boris (Olivia Hija’s teenage sibling and son of Olivia Mamá), Erika Guadalupe, Miguel, Jasmine, Erika, four Juntos members from Norristown35 (three of them undocumented and one who came with her husband and 10 year-old child) and I traveled from Philadelphia to Chicago for the launch of a new national Latinx political platform called Mijente. Juntos is a founding member of this national network and Olivia Hija, Erika Guadalupe and Miguel (youth leaders at Juntos who are in their 20’s and undocumented or recently undocumented) led workshops during this gathering. These included: “How the DREAMer narrative turned into a Nightmare” (facilitated by Olivia Hija and Erika Guadalupe), “Our Legacy is Alive: The Gran Varones” (facilitated by Miguel and another gay Latino leader in Philadelphia), and “Reproductive Justice 101

35 I did not ask these community members to join my study so I am not identifying them here.
and Abortion in the Latinx Community” (facilitated by Erika and a Latinx immigrant rights organization from Chicago).

Together, each of us also shaped the larger Mijente envisioning for all of our people. In addition, Miguel’s essay, “Because We Don’t Live Single-Issue Lives,” which was inspired by Audre Lorde and addressed his intersectional conceptualization of our movement and of Mijente as a political platform, was featured in Mijente’s program. Over the course of two days, we led and participated in town hall meetings and workshops where we mobilized critical and coalitional literacy practices that facilitated our learning, teaching and inquiring into the multiple aspects of our communities’ diverse experiences of injustice. Together, we focused on building a shared communal and intermeshed orientation to our collective organizing across the U.S.

Before analyzing Juntos members’ coalitional teaching and learning at Mijente, it is necessary to give a better sense of what Mijente, and therefore Juntos in close relationship to it, stand for in mobilizing against domination. First, a key aspect of Mijente is that its name means “Mypeople” in English and that “gente,” which is the Spanish word for “people,” is intentionally misspelled as “jente.” As a critical (Auerbach, 1989; Freire, 1970; Knight et al., 2006) and coalitional literacy text (Campano et al., 2013) meant to spark teaching, learning and inquiry, the opening comic in the Mijente program (see Figure 4.2) tells us that the choice to replace the “G” with a “J” in the word “gente,” references “Justice” or “Joteria,” a very popular and traditional Mexican board game that uses folk images from across Latin American heterogeneous culture. I believe this choice is a deliberate effort to recognize the fusion of cultures, races, ethnicities and practices within “our people.” It also signals a purposeful focus on achieving justice for
all who are part of our people by drawing upon our communities’ ways of knowing to negotiate and create a collective vision. This is reflected in the statement, “We don’t have it all figured out but we can build it together.”

Figure 4.2. Mijente’s opening comic in Mijente Convening 2015 Program.
The dynamic of the collective dialogue visualized in this comic is like the one shown in the opening town hall vignette of this chapter, where each of us at the table and in the larger room offered different ideas that did not always align, yet together we came up with a shared set of values for a vision for our community.

As people at the Philadelphia table discussed how to name our shared vision for Latinx immigrants in the U.S., there were moments of tension and disagreement. Ultimately, we named the differing identities and oppressions of our communities, much like the comic above when it highlights the closing of schools and the scapegoating and shooting of our people as examples of these varied experiences. The conversation that opened this chapter showed that we did so after standing with each other and answering or taking up each other’s questions.

Thus, the claim in the comic that we do not yet know how we will do it but that we are committed to being able to figure it out together “valorizes open ended understanding, complexity, and uncertainty” (Lugones & Price, 1995, p. 123-126 as cited by Lugones, 2014, p. 80). This comic advocates for dialectic inquiries around differences, certainty and uncertainty, and local and translocal experiences, which are also present in the Philadelphia envisioning process at Mijente where Juntos’s difference sparks a dialectic (Lorde, 1984/2007). This was illustrated in Chapter 3 when Juntos members do not shame people who exclude particular Latinx immigrants, such as those with criminal records, from their conceptualization of our community. Instead, Juntos members build a home for each other where people forge relationships across differing identities and
experiences through relational and inquiry-based learning for a complex and complete understandings of our communities.

Figure 4.3. Program cover for Mijente’s founding convening in 2015. This figure shows an example of a critical and coalitional literacy text that facilitated a communal pedagogy of resistance at Mijente.
A close read of Figure 4.2 and 4.3 together show that the name, Mijente, and the intermeshing vision for this new coalitional national platform stand for an expansive sense of who our people are, a communal conceptualization of justice that centers understanding of oppressions as intermeshing, and the collective mobilization needed to defy them as such. This is seen, for example, in Figure 4.2’s emphasis on our people at once experiencing numerous intermeshing oppressions, such as xenophobia, racism and imperialism (Donald Trump on TV famously saying “When Mexico sends its people…”), education inequity (“they are closing our schools”), economic and housing policies that result in poverty (“can’t nobody afford to live in this city anymore”) and police brutality and racist criminalization (“They’re even shooting us on the streets. ‘Don’t Shoot!!!!’”).

This is also visible in the portrayal on the cover of the Mijente Program of three people with differing and fused non-dominant identities (one of whom is wearing an electronic ICE shackle) jumping together with interlocked arms over a tall wired-fence or border (Figure 4.3). As they jump, they destroy greed/capitalism (smashed “$” sign on the sole of the indigenous woman’s shoe), imperialism (missile on the sole of the black person’s shoe) and mass criminalization (broken chain on the sole of the Mestizx person’s shoe). The action of these three people also scares the police officer (portrayed here as a pig, which is a common metaphor used by criminalized communities to refer to police) and the politician (symbolized here by a suited up cat), who hunch and cover in disbelief. This program cover is a vivid example of critical and coalitional literacies facilitating dialectic learning and teaching for action.

Further, the power of our collective union is stressed in the statement “we are more powerful than we realize” (Figure 4.2). This belief in the strength of our communal
being is also emphasized when, in the town hall conversation, Olivia Mamá says, “Our voice has weight! We have changed laws and we can achieve justice!” This belief is further affirmed when we, as a Mijente community, give a standing ovation after the concluding statement, “If you are not pro-Black, pro-LGBTQ, pro-women, pro-Indigenous, pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-Latinx, we will get you out of power!” is put forth during the Mijente Visions town hall. The expression of this collective and unified power is also portrayed in the Mijente cover (Figure 4.3), where interlinked people are able to jump above and destroy all oppressions.

Connecting the critical and coalitional literacy practices (Auerbach, 1989; Campano et al., 2013; Freire, 1970; Knight et al, 2006) mobilized by the Mijente cover and comic to the local literacies and pedagogy of Juntos, I find similarities between the Mijente cover (Figure 4.3) and the #ShutDownBerks posters from Chapter 3. The cover affirms our power and intervenes in oppression in the same way as the statements written by Juntos members: “The Wall is Tall But Our Freedom is Higher!” “Chosen Families Know No Borders #Undocuqueer,” and, “No More Abuse, Exploitation and Maltreatment!” (Figure 4.4). The inclusive and repeated “our,” the claiming of “chosen families” and the demands for the “full stop to abuse and exploitation” that are present in the posters are also powerfully visualized in this Mijente cover. Though created separately, by different people and for different occasions and locations, there is a shared translocal envisioning and intervention put forth that centers, teaches and learns communality, shared power, interdependence and an intermeshed sense of identities and of oppressions.
Moreover, the statement, “Because real change requires more from us not just more of us,” is highlighted in the cover of Mijente’s program (Figure 4.3) and puts forward a visualization of mobilizing that views identities and oppressions as intermeshing and of change coming from each of us working together from our differences. “More from us” emphasizes the need for individuals in our communities to have difficult conversations with ourselves and with each other about how oppressions and justice operate, thereby putting more of ourselves in the movement. This is what Gloria Anzaldúa (1987/2007) argues in the opening quote to this chapter, “The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains” (p. 109). We must engage in the heavy inner work of transforming how we feel and think for the sake of us all.

Addressing this “more from us” emphasis a few pages into the program, Mijente’s co-founder, Marisa, writes:

I want to be clear that we don’t seek unanimity in this space, but…I believe that we can’t afford nor can we permit as a community to stand aside, to play it down the middle... That’s why we say we need more from us, not simply more of us. We want to make very clear that building the power of Latinx people cannot come at the expense of other communities, nor can it be realized if it involves the marginalization of parts of ourselves and our community in the process. (Mijente Program, p. 5)
This stance of Mijente on the intermeshing of our identities and oppressions is equally present and strong in Juntos’s willingness, as seen in the opening vignette, to have a challenging conversations that are attentive to not marginalizing any part of the Latinx communities, other oppressed communities, or any identities within ourselves as we envision the realization of intermeshing justice. This stance does not originate in Mijente or at Juntos. Instead, this stance comes from the dialectic of these translocal relationships across identities and oppressions. In other parts of this chapter, I will explore instances of how this stance is taken locally at Juntos and how it is further nourished across regional and national relationships in a way that impacts both the local and the national work on immigrant rights.

It is important to stress here that in this chapter I am highlighting the ways in which Juntos and Mijente’s stances are shaped by their dialectic. Juntos’s work always rises from its local context and knowledge. However, such local knowledge inevitably transforms as it becomes part of a dialectic between Juntos and other organizations and peoples through translocal convenings and relationships, like the ones explored here in the context of Mijente’s convening.

**Dialectic Inquiries into Our Language Practices**

An important feature of the cover, the comic and the whole Mijente program is that all of these critical and coalitional texts are both English and Spanish. This reflects a commitment to language access and inclusivity.
Figure 4.5. Latinx Comic in Mijente 2015 Convening Program.
Examining language use in our communities, the Mijente program contains a coalitional literacy text (Figure 4.5) that serves as a tool for dialectic inquiry, learning and teaching about how language facilitates inclusion/exclusion in our communities, and how it reflects our assumptions about who is part of us, and what oppressions matter to us. The comic portrays two people participating in the Mijente convening who have a conversation about spelling Latino as Latinx. The female presenting person in the conversation wears a cap that says “Scholar,” which conveys that she is an organic intellectual (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) who offers insights that shape the common sense of our non-dominant Latinx communities and connect this common sense to our critical consciousness, or facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007).

In this comic, the female presenting scholar describes her understanding of why “Latinx” is used in the Mijente program. She says that it is a gender-neutral replacement for the dominant male-gendered “Latino” as well as the two-gendered non-dominant but still exclusive “Latin@.” Her statement that “many of our folks” are excluded from belonging to our community when these two terms (Latino and Latin@) are used is powerful. It recognizes “two-spirit and trans folks” as belonging to our people and as needing to be included in the language we use to refer to our heterogeneous communities. Here, there is an understanding of identities and oppressions as intermeshing (Lorde, 1984).

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36 I am aware that our communities speak many more languages than English and Spanish and that both of these languages were imposed on the Americas by colonizers. These are conversations that are had in our communities. As someone who has carried our language access trainings and who worked as Juntos as an interpreter and translator at many of our communal events, I am always aware that there are languages, particularly indigenous languages that we are ignoring when we make spaces bilingual (Spanish/English) only. I believe that part of the work people in organizations like Juntos and Mijente is to walk together towards more inclusive language practices in our communities. Unfortunately, indigenous languages have been attacked for so many centuries that often there are not enough of us who speak the languages that would make events and texts comprehensively accessible. Still, this is an important complexity within our organizing that is very important to acknowledge here.
because the use of Latinx requires (1) acknowledgement of the oppressions affecting trans and gender non-conforming people, (2) the conceptualization of those oppressions as interlinked to all other oppressions in our Latinx communities, and (3) a view that dismantling of oppressions based on gender identity is central to our “common cause” (Hames-Garcia, 2011; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2003, 2014) and to the common sense of our movement.

In a section of his 2014 book, Reform Without Justice: Latino Migrant Politics and the Homeland Security State, political scientist and immigrant rights activist Alfonso Gonzalez applies Antonio Gramsci’s concept of *organic intellectuals* to understand how the 2006 Mega Marches both formed and challenged the anti-immigrant hegemony that is so entrenched in the U.S. He argues that immigrant *organic intellectuals*, whose knowledge and insights come from “unique genealogies of struggle…[and from] their experiences and informal education as organizers” (p. 50), were able to shape the common sense of the larger immigrant community. This supported the view that the destruction of anti-immigrant hegemony was possible. From this common sense, massive action against this hegemony took place even when the dominant common sense posited it was impossible.

In explaining Gramsci’s conceptualization of the key role that *organic intellectuals* have in the process of communities establishing new hegemonies (such as pro-queer, pro-Latinx, pro-Black, pro-poor, pro-immigrant) that counter dominant ones, Gonzalez (2014) says that social groups must “elaborate [their] own corps of organic intellectuals” (p. 24) who transform the common sense of the larger group and, over time, the wider and dominant common sense of a society. In the case of this Latinx comic, an
organic intellectual from our community is portrayed as offering a pro-queer explanation for the use of the term “Latinx” as part of our common sense. This instance can be seen as one small example of this process of community members, as organic intellectuals, shaping our wider community’s common sense towards a vision of our community that sees, names, includes and addresses all of our differing identities and oppressions.

Pointing to a dialectic that does not shame anyone in the process of reshaping our common sense, the comic concludes with a dialogue where the male presenting community member states his determination to “personally stick to Chicano” and continue to avoid the term Hispanic (which has been the most dominant “common sense” term imposed by the state to refer to our communities). This person’s choice to not take up Latinx is one that the female presenting person does not challenge. Instead, she agrees with him regarding the inappropriateness of the term “Hispanic” 37. In doing so, she does not shame him for not holding a perspective that she views as most critically conscious. In fact, she respects his decision and welcomes him to join her in the workshops at Mijente in a manner that reflects her invitation to keep inquiring into and reshaping the assumptions or common sense of our communities.

37 In Latino/a Rights and Justice in the United States: Perspectives and Approaches (2009), José Luis Morin discusses Suzanne Oboler’s (1995, 2009) argument that the term “Hispanic” has been rejected over time by the heterogeneous communities in the U.S. with ties to Latin America because of the direct connection it makes to colonizing European and Spain powers “while diverting attention away from U.S. domination and control over Latin Americans in the U.S. (Oboler, 1995, p. 4).” Further, he emphasizes that the term does not validate the communities’ “diverse racial and cultural characteristics, including the indigenous and African heritages of vast numbers of persons from Latin America and the Caribbean (Perea et al, 2000, 4; Flores, et al 2002, 83)” (p.10). Thus, this term homogenizes a very racially, culturally and ethnically diverse community and “obscures the political struggle for identity by Latin Americans in the U.S. (p. 10). Morin (2009) further explains that these communities have more readily taken up the term Latino because it specifically signals to a shared racialization process experienced by these populations. He furthermore posits that “in this sense, embracing the term “Latino” is akin to the adoption of Chicano as an assertion of identity, culture, self-determination and self-empowerment (see e.g., Garcia, 2011; Acuña 2007)” (p. 12).
Miguel, who until recently was undocumented and who is a young gay Latino leader who began organizing at Juntos out of high school had been doing so for almost four years at the time of our conversation, spoke to me during our interview about the importance of these kinds of open dialectic practices (as portrayed in the comic) in communal spaces like Juntos, Mijente and elsewhere. These involve not shaming others for the language they choose to refer to themselves, but still teaching and learning together about terms that are inclusive so that these are accessible and understood among our communities. He explains,

I think it’s interesting because I personally don’t identify as Latinx, I identify as Latino, but I definitely see the need and the importance of having that gender-neutral variant to the language because, as we know, Spanish is divided into masculine and feminine nouns but there’s so much more outside of the binary.

I think it’s important, as an organization that says it is representing the entire Latino immigrant community to be very purposeful about being inclusive. And language like that addresses that. Obviously, there needs to be education happening as to why that shift is happening and that language is being used, [so that] people understand it. And I think the way that you do it is that you’re not telling people to change how they identify themselves. If they wanna identify as Latino, go ahead and identify that way, if you wanna identify as Latina, then go ahead. You wanna use Latin@? Go ahead. It’s being able to have the options, the ability to use language that represents you as an individual, and making sure that the community itself understands you when you’re using that language. So it’s not just about allowing the space for people to say “I’m Latinx” but to having these conversations with the community so they understand what that means when someone says Latinx. (Interview, August 2nd, 2016)

Miguel makes clear that it is crucial that organizations that aim to be inclusive of the heterogeneity of our communities take up language that does not exclude. However, his comments and our shared practice at Juntos, where people are neither “corrected” nor made to take up the term “Latinx,” show that imposing inclusive language is not part of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance. Instead, such a pedagogy welcomes people’s choices about the terms they use to refer to themselves (e.g., “If you wanna identify as
Latino…as Latina…use Latin@…go ahead.”), while they also facilitate and encourage inquiry-based conversations around how our language reflects our shared common sense. It is in these conversations and communal inquiries mobilized by critical and coalitional literacy practices that a communal pedagogy of resistance unfolds.

The Mijente comic is an inquiry tool that raises questions, such as, *Why is the term Latinx being used instead of Latino? Is it a misspelling? What does it stand for and why is it so? And what do I think about that? Why would I want to or not want to take it up? How does the language I use reflect my values and my conceptualization of oppression and justice?* These questions can also arise for people when an organization, such as Juntos, choosing to identify itself as a Latinx (Juntos website, March 15, 2017). Juntos encourages these inquiries through engagement in critical and coalitional literacies and conversations, such as the one depicted in this comic, without imposing terms on people.

At Mijente, Juntos’s discussion during the town hall addressed the need to examine our language and its specificity, particularly when Olivia said, “We’re generalizing…not specifically for one person or group, but in general for all,” and when Miguel said, “We should name the different identities…or they can be erased.” In Philadelphia, Juntos’s workshops, events and everyday informal conversations within and across committees also raise inquiries about our language. Often, these shape and are shaped by relationships between Juntos and others organizing immigrants elsewhere in the U.S. Speaking to these language and critical literacy practices at Juntos, Yared says,

At actions, we always have the #Not1More queer exclusion sign [and] I love when [a local queer Latinx social justice organization] comes out with their flags
that are Latin American flags with rainbows on them. We just start using this language, using these ideas and start moving people with us in that way, because then you start having those [inquiry-based] conversations with people: Oh, but what does that word mean? But what does that sign mean? It’s not necessarily giving people the chance to assess whether it’s right or wrong, it’s giving people the chance to understand where they feel on things. We’ve been making sure that Juntos is an open space for that and making sure our LGBTQ community is empowered and self-empowered, [that] everyone else is learning from that and beginning to reflect on it and realizing, actually, we have a lot of feelings that hurt others and we need to understand how to work through those. It’s a long process. (Interview, May 6, 2016)

Figure 4.6. Pictures of protests Juntos members led/participated in 2014 and 2015. These took place in Philadelphia in Fall 2014 (left) and in Phoenix, Arizona in Spring 2015 (right). These images showcase the critical and coalitional literacy practices at local Juntos actions and national coalitional protests where Juntos members are familiarized with, and encouraged to, inquire into the ways our movement is/isn’t inclusive of our LGBTQ communities.

A key aspect of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, as Yared and Miguel have described above, is that opportunities are created for people to take up inquiries or raise their own questions around our language and treatment of those with non-dominant identities within our Latinx communities. In Miguel and Yared’s explanations, Juntos sets up opportunities for people to see and inquire into terms, flags, visuals and experiences that they are unfamiliar with and invites them to understand them. The Mijente comic shows this very process in a larger context.

In their explanations, Miguel and Yared also speak about the internal teaching and learning that Anzaldúa (1987/2007) refers to when she writes, “The struggle has always
been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn must come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the ‘real’ world unless it first happens in the images in our heads” (p. 109).

Yared and Miguel understand and argue that awareness and learning about the experiences of others in relationship to ourselves comes first and that such awareness may transform the “images in our heads.” Over time (“It’s a long process,” as Yared notes), this leads to “real world” actions that result from a new common sense. In order to explore the pedagogical arguments made by the comic, Miguel and Yared, below I describe an instance of the inquiry-based and intergenerational dimension of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance. This example is also reflective of Juntos’s dialectic translocal relationships with other organizations.

As part of my practice at Juntos, in Fall 2016 I did simultaneous interpretation at an event that we co-hosted with a local Latinx LGBTQ organization on the experiences of trans-Latinx communities. The event invited all to a conversation with Jennicet Gutierrez and it was called, “My Existence is Resistance,” using Jennicet’s own words to describe the life and activism of trans of color communities, including her own. Jennicet is a well-known trans-Latina undocumented activist and co-founder of Familia [Family]: Trans Queer Liberation Movement (TQLM) in Los Angeles, California, as well as an active leader in the Mijente network and in the national #Not1More Deportation

38 Jennicet has become very well known around the country because on June 14, 2015, she interrupted then President Barack Obama during a speech he was giving to celebrate LGBTQ communities in the U.S. In her interruption, she demanded Obama put an end to the abuse and torture of trans undocumented immigrants in detention centers (who are denied medicine and hormones, mis-gendered, assaulted, among much else) and by doing so, she risked being deported. A week after her calling out these deplorable realities, Obama’s administration made changes to its gender identification policy within immigration centers across the country. Jennicet frequently does talks and workshops around the country and an exemplary activist for thousands of immigrants in the U.S. and beyond.
Campaign in which Juntos is also active. This was an event at the Juntos office and led by Latinx members of our communities. The session was open to all ages and it was one in which my mother participated. This gave me the opportunity to learn from the intergenerational dimension of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance in the context of my mother’s and my intergenerational learning and teaching relationship.

Between sixty and seventy Philadelphia community members (including elementary to college-aged children and youth) joined us at our office that Fall evening. Among them were Olivia Mamá, Olivia Hija, María and her children, and many other Juntos leaders of a range of ages, genders and other identities. Along with Jennicet, there were three other trans Latinx activists from Philadelphia who worked as staff with our co-host organization. In a panel format that Miguel facilitated, Jennicet and these three trans and Latinx community members spoke about their identities and experiences with oppression and answered questions that they posed to each other and received from event participants.

That night, my Mother was my simultaneous interpretation partner; she translated from English to Spanish, while I translated from Spanish to English. My mother, who since I was very small has exemplified how to care for others as much as for oneself and who always has encouraged me to speak up against injustice, grew up in Venezuela in a Catholic context with little tolerance for gender or sexual orientation multiplicities. Thus, though her disposition is to always be inclusive, her life contexts have been such that she has not developed relationships with trans members of our communities. Therefore, she was visibly uncomfortable in a room where at least half, if not more, of the community present was transgendered. The event challenged her to take up inquiries that she had not
previously considered, which is a central aspect of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, as Miguel and Yared have described.

Before we began to interpret, I generated a list of terms in Spanish for my mother that I imagined would come up, such as LGBTQ, queer, Latinx, Latin@, using different gender pronouns beyond the binary. My mom has a master’s degree in teaching ESOL and her passion has been linguistics, so she is particular about following traditional language rules. Therefore, these identity and oppression terms that come from the everyday experiences of oppressed people (and not from traditional language rules) were very much outside of her comfort zone.

While my mother and I discussed this language, suddenly a Juntos community member to whom I had already given an interpretation headset for the event came back to me, visibly uncomfortable. She handed the headset back, saying she had to go. Almost immediately, the event started and my mom began to interpret for Olivia Mamá, María and many other Spanish speakers in the room. Because most of the event took place in English, I was often able to listen in to my mother’s simultaneous interpreting. I could tell that she was explaining terms as best as she could, and being honest and detailed when she was not quite sure of what the translation would be.

After the event ended, Olivia and my mom talked about what they had learned while I took the headsets back and organized the interpreting equipment we had borrowed from the local school district. In their conversation, Olivia Mamá and my mother noted how they understood why that community member had returned her headset and left in a rush earlier in the night. In her response, they recognized their own
discomforts. They then talked about their religious upbringing and how it had been challenging to be surrounded by so many transgender people, a first for both of them in their lives. They emphasized how important it had been for them to hang in with their discomfort and listen to the stories about the lives of the panelists, remaining open to them, inquiring into the emotional responses and learning from them. My mom emphasized how glad she was that multiple panelists had shared that their mothers had always or eventually accepted them, and that one of the panelist’s mothers had consistently advocated for them at their school when teachers and students had rejected their child and bullied them for being trans. My mother and Olivia said they would have done the same. As they spoke, they bonded as people who had grown up in religious settings, as women who had experienced mistreatment, and as Latina immigrant mothers who felt committed to fully embracing trans people as part of our people.

I cannot describe how incredibly moved I felt listening to their conversation. As Yared mentioned and as we saw when a Juntos member left, taking up these inquiries and transforming ourselves is not a quick or easy process. However, that night my mom told me, “Alicita, I cannot tell you how grateful I am that you brought me to this event and that I had the chance to support it. I have, of course, never had anything against trans people but I had never been to an event like this…I’ve never had so much contact with so many trans people. Hearing their experiences and learning from them really has changed me.” She added, “I am completely committed to ensuring their safety, their well-being, now with a better understanding of what this entails” (Fieldnotes, November 2015).

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39 This conversation took place in Spanish and I translated it for the purpose of this chapter.
In the course of that visit to Philadelphia, my mother, Olivia Mamá, María, Jenny (another mother at Juntos) and I had a little picnic in a park by the Juntos office. Over homemade tamales made by María, we discussed how important it had been to learn from Jennicet and the rest of the panel because it had provided each of them with clarity about language and oppressions that they had not had before. They talked about seeing the oppression of trans communities as being related to their oppressions.

It is often difficult for me to put myself in my mother’s shoes when she does not understand my stances on social justice issues, particularly around how the language we use reflects our stances on oppression. In the past, for example, she has lectured me on how grammatically incorrect is to make gendered nouns in Spanish into neutral ones. However, this event and the subsequent picnic discussion led me to learn from her, and from her relationship to mothers at Juntos with whom I build and learn. This time in our conversation, I actually heard my mother when she expressed herself, instead of jumping to the frustration and anger that I tend to feel when she, always unintentionally, says something that I feel is transphobic, homophobic, racist, or sexist. I understood her this time, even though she was not sharing new information about her upbringing. This time, I felt the “long process” that Yared described taking its course, moving us both closer to each other and together closer to a more encompassing vision of our people.

In addition to my mother’s and my transformation, I learned about the transformation of other families in the room who did not identify as Latinx. Specifically, a Black non-Latinx mother who had come with her husband and children mentioned to me that right after the event her teenage son had told her, “Mom, these folks are fighting for their humanity! We need to join them!” She was emotionally moved by his response,
as she had not yet discussed this topic before with him. She noted that the evening had been very educational for her family and that it would shape their social justice actions.

Overall, this event provided me with the chance to see Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance moving non-Latinx families, Juntos’s mothers, as well as my mother and me in our intergenerational and extrafamilial learning (Gadsden & Hall, 1996; Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008) in order to better understand each other and our community. Additionally, in my role as an interpretation/translation practitioner at Juntos and broadly in social movements, I further understood how critical language access is for facilitating inclusive and transformative conversations that do the hard work of getting us to put *more of ourselves* into our shared struggle, figuring it out together and valuing all of our languages and identities. In this way, I further learned that interpreting and translating is a fundamental organizing practice. Without it, the immigrant rights movement and other movements that involve the lives of non-dominant language speakers simply cannot be inclusive.

Lastly, I argue in this chapter that the learning encouraged by Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is not necessarily linear where some of us are “most woke” (i.e., most critical) as Erika Guadalupe noted in Chapter 3, and others of us are less critical and therefore “behind” in our learning. Relatedly, it is not that some of us are *organic intellectuals* (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) and others are not. Instead, as the examples above demonstrate, the learning and teaching at Juntos and through its relationships with organizations like TQLM, Mijente, and others is relational and dialectic. This means that learning is understood to be multidirectional and that we are always in different places. Those places are accepted while we encourage each other to take up inquiries that move
us “in different directions,” as Yared says, to see how our community’s “common sense” (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) could be more rooted in our critical consciousness, more inclusive, and more aware of our interdependence and our mutual constitution (Hames-Garcia, 2011; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014).

This conceptualization of learning as “moving in different directions” so that we can hear each other where we are is different from understandings of learning as linear. This is seen in Mijente’s program comics, in Juntos’s conversation with folks from Philadelphia at Mijente around a vision for our people, in the Juntos’s coalitional event on the lives and resistance of our trans family, in the art and the music of the #ShutDownBerks Campaign, and, as seen next, in the everyday work of committees and workshops hosted and facilitated by Juntos.

**Dialectic Inquiries into Social Movement Narratives**

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, Erika Guadalupe and Olivia Hija co-facilitated a Juntos workshop at Mijente called, “How the DREAMer narrative turned into a Nightmare.” Its blurb in the program read:

> The messaging we use while fighting for our rights carries a lot of weight. The purpose of this workshop is to highlight how elitist/conformative narratives (such as the DREAMer narrative or phases such as “we are not criminals”) are damaging to a movement and how these narratives lead to the exclusion of whole communities. We also want to highlight examples of successful movements/campaigns that do not use divisive language and have in fact been inclusive of marginalized communities and to talk about the work that goes into developing this kind of unifying message. (Mijente Program, 2015, p.11)

This description of the session, particularly when it notes that “elitist/conformative narratives are damaging…and lead to exclusion of whole communities” and that we want our movement to be “inclusive of marginalized communities…[and to] develop unifying
messages,” gives us an initial insight into how Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance centers interdependence as well as conceptualizations of identities as mutually constituted (Hames-García, 2011) and of oppressions as intermeshed (Lugones, 2003). The analysis below will also show how the critical literacy practice of analyzing social movement narratives is what facilitates this communal pedagogy of resistance. In turn, this pedagogy facilitates new critical literacies.

This DREAMer session took place in one of the classrooms of the school hosting the convening. Twenty to twenty-five Mijente participants attended and they ranged in age from teenagers to people likely in their fifties. Our identities spanned a multiplicity of races, immigration statuses and genders, and we sat on school chairs making a semi-circle, facing each other and a whiteboard at one side of the classroom. Erika Guadalupe and Olivia Hija began the session by asking us to introduce ourselves to each other. From doing so, I learned that we came from many different towns and cities across the U.S., Canada and Latin America. Many of us wore headsets to listen to interpreters in the room and our facilitators switched between English and Spanish and often used Spanglish. After introductions, together we brainstormed a list of “Messaging/rhetoric that we’ve heard” (Figure 4.7) in the organizing to give immigration relief and access to higher education to undocumented young people who came to the United States as children, which broadly synthesizes goals of the DREAM Act40.

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40 The DREAM Act refers to the “Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors” Act, which was first introduced in 2001. The Act has never passed the House and the Senate. Many individual states (21 of them as of 2017) have passed their own laws allowing undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition. Others have banned undocumented students from public universities (Gordon, 2016; Riverbark, 2013).
Figure 4.7. Brainstorm of DREAMer discourse at a Juntos’s Mijente 2015 workshop.

In our conversation about what we had brainstormed, we noticed patterns of the DREAMer discourse. Olivia Hija and Erika Guadalupe summarized these, pointing out our contributions showed how this discourse dehumanizes our communities: it sees undocumented youth in capitalist terms (i.e., “Futuro – Contribute”), as tools for making money for this country or as bodies for U.S. military defense (i.e., “military”); it sees them as victims of the “crimes” their undocumented parents committed by crossing borders to arrive in the U.S. with them (i.e. Víctimas – los padres los trajeron / [Victims – their parents brought them here]); it views as worthy only the undocumented youth who are stellar students (i.e., “estudiantes estrellas”) and who have “good morals,” which involve never having had any contact with police or disciplinary institutions (i.e., “Good
morals – no criminales”); it is grounded on portraying our foreign countries as places that are savage, plagued with crime, out of control when it comes to morality and order, and that those countries are solely responsible for all of their ills (i.e., “trashing other countries”).

As we analyzed these together, guided by the question of how these narratives hurt and exclude, and how they are “conformist,” “elitist” and based on “respectability politics,” we questioned where these discourses originated. Participants pointed out the role that politicians have played in manipulating our communities (as the Mijente comic shows in Figure 4.2), and how citizens speaking for undocumented communities have made decisions and spoken for them. This was a fact that was also denounced in the town hall conversation described in the beginning of this chapter through the statement, “That no one speak for us!”

Guided by this inquiry into the DREAMer narrative and aiming to make connections between this discourse and ones put forth by other movements for social justice, Olivia Hija and Erika Guadalupe facilitated another brainstorming of what we deemed “NO-NO” discourses that similarly exclude communities that are part of our people. Then they asked us to split into groups of 5-6 people to have in-depth conversations about a selection of these discourses in order to then create a list together of “YES-YES” narratives that we could learn from about how to “develop unified messages” (session description) that do not deem some of us more worthy than others.
As seen in Figure 4.8, this list is wide-ranging, and as we discuss, the point is made that these movements are not separate from each other. In order to get into detailed discussions, we separated these movements according to the boundaries that their discourses have created for them. When we ran out of time, we came back together and shared each of our conversations. As we did so, Erika Guadalupe scribed our points on the white board (Figure 4.9).
As people listened to each other and discussed how and why these discourses take shape, one young participant contributed, “Let’s not forget about the School to Prison Pipeline. Kids get pushed out of school. We have to listen to these testimonios. Why do we not finish school? Why are we excluded?” Responding to this, Olivia Hija asserted, “Todo está conectado. [Everything is connected]. Dinero, School to Prison Pipeline, no terminan high school. [Money, School to Prison Pipeline, not finishing high school].” An older community member then asked, “Who is worthy? It’s about who is worthy. Si tienes un DUI [nobody cares about you if you have a DUI]. There was a father that was driving and had a DUI and he was deported.”
This dialogue is exemplary of how Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is rooted in understanding oppressions as intermeshing (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014). Workshop participants are seen establishing connections between oppressive discourses and inquiring into the reasons for and consequences of these narratives. The consistent raising of questions also shows how this communal pedagogy is inquiry-based, as people take up each other’s questions or note patterns by recognizing our overarching inquiries (i.e., “Who is worthy? It’s about who is worthy”).

Another key finding from the analysis of this workshop is that Olivia Hija and Erika Guadalupe, as Juntos’s community members, are “practitioner inquirers,” meaning that they take up an “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) as they facilitate. This is visible in the fact that they do not impose ideas or arguments on the group. Instead, Erika Guadalupe and Olivia Hija explore questions with the rest of us, positioning themselves as learners alongside everyone in the workshop, figuring out the inquiry process with us as we go.

We see the practice of not shaming as well when Olivia Hija shares, “No estamos hablando de millones de personas que están detenidas. [We are not mentioning the millions of people who are detained]. It’s important that we go beyond women and children and care as much about trans people in detention centers.” Thus, when she notices an erasure or omission in our shared inquiry, she includes herself as part of those who have not yet considered it. In other words, she does not place herself as someone more critical or more “woke” (using the term Erika Guadalupe used in Chapter 3). Instead, she belongs to the larger group of us who have unintentionally left some of our
people out of our analysis, and she notes this so that we may question our omission together.

We run out of time before we move onto collectively composing a “YES-YES” discourse list. Thus, Erika Guadalupe begins to close by summarizing, “The American Dream has not existed for everyone. It has only been constructed for some of us. We can’t get anywhere with language to appeal to people that are oppressing us,” to which a fellow session participant responds, “As organizers, we need to say something when our language excludes.” In the final minutes of the session, Erika Guadalupe writes up this quote on the white board (Figure 4.10):

\[ \text{\"Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them\"} \]

- \text{Assata Shakur}

\text{Figure 4.10. Assata Shakur quote at conclusion of DREAMer workshop at Mijente 2015.}

Erika Guadalupe’s decision to highlight the words of Assata Shakur reflects her valuing of the lessons of Black people’s struggles, because Shakur is a Black woman activist who is well known for her bold defiance of the intermeshed oppressions (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) imposed on Black and other communities of color across the world. This quote is particularly powerful because it reminds us of Lorde’s (1984/2007) argument that, “The masters tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (p. 112). Shakur’s (1987) quote here is a similarly strong reminder that we need to critically examine how our language and narratives to describe our organizing and our community
differ from those imposed on us through coloniality logics (e.g. Mignolo, 2011) and the oppressions that keep us struggling. The use of this quote also signals that our movement is pro-Black, as discussed in the beginning of the chapter, and that we learn from the legacies of Black struggles in the U.S. and across the world.

In many ways, I also see this reminder as one that moves us towards the de-linking possibilities (e.g., Mignolo, 2011) discussed in Chapter 2, where we break away from the language and logics oppressing us. As we said goodbye, Erika Guadalupe wrote her email address on the board and told us, “Let’s stay in touch. Let’s keep talking.” This action portrays another example of how Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is about building dialectic relationships over time and across locations and experiences.

As a participant in this session, I learned a great deal from the small group conversations where fellow community members built knowledge together from their experiences. In Chapter 3, Erika Guadalupe similarly drew on her experiences to explain how her practice alongside others whose lives are different from hers has taught her to ask herself questions about her assumptions. Specifically, she shared that she began to challenge her own DREAMers discourse after listening to Olivia Mamá and other parents speak about their exclusion from the dominant narratives, and after considering how her own father, who has a DUI, would never be seen or treated as worthy through such a discourse.

Rooted in critically examining our differing experiences, this workshop provided us with opportunities to inquire into our movement narratives and their organizing practices. As shown in the analysis above, our dialectic led us to take an “inquiry stance”
(Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) into our language and narratives and, from there, consider changes to our practices that would make them better for all of us.

**Dialectic Inquiries into Intersectionality/Intermeshing**

When I interviewed Erika Guadalupe, I asked her about her experience facilitating the DREAMer workshop and to describe how and why she had engaged these communal pedagogical practices of resistance. She answered,

Something that I’ve learned in doing workshops is that most people aren’t bad people; they just don’t have all the information… so when I do workshops I try to give the most information…The biggest thing for me for doing workshops [is that when] people say something [that reflects a dominant discourse], they often don’t think about how that has been said to them, and how that supports these shitty systems that are dividing our communities...Most of the time what I’m trying to do…is to try and just be honest and speak the truth. (Interview, August 24, 2016)

In her answer, Erika Guadalupe reflects on her practice of assuming the best out of each person who is part of a workshop and of her community as a whole. She acknowledges how natural and pervasive “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1973) or hegemony (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) is when she emphasizes that people most often take up dominant discourses that oppress them without realizing it. She understands that this is intended, and Chapter 3 showed that she has reflected on her own participation in oppressive discourses. Erika Guadalupe’s reflection highlights the importance of an “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) into our practices within the movement. This involves being open to questioning our assumptions, asking questions of other’s practices, and working together to gain the information we need to be better to others and ourselves. As part of this stance, she does not position herself as better than others or as more critical. Instead, she considers that we are all in different places and that some of us have not yet
raised questions about our practices or our (re)production (Bourdieu, 1973) of the divisive and exclusive narratives reflected in them.

Thinking back on how she has learned to facilitate workshops, below Erika Guadalupe highlights that her relationships within Juntos and with other activists across the country have been essential to her learning. In doing so, she emphasizes that relational learning is central to Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance and puts forth the idea that learning occurs from observing others whom we respect and who expose us to new ideas. Further, she centers intersectionality and intermeshing (Crenshaw, 1991; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) as she considers how she has learned to inquire into power through her activist relationships. Erika Guadalupe shares,

I learned a lot from people at Juntos. For example, people like Erika taught me a lot. Other national organizers from Mijente, for example, or Familia Trans Queer Liberation Movement (TQLM)...they are all people who have taught me a lot...People have helped me learn to be a better speaker and how to be honest...[I have learned] just by watching them [and] listening to them...[about] ideas of intersectionality and how power dynamics play out: things like good immigrant versus bad immigrant, [and the] language in general that we use. I feel [that] I’ve learned from them that that is important. (Interview, August 24, 2016)

The relational and dialectic approach that Erika Guadalupe took up with Olivia Hija during the Mijente workshop is one that Jasmine also engaged when we co-facilitated a workshop in early February 2016 at Juntos’s weekly immigration committee meeting. In the excerpt of it below, and in the discourse workshop at Mijente above, Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is seen in action. In it, we see this pedagogy’s relational and intergenerational dimensions (relationship-based learning that is multidirectional and extrafamilial), inquiry-based dimensions (asking critical questions of ourselves and each other, learning based on analyzing power and oppression while
hearing in others when tension or conflict arise, and interdependency and intermeshing dimensions (learning rooted in values of ontological interdependence and an understanding of our oppressions and identities as intermeshing).

The session described below also shows the critical role of conflict and tension in a communal pedagogy of resistance. Without disagreements and difference, this pedagogy would have no reason for being. Conflict and tension surface the differences among us that, through their learning dimensions, move us in visualizing and acting on a more complex vision for us all.

The goals of the workshop that Jasmine and I ran were: (1) to support immigrant community members in learning about immigration relief programs (i.e., DACA, DAPA, U-Visa), (2) to prepare them to work one-on-one with fellow undocumented immigrants to figure out whether they qualify for any of these and to plan ahead in case they ever faced deportation proceedings, and (3) to have community members feel capable of giving immigration relief workshops in their homes, churches and other community spaces outside of the Juntos office. It is important to note that this workshop took place within a regular immigration committee meeting and that these meetings took place every Monday morning during the second year I was at Juntos. These meetings ranged in attendance from 8-40 people. On this particular morning, twenty people were in attendance, including one teenager and three toddlers.

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41 The whole workshop took place in Spanish and I have translated the dialogue here for this chapter’s purpose.
Early in the workshop, a community member read a list of the new deportation priorities that the Obama administration had recently released, meaning a list of actions or experiences that would put someone at the highest risk of being deported. The list included: having a DUI, a record of entering the U.S. again after being deported, an existing deportation order, an expired visa, or criminal records related to robbery, sexual assault, drugs, or domestic violence. After the community member finished reading, Jasmine asked, “What do we think about this list? What do you all think of this division of our community?” Elena, who is undocumented, quickly responded, “I think these are all good because a lot of people drive drunk, there are a lot of accidents where children get run over, and that’s not okay. The same thing is true with domestic violence and sexual assault, weapon possession and robbery. I think everything just read is good.”

Others in the room agreed with Elena while some expressed disagreement. Jasmine, facilitating in an inquiry-based manner, raised another question: “Is deporting people who have committed these crimes a solution?” To this, Elena immediately responded, “No, because they would continue doing these things in another country.”

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42 This is a pseudonym, as she did choose to participate in the study but we never found time to do interviews, so I do not count her as officially participating in this research. I am not identifying any of the other workshop participants with a pseudonym because they did not individually participate in my study.
Another community member then said, “Maybe therapy would be a solution,” and another person added, “Maybe Alcoholic Anonymous.” Then Jasmine asked, “And what could be the solution to someone selling drugs? Why do people sell drugs?” to which a community member who had not yet spoken responded, “Out of necessity.” Then Elena contributed, “Maybe because it’s the easiest way to make money.” Jasmine agreed, “Yes, often it’s much easier to sell drugs than to work two or three jobs and not see your family when you can work less selling drugs and see them.” A back and forth grounded in inquiries around our assumptions regarding criminality continued.

In the midst of this inquiry, the teenage son of one of the community members present, argued, “You’re right, why don’t the wealthy who have money contribute? They don’t want to lose their power. In my mind I think that if every rich person in this world gave money to all the poor people, there would be no more rich people and that’s what they don’t want. They want to maintain their power and they want us to stay in this situation.” Many across the room quickly responded to his comment in agreement, with one saying, “Exactly, this is the truth!”

This young person’s analysis of how capitalism works to assert hegemony – and in the context of our conversation, to ensure people in poverty are criminalized and targeted for deportation – resonates with the idea that our community members are organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) of our struggle. As such, these community members “produce knowledge for the immigrant movement” (Gonzales, 2014, p. 184) that shapes our shared common sense about why and how things are and should be. In this case, this young organic intellectual makes a connection between immigration laws and capitalism, getting our group to draw from our critical
consciousness or facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) to see the fusion (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) of capitalism, racism and xenophobia. Further, his contributions give us insights into the extrafamilial intergenerational learning explored in Chapter 3, which specifically noted how youth provide key analyses that challenge our shared assumptions about how oppressions work and why.

Continuing to encourage us to draw from our facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), Jasmine then asked, “So, is it fair for an American to have a DUI, go to court, do community service and keep on with life here but that for an immigrant this isn’t so? Is it fair that immigrants have to face a double punishment?” Many community members across the table said, “No.” Elena said, “It’s not equal punishment at all.” And Jasmine, whom most people in the room by now had known closely for many months if not years, shared the following personal story in a manner that exemplifies the relational nature of learning here: “Those of you who have been at Juntos for a while know that I am open about this issue in my past but when I was young I got a DUI. I knew it was bad [to drink and drive] but when one starts to drink, it’s easy to think one hasn’t drunk too much…and like you all said, deporting me was not going to stop that. Most people that have a problem with alcohol have it due to trauma or abuse in their life.” Elena then said, “They need more support,” and someone else added, “Family support.” Jasmine replied, “So, should we accept these divisions within our community?” And numerous people in the room said, “No, no, no”. “Why?” Jasmine asked. “Because it’s unjust,” a community member responded.

Elena then questioned, in a manner that shows the inquiry-based dimension of Juntos’s pedagogy of resistance in action, “But why do those who come here to make a
better life commit crimes? They shouldn’t do it. Why do they do it?” Responding to Elena, Jasmine then raised a question that fuses poverty/capitalism with racism and anti-black racism as oppressions that together shape all we experience and that facilitate crime in our communities. She asked, “How does this country treat our Latino community? I’m not just talking about immigrants. But are we given the same education and the same opportunities as white people are?” and across the room we hear multiple immediate, “No, no, no.” “And are Black people treated like White people?” she added, followed by another round of firm “No” around the table.

Jasmine continued:

Let’s think about the larger society, [about] the issues that exist more broadly. We’re all here because back home we had issues with raising families, having jobs, being safe, and a lot of that was out of our control as individuals on our own. There are oppression systems that exist across countries and here to maintain oppression. And so there are systems that work together to oppress us and that’s why we are here without papers. The immigration system is broken but even when we all get papers we will still live in a country where it is okay to abuse women, for example. How can we change the system so that we don’t accept domestic violence, so that we all are treated as white citizens are, so that we don’t have to sell drugs? These are not coincidences.

People across the room voiced their agreement and Elena said, “So maybe the solution to when people commit these crimes is to say, ‘We’ll help you and give you this punishment but help you get better, and if you do, then we give you permission [to become a citizen] and if you don’t, well then.’” And Jasmine, aware that the disagreement Elena has voiced is still not resolved, responded with, “Well, you’re right that sometimes we need to see that we have a problem to get better.” In her answer, Jasmine agrees with one aspect of Elena’s position, which does not get Elena to agree with her, but does acknowledge Elena’s perspective.
The dialogue above revolves around the recognition of the intermeshing of our oppressions (i.e., “How can we change the system so that we don’t accept domestic violence, so that we all are treated as white citizens do, so that we don’t have to sell drugs? These are not coincidences.”). In the discussion, we also witness Elena moving from feeling that Obama’s deportation priorities are fair to considering they are not. Yet she is still very concerned with deterring crime and is still in disagreement with Jasmine about whether people with criminal records should be deported. So Jasmine meets her where she is, acknowledging her perspective and concern. After an exploration of how government policies, capitalism, racism and other oppressions affect community opportunities and behaviors, particularly around crime, the group largely moves away from criminalizing members of our community. This move is not homogeneous, however, and involves ongoing differences of opinion, which will continue to be explored over time as the committee continues to meet each week. Jasmine closes this section of the workshop with the following words:

So, now that we know more about the deportation priorities, how do you [all] feel about saying we don’t accept these divisions, that the federal government isn’t going to divide our community, and that we are going to fight for each and everyone of us. Do you feel good about that? Is this something we can do? And an overwhelming, “Sí Se Puede!” [Yes, We Can!”] is said loudly by many across the room, including Elena. Then without prompting we all begin to chant together “Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede!” (Figure 4.12).
Our intergenerational workshop lasted almost two hours and the conversation portrayed above is one small piece of it. In this process, we inquire into our assumptions and practices collectively, highlighting the inquiry-based dimension of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance. This dimension, along with the intergenerational aspect of this pedagogy, is also reflected when a young organic intellectual (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) of our community raises a question and contributes key analysis about how capitalism facilitates the criminalization and deportation of our communities.

Further, the relational aspect of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is portrayed when Jasmine shares a personal story that others can relate to about her own DUI record\(^\text{43}\). Thus, she moves people, and Elena in particular (who has represented the perspective of those who disagree with fighting the deportation of community members with criminal records). Moreover, the inquiries that Jasmine invites lead us to come to terms with how criminalizing discourses are applied to all of us when we are racialized as Latinxs, and therefore are not treated equitably in comparison to white U.S. citizens. We also see that our unfair treatment is linked to the unequal treatment of Black people. This

\(^{43}\) Prior to the Obama administration, DUIs were considered misdemeanors and not treated as felonies or criminal charges that would qualify an undocumented and a green card holding immigrant to be a priority for deportation. During his administration, DUIs and petty crimes, like shoplifting, became classified as felonies, and qualify people for deportation.
aspect of this workshop shines light on the interdependence and intermeshing dimensions of the pedagogy at play here, which views our lives as interdependent and centers intermeshing understandings of identity and oppression.

Additionally, the dialectic in our workshop highlights how important it is to understand that the struggles of undocumented communities are not solely about citizenship. As Jasmine has highlighted, this is because they do not result solely from a broken immigration system. This point is reinforced when our community questions whether Latinxs, regardless of immigration status, and Blacks are treated like white people are, particularly in light of Elena’s question about why people commit crimes in our communities. Here, the intermeshing of oppressions (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) and how white supremacy greatly shapes this fusion is stressed. Further, when Jasmine says, “But even when we all get papers we will still live in a country where it is okay to abuse women, for example,” she shines light on how sexism, patriarchy and racism are oppressions that fuse together to afflict us, with and without U.S citizenship.

This point was also prevalent in the Mijente forum on immigration, which took place during the first block of sessions of the convening. There, about thirty of us came together to learn from movement cuentos or “movement stories from the Fight Against Immigration Enforcement” (Mijente Program, 2015, p. 9). Among the many conversations that were part of that forum, a number of points were made in a manner that also addressed the inquiry from our immigration committee about how our movement is and is not about citizenship, and how our individual oppressions intermesh with those of others. Specifically, a young Chinese and Latinx participant stated, “We need to express solidarity between our communities, Latinx and Asians, especially
among those of us who are undocumented, and pay attention to how the myths of
[Asians] being a model minority sparks divisions between our communities.” Another
participant also responded, “They use our differences to divide us. We have to defend
Muslim people. We have to defend each other any time they mess with one of us as
minorities.” A participant from New Orleans then asked, “What happens to those of us
[who are undocumented and] who don’t have children here?” And in her description of
Chicago’s organizing practices, another participant asked, “What is citizenship?
Immigration is one more way of oppressing us. But is our goal to be citizens or to
dismantle the institutions that oppress us?” (Fieldnotes, December 12, 2015).

*Learning about our own practices through lenses of anti-Black racism and white
supremacy.* In her interview, Yared also highlighted how necessary it is to approach our
immigrant rights movement as being much larger than issues of legality and citizenship
and to be very aware of how white supremacy shapes all oppressions. She said,

[At Juntos] we see white supremacy issues playing out and how it’s a lot more
entangled in a race issue than just policy and legality, which is what people try to
pin it all around. So, I think as much as we fight for very specific policies or very
specific laws that become less and less abusive to our people, as long as we don’t
recognize that all those policies and all those laws are rooted in a deeply
embedded racism and white supremacy that’s there, we’re going to just keep
fighting different laws and different policies. I think that’s a cultural shift that
takes generations. (Interview, May 6, 2016)

This is exactly the kind of shift that Jasmine is moving community members towards in
our immigration relief workshop when she brings up the racialization of our communities
and of Black people in relationship to a white norm, regardless of immigration status. As
an organization, Juntos does not only work on issues of legality and immigration policy;
it’s work also centers white supremacy while addressing additional oppressions. This is
visible when the organization supports Latinx immigrant youth and parents to challenge
the shutting down of schools in Black and Brown communities in Philadelphia (as
Jasmine notes in Chapter 2), when it has a women’s committee where issues of domestic
violence and sexual assault are raised in the context of our Latinx immigrant community
(as noted in Chapter 2 and 3), when it runs LGBTQ coffee hours for Latinx youth, or as it
facilitates workshops for Latinx youth in local high schools on racism, homo/trans
phobia, sexism, colonialism, and our activism legacies\textsuperscript{44}.

Emphasizing the connection between white supremacy and anti-Blackness and
stressing how it fully shapes the racism Latinx and other communities of color
experience, Miguel argues, “Anti-Blackness always manifests itself in terms of anti-
anything that isn’t white. The racism against Brown people and immigrants comes from
this socially embedded anti-Blackness that has been prevalent throughout our society in
general” (Member Check, October 29, 2016). This is a point that is central to learning at
Juntos and I believe is a main reason why anti-Black racism needs to be at the forefront
of immigrant rights work. It can never be emphasized or analyzed over time enough that
the racism that all people of color experience (e.g., Latinxs, Indigenous, Muslims, Asians,
with each community being fully heterogeneous) derives from anti-Black racism. Thus,
anti-Black racism, which is a tool of white supremacy, is the root of the racialization
processes that minoritized people undergo in this country.

Elaborating on what this anti-Blackness reality means in terms of our organizing
practices, Yared says, “It’s having to understand that it’s not just going to be a legal shift,

\textsuperscript{44} These were all consistent practices of Juntos that I witnessed while I was there, or ones I learned took
place in past years.
but that it comes back to education. And sadly, it’s not just education of our communities, which is what I am most comfortable working in, but it’s going to have to be education of other communities and people moving other people” (Interview, May 6, 2016). Yared’s statement shows how organizing is very much an educational practice (Foley, 1999; Horton & Freire, 2007; Oakes at al., 2006). Relatedly, the need to forge educational relationships with others beyond our own identities and local contexts is clear. Without this “people moving other people” aspect of our educational work, our immigrant rights struggle will continue to be seen and approached as solely about legal shifts regarding citizenship status, which do not get at the root of the struggles we experience. As Yared states, we must “recognize that all those policies and all those laws are rooted in a deeply embedded racism and white supremacy,” and so we must tackle that head on in our local and translocal organizing. Crucially, we must go well beyond our own education.

Recognizing this need to educate ourselves and others on how the racism Brown people experience is tied to anti-Black racism, at Mijente we had four different workshops that centered pro-Blackness. One of them was a large town hall one, much like the session described in the beginning of this chapter that included everyone in the convening. It was called, “Pro-Black Latinx Politics,” and its description in the program read:

Social movements amongst Latinx and Chicanx people, at least ones with liberatory aspirations, must be unequivocally pro-Black. Period. The goal of this session is to explore the realities as well as the possibilities of building authentic, bottom up unity between communities. We will look at historic as well as current examples, and hear from those working and living at this intersection. Sat Cafeteria, all attending session. (Mijente Program, 2015, p. 11).
After listening to the testimonials and analytic perspectives of a panel of Black Latinx community members and Brown Latinx immigrants described as “practitioners and experts working at this intersection” (Fieldnotes, December 12, 2015), town hall participants had pair conversations answering the question, “How have you seen anti-Blackness in your own family and community?” As we shared back in smaller groups and then in the larger group, one of the panelists summarized our collective points,

We have been consistently pitted against each other. Racial justice work is a project of healing. It’s about who is the broader ‘we’? Let’s invite each other into a new conversation that looks at the legacies of colonization, which is, literally, the dismembering of our people. Let’s not pretend we are not of each other. (Fieldnotes, December 15, 2015)

The coloniality-resisting conversations we had in this session were some of the hardest ones that weekend. People in the room were crying and a number had to leave the room for air. One person, who identified as white Latinx, argued during the large group conversation that we should all embrace the whiteness in ourselves as a mixed-race group, sharing that as a white person they felt excluded from depictions of our Latinx community. This led to a tense dialogue involving people from the panel and the larger participant group that highlighted that whiteness is already recognized, centered and privileged in our Latinx communities. Collectively, the group argued that whiteness is fully naturalized as the desirable norm for our hair, our standards of speaking, writing, beauty and even procreating (the popular saying in Latin America of “mejorar la raza” or “improving the race” by having lighter skinned children was noted as an example of this), among much else. The point was made by another participant that white supremacy is structural, and that white people in our Latinx community need to acknowledge how their whiteness has benefited them and work hard to undo that system. This was a charged
discussion and the person who brought up the comment about embracing our whiteness ended up walking out of the room while crying.

As the town hall session came to a close, one of the Mijente facilitators stressed,

This is deeply personal work, it’s about allowing ourselves to be super uncomfortable…we need to get over what we have not done and be *la gran familia* [the great family] that we always talk about...It is fine to be white but you need to do the work to not be an accomplice in a system that is killing us. (Fieldnotes, December 15, 2015)

This short excerpt of this heated and emotional discussion is reflective of the arduous process of “changing the images in our minds” that Anzaldúa (1987/2007) argues is necessary for real change to take place. It is also shows the complex nature of these dialogues around what being part of our “great family” entails. It shines light on how processes of racialization shape our sense of belonging and how a communal pedagogy of resistance involves critical inquiries into who belongs in our family, how white supremacy, coloniality and intermeshed oppressions have shaped our assumptions around this, and what work is required in expanding who we include as part of our people and our family.

At Juntos⁴⁵, the *lema* “Black Lives Matter” or *Las Vidas Negras Importan* is centrally present in across many aspects of Juntos’s work. For example, describing a

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⁴⁵ During Erika’s interview, I learned that at Juntos, workshops on “the history of Black struggle in the U.S.” and our connections to the Black Lives Matter movement were facilitated prior to my interning there, and that non-Black Latinx members did not really move until they spent time in “the same spaces together” with Black communities after Juntos started collaborating with a local Black organization outside of Philadelphia (Interview, April 25, 2016). So, Erika suggested that internal transformation comes from relationships, and sharing time and space, and not just from engaging in critical conversations.
"papel picado" art piece she made (Figure 4.13), Erika Guadalupe noted, “With this piece, I was hoping to create a visual piece that serves as a representation of Black/Brown solidarity. As Latinx, we must actively work against the anti-blackness that exists in our society because our liberation as a people is directly tied together” (Member check, March 18, 2017).

![Image of papel picado art piece](image)

*Figure 4.13. Las Vidas Negras Importan art piece made by Erika Guadalupe. This piece was made in 2016 and revised in 2017.*

Addressing this tied liberation, in her practice at Juntos Yared recurrently engaged in the very hard work of disentangling how Black and Brown communities are “pitted against each other” and how “we are of each other”. Specifically, one morning an undocumented Latina mother came into our office and she told Yared that her husband had been killed by a Black man. As she wept, she told Yared she was at Juntos because she wanted organizational help to have a vigil to denounce Black people killing others (Fieldnotes, November 2015).

Remembering this moment now, I feel incredibly sad and distressed. Yared made a number of phone calls and guided this grieving wife through all the information that

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46 *Papel picado* is a type of traditional Mexican folk paper art that involves cutting pieces of paper from particular images and stringing them together to hang around at festivities, including Day of the Dead and many others. Erika has facilitated numerous intergenerational *papel picado* workshops at Juntos. In October 2016, she designed *papel picado* referencing the need to shut down Berks and to end to all deportations, which said: Not1More and Shut Down Berks in Spanish.
Juntos had in its resource guide to help her receive immediate mental health and other logistical support. And all along, Yared was thoughtful and careful in noting how this horrific tragedy had not taken place because the man who had killed her husband was Black. She explained, as she could in this extremely difficult context, that there were oppressions that led to violence in our communities, including racism and imposed poverty, and that this man must have been suffering from many issues himself that afflicted him. A vigil against fellow Black people would not resolve those issues or prevent them from leading someone to engage in violence. It would only cause more pain. She acknowledged the woman’s anger and hurt and she tried her best to redirect it, to shed light on how we are “pinned against each other,” and to make arrangements for healing to happen. Yared is not trained as a social worker or as a restorative justice counselor, but she is clear that she must do her best to direct such reasonable anger and tension towards a larger understanding of the systems that shape our lives, as well as forgiveness, even if the event is too recent to move past anger. The grieving mother thanked Yared for her help and left the office crying.

Though this was an excruciatingly difficult conversation to have about anti-Blackness and about the intermeshing of our oppressions and our interconnectedness, Yared faced the need to have it. This example shows how central Juntos’s stance that *Las Vidas Negras Importan* [Black Lives Matter] is. Further, it shows how accurate it is that “racial justice work is about healing,” because it means recognizing how our being “pitted against each other” everyday causes deep pain, violence, disrespect and misrecognition between us. And so Yared carefully and caringly contributes, even if only
a little bit, to healing between and within our communities and to our recognition of our shared humanity.

During my time at Juntos, I witnessed Yared consistently center race and anti-Black racism in her facilitation of Fuerza, Juntos’s youth group. Over the year of this study, the group had between one and five Black Latinx youth and about three to five Mestizx Latinx youth in attendance every week. This contributed a lot to the group being able to have critical conversations and, over time, learning together about how anti-Black racism and white supremacy shape the intermeshing of oppressions in our Latinx communities.47

Though challenging and often painful, Yared’s conversations with young and adult members of our communities reflect “a willingness to be uncomfortable” and to be part of a movement that “encompasses all of the things we are fighting for” (Facilitator at Mijente Pro-Black Latinx Politics town hall fieldnotes, December 12, 2015).

**Conceptualizing Immigrant Rights as Human Rights**

As demonstrated in the multiple examples above, “all of the things we are fighting for” within the movement for Latinx immigrant rights encompass much more than just the legality of immigration status. Our goals address rights pertaining to all aspects of our human lives (i.e., race, gender identity, sexual orientation, education, citizenship status,

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47 Most of the youth did not participate in my study. Fuerza met every week while I was working at the office, so I was able to witness their transformative work, much of which was carried out through art projects, film discussions and a great deal of analysis on their personal and their families’ experiences. During this year, the majority of Fuerza youth were also interning at Juntos as part of their High School internships.
housing, labor, and so much more). As such, the immigrant rights movement is a human rights movement.

As argued in this chapter, Juntos’s iteration of the immigrant rights movement centers the intersection (Crenshaw, 1991), mutual constitution (Hames-García, 2011) and intermeshing of our oppressions and identities (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014). As an organization, Juntos fights locally and nationally, as reflected in its forging of translocal dialectic and inquiry-based relationships with other communities across the U.S., for the rights of Latinx immigrants across the multiplicity of identities, experiences and oppressions that span our communities. This is because “immigrants are such a diverse community that so much of their rights compile so many spans” (Erika Guadalupe Interview, August 24, 2016), and because the organization’s work aims to “address the intersections” (Miguel Interview, August 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2016) and the intermeshing (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) of the identities and oppressions of our communities and of others who are part of our people. To this point, Jasmine argues that our organizing “acknowledges the intricacies of how our movement is interconnected with other people’s struggles while still respecting and acknowledging that the different struggles are unique” (Interview, April 7, 2016).

When asking Juntos members whom I interviewed about how they conceptualized the immigrant rights movement, every single person said that they conceive of it as a human rights movement. Several people highlighted that this conceptualization has not always been prevalent. For example, Miguel notes that about ten years ago, around the time of the 2006 Mega Marches, the movement was solely focused on undocumented immigrants “being able to live here, being able to work here” (Interview, August 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2016).
2016). He explains that it was not until the DREAMer narrative began to take shape, even as it was exclusive and criminalizing, that conversations around the education rights of undocumented immigrants became more central to the mobilization.

From that point, as others at Juntos also put forth, there was an opening in the movement to fight for rights related to the heterogeneous identities, oppressions, and experiences of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Over time, issues related to healthcare, gender and sexual orientation, anti-black racism and white supremacy, mass incarceration, police brutality, school-based criminalization (i.e., school to prison pipeline and school to deportation pipeline), reproductive rights, domestic and sexual violence, and environmental issues, among other issues, have come to be seen as central to the immigrant rights movement and understood to be interlinked with the experiences of fellow oppressed communities (Miguel Interview August 2nd, 2016; Jasmine Interview, May 6, 2016; Erika Guadalupe, August 24, 2016).

In addition to centering the intermeshing of our identities and struggles (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014), community members emphasized throughout these interviews that conceptualizing the immigrant rights movement as a human rights movement also means advocating for the recognition that immigrants are human and that, by virtue of our humanity, we have rights regardless of citizenship status. For example, María said,

All humans must be treated and respected equally, regardless of our race or immigration status, regardless of where we were born on earth, and we have to fight for that. …If you are not a citizen, you don’t have rights and if you are not white, you don’t have right to so many things, and why is this? Human blood runs inside all of us, so why are we separated out as immigrants? (Interview, March 25, 2016)
Another consistent argument made by several people is that migration is a human right. In our shared practice and conversations, we always emphasize that the act of migrating is a natural and necessary practice of humans across history, particularly when our livelihood and survival is in danger, but regardless of whether it is. Emphasizing this, Olivia Hija highlights, “All peoples migrate. That’s why we have different countries, different languages. Migration is not something that is recent…It is and has been everywhere. It’s a fundamental part of life and so that’s why I think immigrant rights are human rights” (Interview, April 26, 2016). Recognizing this point at the Mijente welcome involved linking movement of people with colonization and recognizing “first nation people” as “our kin, our ancestors, our people, our political lineage” (Fieldnotes, December 12, 2016), which also means coming to terms with the fact that first nations peoples were and continue to be forcefully and violently removed from these lands.

Figure 4.14. “We Are Human Beings, Risking Our Lives, For Our Families & Our Future” (2015). This piece was made by Michelle Angela and painted by Juntos members and Michelle Angela in Fall 2015 onto the street outside of Philadelphia ICE Building.

Discussing education as fundamental to the defense of our people’s human rights, María posited that we have to address the role that school books and schooling in general play in portraying our people as not being part of society, and, therefore, as not having or deserving any rights. In an excerpt on our conversation, she says,
There are not a lot of school books about immigrants; most portray white men and white women [only]. So immigrants are not seen much, and the same thing with African Americans…and Indigenous peoples, they are also not included or always separated out. This is true, as well, in television, magazines. As parents and families, we can teach about our rights at home but at school that’s another thing. (Interview, March 25, 2016)

María’s insights here are very important. They highlight the critical educational work that Latinx immigrant parents and communities do at home and in community spaces, shown across the chapters of this study, to teach younger generations about their rights and about those of other minoritized and oppressed groups, including the relationships between them. Her argument signals to how this pedagogy is attentive to the intermeshing of our identities and experiences of oppression. Further, María’s remarks emphasize that schools are very important sites of learning about these basic assumptions regarding who makes up and how people make up our society. Her statement establishes, as has been pointed out across this chapter, the paramount importance of home, community and school-based communal pedagogies that acknowledge and cement the fact that all humans belong and have rights on this earth.

Juan Carlos and Lluli, whose civil disobedience with Juntos was highlighted in Chapter 3, discussed this at length with me during their interview. Around the time that we spoke, they had been participating in workshops at Juntos on the concept of human rights, and Juan Carlos had been posting one human right a day on his social media account, encouraging people to learn more about their rights. As we talked, he stressed the following:

[Rights] are universal! And the problem is we are not aware of our rights. We don’t enact them! And politicians use us as objects, and they ignore the rights we have, that all of us have. We are all equal! We have a right to housing, to due process, to live! A white person has the same rights that an immigrant has. An
immigrant is not less or more than them. And education in our communities is what makes the difference. We have to educate ourselves about what our rights are because so many people are not aware of them. (Interview, September 14, 2016)

Like María, Juan Carlos here also challenges racism. Moreover, he emphasizes the importance of learning our rights as humans who are immigrants and of teaching them to others so that all may know them and enact them. To his statement, Lluli adds, “I really like that Juntos offers workshops, handouts and flyers on this because people have been responding to it and coming to Juntos” (Interview, September 14, 2016). Her opinion emphasizes how Juntos’s workshops, along with its coalitional and critical literacy texts (i.e., flyers, handouts), as part of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, are focused on people learning and teaching about each other’s rights. Like María, Juan Carlos and Lluli shine light on the key role that grassroots community education plays in our communities’ learning about and fighting for our rights as humans. Across all interviews, I heard loudly the need for undocumented community members to learn and teach their rights and, being their own best advocates, to collectively speak for themselves.

Figure 4.15: “I Am My Own Best Advocate” Posters featuring Juntos members. These 2014 posters feature Juan Carlos and Olivia Mamá, and are two of many other similar posters of other Juntos’s leaders, as well. These are visible in Juntos’s office still today. They reflect the message Juntos’s members carried when they traveled to Washington, DC in 2014 to demand any conversation and decision about immigration reform be shaped by undocumented people.
A Human Rights Movement Rooted in the Epistemic Privilege of Those Most Oppressed

In late summer 2016, conscious of the fundamental need for community rights education, Juntos partnered with two local social justice organizations (one focused on Philadelphia students and another one on South East Asian refugee communities) and a national human rights organization to run a day-long human rights convening and tribunal in Philadelphia. This coalitional event took place at a community school started by the Asian American and immigrant communities in Philadelphia and gathered about a hundred people from across the U.S. northeast and Philadelphia who were working on a wide range of human rights issues. This gathering is another important example of the ways in which Juntos forges coalitional relationships with others regionally and nationally to contribute to a movement that conceives of identities and oppressions as intersecting (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014). Juntos members had the chance to keep learning about the intricate differences between their experiences and those of other communities and to see each other’s experiences as contributing unique knowledges to a shared movement.

During the day, a series of large and small group conversations and panels around human rights in the U.S. Northeast took place. In the evening, a tribunal with three Jurors listened to and documented more than four hours of human rights violation testimonials from diverse Philadelphia communities to later prepare a detailed document for the United Nations’ record on the United States government. About a month after the tribunal, Juntos, in coalition with 59 other local and national organizations, submitted a 13-page urgent appeal letter to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in Geneva.
Through the composition and submission of this critical and coalitional literacy text, Juntos forged translocal relationships for international action.

Just as it was at Mijente, Juntos members were leaders in this regional convening and participated in many ways. Miguel, who is also on the board of the human rights organization, facilitated the tribunal. Speaking about Juntos’s local work, Erika was one of five panelists on human rights issues in the U.S. Northeast. Olivia Hija coordinated all of the onsite logistics and prepared our members to testify in front of the jurors. During the tribunal, Olivia Mamá read a testimonial collectively written by mothers detained at the Berks Family Detention Center. Her teenage son, Boris, read the testimonials written by the incarcerated children. Further, a female Juntos member, who did not participate in my study, along with her husband, who was fighting deportation proceedings with Juntos’s support and soon after had to go into sanctuary at a local Church, also testified. Additionally, Erika was able to bring into the tribunal one of the incarcerated Berks mothers via phone, so this mother was able to give her own testimony and answer questions from the jurors about the human rights violations she, other mothers and children experience there.

Figure 4.16. US Human Rights Convening co-hosted by Juntos in September 2016. This figure shows Miguel facilitating the tribunal (Jurors to his right) and Olivia Mamá, Boris and other Juntos members testifying at the Tribunal.
As a practitioner at Juntos, I coordinated all-day simultaneous (English/Spanish) interpretation by 15 volunteers whom I recruited and myself. This allowed community members like Maria to participate all day, and for Olivia, Boris and other Juntos members to give testimonials in Spanish and be understood by all in the room. The tribunal spanned issues such as the massive school closings in Philadelphia, the criminalization and deportation of Cambodian refugees and undocumented immigrants, the criminalization and dehumanization of sex workers and homeless community members, and the incarceration of children and families at detention centers (particularly at Berks).

![Figure 4.17](image)

**Figure 4.17**. Juntos members participating at US Human Rights Convening. This figure shows Maria (in pink) and ten fellow Juntos members participating in the Human Rights convening.

When testifying, Boris, who sat next to his mom (Olivia Mamá) facing the jurors, and who was born in the U.S. and was thirteen years old at the time, read the words from incarcerated children at Berks. In their testimony, the children contributed key knowledge about injustice based on their experiences. Below is a short excerpt of the testimony Boris read,

> We are young people between the ages of 12 and 16 who are stuck at the Berks Family Detention Center in Berks, PA. We are teenagers who are being deprived of our freedom. We are children; we are young people with many dreams to fulfill and with many goals to achieve...Sincerely, 7th grade student prisoner, 371 days. 8th grade student prisoner, 349 days. 8th grade student prisoner, 163 days. 9th grade student prisoner, 305 days. 9th grade student prisoner, 376 days, 9th grade student prisoner 327 days. (Artifact, September 2016)
In her human rights panel remarks, Erika, as the Executive Director of Juntos, described something that speaks to a central feature of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance. She said, “Very fundamentally…I believe in organic intellectualism, so the idea that the movement has to be led by the knowledge of our undocumented communities because no one will know those experiences unless they’ve lived through them” (Fieldnotes, September 17, 2016). Expanding this point, in our interview she explained,

I believe so much in our community because…their intelligence comes from their personal experience, and so they are what I consider to be organic intellectuals. Some of them didn’t graduate from high school and many did not go to college, but [their knowledge is] the strength of the organization. (Interview, April 25, 2016)

Throughout this chapter, analysis has shown that as Juntos’s members read and write to learn, teach, inquire and mobilize locally, regionally and nationally, within and outside of coalitions, they also hold this stance that the critical knowledge that Latinx immigrants draw from their experience is what powers the organization’s work. It is a stance that echoes Juntos’s members’ conviction in the epistemic value (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) of their testimonies, and of their home and community knowledges. The epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) of our community members shapes the common sense of the organization and the larger movement that Juntos contributes to national gatherings like Mijente’s.

This is a position that, as I have shown and argued in this chapter, guides all relationships that members of the organization forge with others and that results from our communities’ attention to the fact that identities and oppressions intermesh. This human rights convening stands out because it was rooted in the paramount importance of
listening to, privileging, and learning from the very unique testimonies of struggle that differing communities offered to each other to facilitate the building of shared knowledges and to “commit[ing] ourselves to some future that can include each other and to work toward that future with the particular strengths of our individual identities” (Lorde, 1984, p.142)

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I addressed the following questions: (1) How is Latinx immigrant organizing through Juntos influenced by relationships to regional and national activists, communities and social justice organizations, and how does Juntos’s organizing also influence these regional and national social justice arenas? (2) What are the intergenerational teaching, learning, critical and coalitional literacy practices that are mobilized in the process of forging these translocal relationships for organizing? And more broadly, (3) How is Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance involving of, and shaped by, relationships to regional and national communities and organizations? What results from these translocal, dialectic and coalitional relationships and affiliations?

I attended to these questions by analyzing key examples from Juntos’s relationship with Mijente, a national political network for Latinx organizing across the U.S. that launched in 2015. This analysis showcased a teaching and learning dialectic focused on an inquiry into how our identities and oppressions intermesh (Lorde; 1984; Lugones, 2014) and who our people are. In my exploration of these, I showed how Juntos’s workshops, local committee work, and everyday conversations between its members nourish inquiries that unveil how transphobia and homophobia, criminalization,
patriarchy, capitalism, white supremacy and anti-Black racism (among other oppressions), legacies and current realities of colonization fuse together to divide us and impact how we define who our people are.

An implication of this conceptualization of our identities and oppressions’ intermeshing is that, as Latinx immigrants at Juntos, we conceptualize our movement as a human rights movement. Thus, our goals involve defending all of our rights as humans with intermeshed identities and oppressions—not only fighting for citizenship. Further, this chapter shows that we conceive of this movement as one guided by the unique and differing knowledges that grow from the experiences of those of us who are most oppressed (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002), recognizing that they are their own best advocates.

As noted in the analysis of Juntos’s members’ conversations in local workshops and national town halls, people’s analysis of their experiences often conflict with one another’s. Thus, a communal pedagogy of resistance is a means to figuring out, through dialectics from and across our differences as organic intellectuals of our movement and as people at the borderlands with unique facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), how to make transformations to our movement’s common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000), with an ultimate goal of transforming the larger common sense of society.

In the context of Juntos’s local practices and translocal dialectics, this “figuring it out together” from our differences involves a communal pedagogy that is facilitated by our mobilization of literacy as a critical social practice and of coalitional literacies (Campano et al, 2013). This means that as we read, write, inquire into and re-
conceptualize our organizing practices, we figure out transformations to our common sense that reflect a new political culture (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000). Thus, our movement is about difficult “inner changes” (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) that de-link (Mignolo, 2011) us from coloniality logics and structures in a manner that is not pure, painless or void of conflict, but rather in a manner that attends to conflict and difference and that is communal. As a whole, this chapter has focused on the “how” of Juntos’s communities’ process of figuring out a new common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) and political culture, locally and trans-locally, as members of a heterogeneous community that every day resists and weakens the complex domination of our people.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Recordar: To remember, from the Latin re-cordis, to pass back through the heart.

(Galeano, 1989/1991, p.1)

So behind this feeling there is this image, this visual, and I have to figure out what the articulation of this image is. That's how I get into the theory. I start theorizing about it. But it always comes from a feeling. (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007, p. 236)

A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives...all fuse together to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience. (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2015, p.19)

It’s not about me
Never was
Never will be
It’s about
We
(Las Cafeteras, 2012)

This study tells many stories about a diverse and intergenerational group of Latinx immigrants (including me) at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). These stories show how, as part of a small immigrant rights Latinx organization named Juntos, we carry out critical literacy practices (Auerbach, 1989; Knight et al, 2006; Freire, 1970/2007) to learn and teach from each other’s experiences and differences about resisting oppression and bringing about a shared pluriversal (Mignolo, 2011) new common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) that protects the full lives of all oppressed and minoritized in the U.S. This study is also about Latinx immigrants communally challenging coloniality (e.g., Mignolo, 2011) through our organizing, as well as about the process of my carrying out practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) as a coloniality-resisting methodology.

Though this research focuses on my taking an “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) on my own and shared organizing practice at Juntos for almost two years as a Latina immigrant, it is a study that is “not about me” but “about we” (Las Cafeteras, 2012). This means this research is about our shared contributions as Latinx immigrants at
Juntos to building a movement for immigrant rights that is attentive to the heterogeneity in the larger “we” of our communities, as we fight together against the daily abuse and legal violence (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012) Latinx immigrant communities experience everyday.

This research tells a slice of a much larger story of resistance and change. The slice presented here is told through the “passing back” through my heart (Galeano, 1989/1991) of almost two years of our shared organizing. It is told through my theorizing from these emotions and images, as Anzaldúa (1987/2007) describes her process of theorizing at the borderlands, and from the feelings these experiences brought up for me. Thus, this study itself reflects my take on the dialectic (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lorde, 1984/2007) between my own experiences, images, and emotions and those of María, Erick, Olivia Mamá, Olivia Hija, Lluli, Juan Carlos, Erika Guadalupe, Miguel, Yared, Jasmine and Erika, who together participated in this study and gave me permission to write about their feelings and experiences.

As I carried out member checks, fellow Latinx immigrants organizing at Juntos said things like, “I am glad you learned something from this interview”. Their feedback clearly points to the fact that the sharing and permission they gave me to carry out this research and write about it always had a clear educational aim. A central goal of this study has been that I would learn from myself and from our work together, and that all of us at Juntos might learn from our work, as well. Additionally, a key aim has been that others who read this work, particularly education practitioners across the lifespan, as well as fellow organizing practitioners and education/literacy scholars, may learn about the
richness and complexities of our immigrant communities’ out-of-school, home, and communal educational practices and literacies.

Further, this work crucially aimed to be of use to Juntos and to each of the people who kindly participated in it. Ultimately, this study aimed to offer us insights about our activist practices that could help us better them (Lytle, 2008) as we continue resisting and dismantling oppression together.

Overall, this study addressed the following questions:

1. How do Latinx immigrants organize for their rights?
   a. What are the literacy practices that Latinx immigrants mobilize in the process of organizing for their rights?
   b. How do I, as a practitioner researcher, work alongside fellow Latinx immigrants to support their/our work for change?

Below, I review the findings of this research and then engage in a discussion that provides additional insights about the work presented here. I conclude this chapter by presenting key study implications.

**Statement of Main Findings**

In this section, I revisit the key arguments made in this research by chapter.

*Practitioner Inquiry Can Be a Methodology To Resist Coloniality*

A main argument of this study is that the framework and methodology of practitioner inquiry (Campano, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lytle, 2000; Simon, Campano, Broderick, Pantoja, 2012) can resist coloniality (e.g., Mignolo, 2011, 2012).
Through its “inquiry stance” framework (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), practitioner research can be a transformative means to engage decolonial reflexivity and prefigure an “elsewhere” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012) that centers relationships of mutual care and aid (Walia, 2013), generates knowledge from the dialectic of practice and inquiry (Campano, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), challenges either/or categories (Simon et al, 2012), and therefore de-links (Mignolo, 2011) from Eurocentric ways of knowing, being, and doing.

My iteration of this methodology as resisting coloniality was influenced by feminist-of-color epistemologies (e.g. Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Lorde, 1984/2007) and by post-positivist realist conceptions of identity (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002). This means that my application and conceptualization of this methodology views the local knowledge generated by practitioners, particularly those at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) or at the in-between and non-dominant edges of disciplines and territories, as pluriversal “border-thinking” (Ghiso & Campano, 2013; Mignolo, 2011, 2012) that “changes the terms” (Mignolo, 2011, para 6) of research and practice for social justice.

Lastly, in this study I have made the case for practitioner inquiry’s potential to resist coloniality based on my analysis of the many ways in which traditional research/ers have and overwhelmingly continue to cement colonial logics and realities. This argument was built from examining demonstrations of this fact across many of Juntos past and ongoing experiences with research/ers, as well as in María’s and her indigenous community’s experiences of coloniality through the research done by outsiders on her community’s language and cultural practices. By analyzing these experiences, which
involved my own organizing practice at Juntos, I argued that everyday this organization resists the coloniality of mainstream research/ers and of oppressive policies and practices related to immigration status-based oppression as it intermeshes (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) with other dominations.

**Intergenerational Critical Literacies as Communal Pedagogy of Resistance**

Grounded on the assumption that organizing is an educational practice (Bishop, 2015; Foley, 1999; Horton & Freire, 1990; Oakes et al, 2006), this study found that Juntos’s Latinx immigrants organize for their rights in a manner that centers extrafamilial intergenerational learning (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008; Gadsden, 2002; Gadsden & Hall, 1996) by mobilizing intergenerational critical literacies (Auerbach, 1989; Knight et al, 2006; Freire & Macedo, 1987) as ideological sociocultural practices (e.g. Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007; Street, 1984) that bring about and nourish what I theorize as a “communal pedagogy of resistance”. The critical literacies that give form to this communal pedagogy of resistance are intergenerational literacies contextualized in music and art-making that put forth “feminist affirmations and interventions” (Knight et al., 2006) that are attentive to the intersection and intermeshing of oppressions (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014), as well as to the rich cultural resources and heterogeneity of our Latinx communities.

Through an analysis of numerous instances at Juntos of intergenerational and extrafamilial literacy and educational practices of organizing, I have defined a communal pedagogy of resistance as one that is enacted in communal spaces (like streets, parks and community organizations) and that arises from the *facultad* (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007), or
from the critical and oppositional consciousness and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997; Moya, 2002) of oppressed people at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). This pedagogy comes to life in the borderlands, which are the in-between and liminal spaces where communities like Latinx immigrants dwell. In its application, a communal pedagogy of resistance 1) expands Latinx immigrants’ sense of who belongs in our families and communities; 2) enhances our sense of being interdependent and interconnected to others in a shared communal being; and 3) facilitates our learning from each other’s differing experiences of intermeshed oppression across generations, communities, and beyond familial-relationships in order to build and act on a pluriversal vision of justice that protects all of us.

As such, this is a pedagogy that has intergenerational, relational, interdependence, and inquiry-based dimensions. Additionally, I posit that this communal pedagogy of resistance sustains deep intergenerational relationships of mutual care among those engaged in it and yields a type of leadership for immigrant rights that is similarly communal. This means that as Juntos members gain knowledge and skills from each other to defend their human rights and expand the sense of who is part of their people, they develop a shared leadership practice. Ultimately, this communal leadership is one that de-centers individualism and re-centers humility, ontological interdependence (Walia, 2013), and the recognition that the facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) or the oppositional critical consciousness (Freire, 1970/2007) and epistemic privilege (e.g. Campano, 2007) of those most oppressed by anti-immigrant hegemony (Gonzales, 2014) must be what leads the movement for immigrant rights forward.
Communal Pedagogy of Resistance as Translocal Dialectic Inquiry

This study also attended to how Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is influenced by, and influences relationships between Latinx activists across local, regional, and national arenas. This analysis considered how Juntos’s intergenerational (Gadsden, 2002), critical (Knight et al., 2006; Freire, 1970), and coalitional literacies (Campano et al., 2013), and therefore its communal pedagogy of resistance, are mobilized across these translocal relationships that Latinx immigrants forge and sustain over time through Juntos.

By examining the leadership and participation of Juntos members at Mijente’s founding convening in 2015 and in a local Human Rights tribunal in 2016, as well as from analyzing Juntos’s local organizational practices as they relate to national events, this study posits that Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance involves a teaching and learning dialectic that inquires into how our identities and oppressions differently intermеш (Lorde; 1984; Lugones, 2014), and into who our people are. Further, this communal pedagogy of resistance is powered by the conflicts that naturally arise from the dialectics between different experiences and knowledges and these are seen are epistemically generative.

Thus, in the context of local and translocal organizing relationships, a communal pedagogy of resistance is a means to generate transformational knowledge from our differing facultades at the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). Privileging this knowledge (Campano, 2007) is what guides our figuring out together (uncertainly) what and how to change our movement and societal common sense (Gramsci, 1916-
1935/2000). This means our immigrant rights organizing is communal dialectic inquiry that is not solely focused on citizenship. Instead, it is focused on how to protect our rights as humans who are part of one another and who have intermeshed identities and face fused oppressions (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) in heterogeneous ways.

**Discussion**

In this section, I discuss the findings presented above, bringing additional insights from this study to light.

*Insider/Outsider Dialectic & Decolonial Reflexivity*

One of the main lessons that stand out from this study is the complexity and dissonance involved in carrying out research that resists coloniality. The dialectic of insider/outsider positionalities generatively “challenges either/or categories” (Simon et al, 2012, p.20) and brings to the fore contradictions and tensions that exist in striving to “de-link” (Mignolo, 2011) research from Eurocentric logics and practices. These discomforting contradictions are invaluably productive for realistically learning about and engaging in decoloniality.

As a practitioner researcher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), I was an active participant at Juntos as I inquired into our shared practice. In writing from this perspective, I attempted the difficult task of telling my story as a practitioner at Juntos while also not centering it. I felt if I centered it, I would risk examining immigrant rights organizing primarily from the perspective of someone who is not most affected by the legal violence (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012) of the U.S. immigration system as it intermeshes (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) with other systems of oppression. I feared I
would end up highlighting my practice when in reality my practice at Juntos was joint interdependent practice.

As evident across these chapters, I sought not to emphasize my practice and story by centering those of people who are undocumented, part of mixed-status families, queer, trans, female, mestizx, indigenous, poor or working class (as these identities intermesh), and are thus most affected by our organizing practices and by the violence to which we communally respond. Looking back, I realize this choice was contradictory because my writing focused on the experiences and knowledges of those most affected as analyzed through my eyes, frameworks and emotions. At times, this study reads like an outsider describing someone else’s practice.

Evidently, there is great tension and complexity in the dialectic of being an insider/outsider to the context I have studied, and therefore in my writing from this positionality. This tension discomforts me. Now that a full version of these chapters is finalized, I worry that I have ended up speaking for people, even after member checks (e.g., Creswell, 2007); after sharing sections of what is here with many (not all) study participants and checking that they felt okay with what is here; after recurrently asking myself the many deep decolonial reflexivity questions of practitioner inquiry’s framework (Lytle, 2000), such as *Who am I to do this research? What is the purpose of this study? Who is this research for? How do I position others and myself as generators of knowledge? What assumptions am I making about knowledge? Who am I representing others and myself? Why?* Thus, as I begin to discuss this study, I find it very important to be clear about what I aimed to do in writing these chapters the way I did.
In writing about this research, I have come to terms with the fact that “there is no pure de-linking” (Campano, 2017, personal communication) from coloniality. Therefore, even as a methodology that can resist coloniality, a practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) always involves other’s practices and experiences, and not “speaking for” others perhaps is not even possible. Could I have centered my practice while decentering it? Could I have centered other’s practice while not speaking for others?

The dissonance in the way I wrote this study is generative. From examining it, I learn that discomfort, uncertainty and tension are, and should be, inherent in knowledge seeking that resists coloniality. Resistance involves discomfort and contradiction and being okay with not knowing exactly the “what” and “how” of the process of building an “elsewhere” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012). This study feels mine and not mine, communal and individual, accurate and inaccurate, coloniality exerting and coloniality resisting.

Further, I find there is a parallel between the lessons from conceiving of and applying practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Campano, 2009; Lytle, 2000; Simon et al., 2012) to resist coloniality in research and the lessons from organizing individually and communally through Juntos to resist coloniality. In both cases, it is impossible to avoid tensions and contradictions as one negotiates a process that attends to a multiplicity of positionalities, values, and commitments. Yet I find that it is from this acknowledging and not ignoring this dissonance that humility and de-linking arise.
A central conclusion I draw from claiming that practitioner research can resist coloniality and from applying such a methodology is that there is no either/or (no “either it resists it or it exerts it”), and that the resulting humbling inquiry into how it does and how it does not resist it is what is in itself coloniality defying. It is the not fully knowing and the welcoming of fallibility that makes this a methodology that shows “textured and realistic accounts of change” (Simon et al., 2012, p.20) and therefore one that generates transformational knowledge about the complexity, difficulty, and value of “prefiguring decolonization” (Walia, 2013).

This study demonstrates practitioner inquiry yields no simple answers, only further inquiry. It is a methodology that does not idealize or romanticize radical change or, in this case, decolonization. This is monumental given the increasing appearance of texts and talks about “how to” decolonize research and practice that to me often feel self-righteous because they tend to prescribe a set of decolonizing guidelines/examples that make researchers or activist seem victorious in their decolonial feats, and/or claim the world must be seen through dichotomies. The same is so in the social justice organizing world, where being “most woke” is often portrayed as a dichotomous, un-contradictory state.

This study has shown that there is a great deal of grassroots organizing happening where people are grappling communally with the contradictions of our practices and frameworks, and that it is a process where sometimes we misrecognize, exclude or speak for or over others. These chapters shine light on how, like practitioner inquiry, organizing that defies coloniality can be full of tensions yet can also be humbling and nourishing of coloniality-resisting, generative inquiry.
I do not wish for my claim that practitioner research can resist coloniality to be prescriptive, to portray me or Juntos as victorious in our journeys, or to support either/or perceptions of the world. I wish for this study and my argument that practitioner research can resist coloniality to show the “epistemic role of dissonance and struggle” (Simon et al., 2012, p. 20). I wish for it to demonstrate how invaluable an “inquiry stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) can be in facing and “digging into” the complex and at times contradictory struggle of carrying out research/organizing that acknowledges and stems from our humanity, from our fragility and ontological interdependence (Walia, 2013). Research/organizing that is committed to prefiguring alongside others (with the tensions and misses that entails) and research/organizing that views the communal process towards decolonization (in its impurity) to be as valuable, or perhaps even most valuable, than having arrived there.

**Literacy as Critical Social Practice & Juntos’s Communal Pedagogy of Resistance**

As literacy research has taken a sociocultural turn (e.g., Gee, 1992; Heath, 1984; Lewis, Enciso, Moje, 2007; Street, 1984), literacy has been increasingly studied in the context of everyday life and social action. The research presented across these chapters offers insights that contribute to the further understanding of literacy as critical social practice. It shows literacy as a local and translocal social practice in action, with rich ideological, cultural and critical dimensions, being carried out by Latinx immigrants to communally resist intermeshed (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) oppression and construct a new common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000).
Across these chapters, Latinx immigrants engage critical literacies (Auerbach, 1989; Knight et al., 2006; Freire & Macedo, 1987) to organize for their rights through teaching, learning, and dialectic inquiry intergenerationally, communally, and from difference. I argue these practices make up a communal pedagogy of resistance that is facilitated by critical literacy practices of, for example, analyzing deportation priorities and immigration policies, inquiring into the roots and the reasons for divisions and exclusions within our communities (and beyond in relation to fellow oppressed and minoritized communities) based on race, gender identity, poverty, sexual orientation, and more.

Further, the communal pedagogy of resistance facilitated by these critical literacies nourishes dialectic inquiries regarding difference, certainty and uncertainty, and who belongs as part of our people, as we figure out together how to resist and bring about a new common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000), to our movement and to larger society, that protects all of us.

Thus, literacies in this context are mobilized to generate knowledge that can inform and lead the movement, and they are negotiated intergenerationally, trans-locally and across difference. This is seen in conversations, for example, around the spelling of "Latinx"; in critical examinations of the narratives and language we use to speak about our communities and wage campaigns; or when protest signs are communally and intergenerationally composed to intervene against injustice and affirm the communal power of our communities. In this context, literacy is a means of circulating and familiarizing ourselves with ideas locally and trans-locally, and of building relationships of inquiry and learning communally.
Additionally, this study has shown literacy to be liberatory as a result of it being engaged by people as a political, cultural (musical, multilingual and artistic) popular (of the people) social practice (Auerbach, 1989) that forges a communal pedagogy of resistance. This research demonstrates literacy, as ideological social practice, is central to a pedagogy that is organic and negotiated communally, without one person exerting it onto others or directing it towards an already defined lesson or vision. Thus, no particular literacy practice is imposed or privileged over others and practices are always infused with the cultural and ideological knowledge and goals of those socially engaging in it as they build relationships with one another and negotiate a process of organizing for human rights. As a whole, this study shows a heterogeneous community of undocumented and documented Latinx immigrants with a multiplicity of identities who are complexly literate, educated, and resourceful and who mobilize literacy to generate communal knowledge from our community’s facultades (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) to defy oppression.

In an age where digital communication is increasing, digital literacies are fundamental to relationship and movement building. This study did not include analysis of these digital literacy practices yet, as seen from Juan Carlos’ discussions of human rights through online forums to the organizational online practices that were part of Juntos’s outreach, these local and translocal digital practices of resistance were common. Thus, more research on the role that digital literacies play in the movement for immigrant rights is warranted.

Lastly, I find it important to discuss the concepts I employed to define the pedagogy facilitated by the critical literacies I examined above. In naming Juntos’s literacy, teaching, and learning practice a “communal pedagogy of resistance”, I drew
from the concept of “communal” because, as argued across this study’s chapters, these practices nourish a sense of ontological interdependence (Walia, 2013) and because they expand our conceptualizations of who belongs to our community or who is part of our people. Both of these aspects of the literacy, teaching, learning, and inquiry at Juntos spoke to a communal state of being. Additionally, these practices took place in public and shared out-of-school spaces, such as the Juntos’s office, parks, streets, city hall, public school cafeterias, parking lots, and even the grass outside detention centers. To me, this also made these literacies, teaching/learning and inquiry practices communal because these spaces are communally used.

Furthermore, knowledge at Juntos is not regarded through coloniality-lenses, meaning knowledge is not understood to be individual or as something one person can own. Instead, it is conceptualized as communal, as belonging to all, and as resulting from the facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) or the oppositional consciousness and epistemic privilege (Campano, 2007; Mohanty, 1997) of community members who regard each other as organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) who together contribute knowledge and leadership “from below” as Juan Carlos calls it.

As stated previously, the mobilization of literacy, teaching/learning and inquiry practices generates communal facultad-derived knowledges that guide our movement. For all these reasons, the word “communal” describes the type of pedagogy nourished at Juntos. It encompasses the pluriversality (Mignolo, 2011) and heterogeneity of knowledges that nourish this pedagogy and the sense that these knowledges are linked and shared. Lastly, to me a pedagogy that is communal is a pedagogy that is everybody’s, that is popular (of the people), inclusive, and expansive of who belongs to our people.
In the context of local and translocal organizing for immigrant rights, which this study has shown is a movement that is concerned with much more than obtaining citizenship status for undocumented people in the U.S., naming Juntos’s pedagogy a “communal pedagogy” feels precise because it also reflects the larger communality goal of this pedagogy, which is to resist together for our holistic and communal well-being.

Lastly, in defining Juntos’s communal pedagogy as being of resistance, I was drawn to the idea that resistance is re-imagining (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) as we inquire together, and that it is necessary to prefiguring of decolonization (Walia, 2013). Connecting back to one of the main lessons of this dissertation, what is unique about Juntos in its local and translocal work, is that we are committed to resisting, imagining, prefiguring together while knowing we do not have all of the answers, and that we need each other’s differing perspectives and identities to be able to figure out the details of what our final vision, and of the process that takes us towards it, fully looks like.

Thus, a communal pedagogy of resistance emphasizes the value of the process of resisting communally towards a shared goal that is being figured out, together. To me, the concept of resistance alludes both to the verb or action of resisting in the present tense, and it also alludes to a noun, a goal of not giving into coloniality. Resistance speaks to the process of figuring out and actively, powerfully, fighting against oppression. It speaks to the activist dimension of the literacies and pedagogy mobilized at Juntos yet it does not presume we have defined a final pluriversal vision of change. It centers our process of learning from each other and negotiating from our differences how we resist and what resistance means now and in the long term. In many ways, organizing at Juntos is
communal resistance, which means communal dialectic inquiry that re-imagines and prefigures a future guided by this process of communal knowledge-generation.

**Communal Leadership & Building a New Common Sense**

Political science literature on the mobilization of Latinx immigrants for immigrant rights (e.g., Ida Buff, 2008; Gonzales, 2014; Pallares, 2015; Voss & Bloemraad, 2011) in the U.S. has argued that the intergenerational turn in the political socialization and mobilization (e.g., Voss & Bloemraad, 2011) of immigrants, increased networking and coalitional power building across smaller civic actors (nonprofits, churches, etc.) utilizing new communications technology (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Salas, 2008) to share resources and get people mobilized, as well as the existence of *organic intellectuals* (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) who transform immigrant communities’ common sense (Gonzales, 2014), might explain the pro-immigrant rights mass actions and small legislative changes that have taken place over the last decade or so in the U.S. Some of the research has also noted that an expansive sense of “our people” (Pallares & Flores-Gonzalez, 2011) might also influence the scale of immigrant rights mobilization.

Contributing to knowledge on the literature on this topic, the practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Campano, 2009; Simon et al., 2012) study presented here has provided a window into the intergenerational, extrafamilial, “our people”- expanding, networked, undocumented-led, and *organic intellectual*-involving organizing practices of Latinx immigrants in Philadelphia. Further, my research has argued that all of these dimensions of Juntos’s organizing have been crucial in its work and that they are part of communal learning/teaching for resistance through a dialectic inquiry process that is
facilitated by intergenerational literacy practice. Thus, it has added an education and literacy dimension to the understanding of immigrant rights organizing. Additionally, it has also posited that this dialectic inquiry process yields a leadership model that can be described as “communal leadership”. Therefore, it has shone light on the fact that models of leadership might also have something to do with the approach and the impact of Latinx immigrant organizing.

Theorizing the relevance of leadership models, social movement theorists have argued, “Movement successes and failures – their growth and decline, their heritages for the future and their mark on history – are all intimately tied up with their forms of leadership” (Barker, Johnson, Lavalette, 2001, p. 22-23). Thus, in the context of Juntos’s contributions to the movement for immigrant rights, this argument about the weight that forms of leadership have on the lives and work of movements is important. Learning about Juntos’s leadership building provides insights into the implications of its communal pedagogy of resistance.

Though a future direction of this study could be to further research Juntos’s leadership model as resulting from its “communal pedagogy of resistance”, the data I analyzed showed that the leadership nourished at Juntos is communal. When asking Juntos’s members during interviews about whether they considered themselves to be leaders, most often people answered “no” and about a third responded with “yes”. Those who responded “no”, stressed they were people who worked with others to push for justice and resist oppression and emphasized they were still learning, not feeling they could alone define strategy or that they would want to tell others what to do.
Puzzled at first by these answers, given that all who I interviewed carried out actions that I believed demonstrated leadership and were exemplary to others in the movement (like getting arrested and risking arrest at demonstrations, leading workshops, speaking publicly at news conferences or actions, facilitating legal clinics, among much else they did to defend and protect each other’s rights), I asked Juntos’s members to tell me how they viewed their own practice at Juntos in relationship to how they defined the concept of leadership.

From our conversations, I learned all thought of themselves as contributing to the movement in a manner that is interconnected to others’ contributions and completely communal. No one, including those who said “yes” to being leaders, emphasized that they had single-handedly contributed a particular vision, idea or action. Every single person stressed that they felt part of a community of people who took action together to defy oppression and bring about change, and that the credit for the work of Juntos was shared, communal.

In discussing these answers during member checks with fellow organizing practitioners at Juntos, I believe that what explains the apprehension of people to claim they are leaders is that mainstream models for leadership conceive of leaders as individuals with a vision that others follow, and as individuals who are credited with actions, strategies, and ideas in their movements. At Juntos, as this research has demonstrated, a vision of justice is being constructed communally and the organizing itself is communal, so singling out individuals and calling them “leaders” who get credited with visions or actions is something that no one at Juntos does.
Instead, as seen in Chapter 3, Juntos leaders call for communal leadership “from below” (as Juan Carlos and Lluli stated when discussing leadership in our movement), viewing those who are undocumented and of mixed-status families (particularly children of undocumented immigrants), as well as those with non-dominant identities and experiences as needing to share their knowledge with others in order to have that shared knowledge guide the movement forward. Thus, Juntos members see their organizing practices as connected with no one being recognized or celebrated as the leader of the whole organization.

Across this study’s chapters, Erika, who is legally the director of the organization, is one of many leaders in the organization who is admired and respected just as other people, like the Olivias, Erick and his mother, and Juan Carlos and Lluli, Jasmine and Yared are admired and respected. In each answer regarding whether they considered themselves leaders, a recurrent theme of humility appeared, as people acknowledged others more than themselves, recognized their need to keep learning from others, and were unwilling to claim credit as individual leaders. Further, those who already recognized themselves as leaders put forth aspects of a non-mainstream definition of leadership when they claimed to be leaders. They claimed to be leaders collectively with others, not ahead or above others, not individually or more critically.

Considering the implication of this communal leadership model that I believe results from Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, the conceptualization of those organizing at Juntos as organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) is relevant. As such, by conceptualizing of leadership at Juntos as being communal or shared, all the participants in this study contribute to a transformation in the common sense (Gramsci,
1916-1935/2000) of the movement about what leadership is and how it should function within the movement. This new common sense around leadership centers communal envisioning, communal credit, communal being. I think this is very important because it means that the new “common sense” of our movement is being forged and recognized as one that does not privilege individualism, individual crediting, or top-down leadership.

Instead, this forming new common sense foregrounds communality. I believe this will prove to be consequential for what Juntos, locally and trans-locally, is able to accomplish in terms of mass action and legislative change. I believe this privileging of communality has shaped what Juntos members have already been able to do in transforming the common sense of the immigrant rights movement. It has led people to feel and belong to an organization where people’s actions and contributions are part of each other’s, where humility is privileged.

This study did not set out to research this question of leadership or of directions in the movement as related to such leadership, but considering what the consequence of Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance is fundamental particularly in terms of leadership and common sense building. Defining the communal feature of Juntos’s pedagogy and leadership style is very important to understand as the movement faces a white supremacist government administration that is proud to be so, and as it works to transform its common sense. I believe a leadership model that de-centers individualism and foregrounds communality, as I argue Juntos’s does, will prove to be essential in transforming societal common sense (Gramsci, 1916-1935/2000) in these times, when a full rejection of white supremacy and of individualistic notions of well-being is so acutely necessary.
Organizing as Inquiry & Juntos Members as Practitioner Researchers

As a practitioner researcher at Juntos I was careful to discuss with everyone who participated in the study the lenses I brought with my practice and research there, particularly those of organizing as educational practice (e.g., Horton & Freire, 1990; Oakes et al., 2006), literacy as a social practice (e.g., Street, 1984) and “inquiry as stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). As my time at Juntos began, I did not know whether these were lenses that were already organically employed by its members as they organized or whether they would be welcomed or be aligned with this space. Over my time in the organization, and as demonstrated across the chapters of this study, I learned that the lenses of education and inquiry are ones that have long been central to Juntos’s organizing.

As examples of workshops, protests, convenings and relationship building analyzed in this study show, Juntos’s members organize through dialectic translocal educational inquiry. Thus, organizing is inquiry. An implication of this is that Juntos members are organizing practitioners and practitioner researchers locally and trans-locally. Preceding chapters have shown Juntos’s members ask questions of their assumptions about each other, about their practices and about their language and narratives; they use evidence from their experiences, lives and past practices to generate knowledge together across differences that can give rise to new inquiries and directions, and they use these inquiries to drive communal action. This is seen, for example, in workshops around the DREAMer narrative or about current immigration relief programs. It is also visible in local gatherings (like the event around Jennicet’s visit), national
convenings (like Mijente’s launching) and in the very structure of individual committee and cross-committee work at Juntos.

That Latinx immigrants at Juntos organize by being practitioner researchers is very important. It shows that inquiry in this space is fundamental to active participation, and that there is no organizing without communal inquiry. This is so even when, as noted in Chapter 2, “inquiry”, being a “practitioner researcher” or an “organizer practitioner” are not words or phrases that are used in the everyday vocabulary at Juntos, even when members’ practices do reflect inquiry being the means for individual and communal organizing practice. These are academic terms that do not get named at Juntos yet the actions and values that these concepts describe are certainly ones crucially mobilized at Juntos.

That this is so is not something I realized early on. At first, I was too concerned with documenting and figuring out a “balance” between inquiring and actively participating. It was not until I started to slow down and ask questions about what it meant to actively participate here, to discuss with fellow organizing practitioners and friends, like Jasmine, the challenges of balancing these roles, that I learned that raising and taking up inquiries, particularly regarding difference and conflict between perspectives, identities and roles is the very means to organizing at Juntos. Being a practitioner researcher at Juntos meant embracing the dialectic between these roles and finding it generative, as Juntos members do.

Jasmine’s emphasis that “our community is filled with experts…[engaging] in mutual relationships of learning from each other and from themselves, become[ing]
experts” (Interview, April 7, 2016) speaks to the fact that each Juntos member is an organizing practitioner, and a practitioner researcher, constantly learning and teaching based on inquiry into their own differing lives and organizing practices, as well as into the policies, discourses and wider practices that shape all of these. Therefore, at Juntos organizing is inquiry. Strategy, action and relationships come from inquiry, and inquiry comes from and leads to action.

**Implications**

In this final section, I discuss broad implications of this practitioner inquiry dissertation for practice, research and Juntos. This last section is guided by the following inquiries: Why do we need to know about Juntos’s work? Why is it important in the literature and practice on literacy, pedagogy, organizing? What could be future directions of this work?

**Implications for Practice**

The concept of a communal pedagogy of resistance could have powerful implications for the practices of K-12 and across the lifespan education practitioners. This is because this concept shines light on the complexity of the intergenerational and extrafamilial literacy practices and community “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) that Latinx immigrants mobilize in communal spaces, such as streets, parks and community organizations everyday, in order to together inquire into, and resist, intermeshed (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) domination and injustice.

As windows into these intergenerational and extrafamilial literacy, education and inquiry practices, in the context of communal dialectics across difference, experience and
context, findings from this study could encourage educators to regard Latinx immigrant children, youth, adults and families as belonging to very heterogeneous and interdependent communities whose well-being and liberation is tied to those of communities traditionally seen as separate from Latinx communities (i.e., Black, Asian, Muslim, Native American communities, etc.). Ideally, education practitioners could see the overlaps, mutual constitutions (Hames-Garcia, 2011), complexities and differences between and among these communities in greater complexity and detail as a result of this study.

Additionally, education practitioners in K-12 and Higher Education spaces could welcome, integrate and/or connect the practices and pedagogy described in this study into their classrooms and educational communities. This would involve recognizing that communal dialectic inquiries could facilitate knowledge generation from the identity and experiential differences of students, families and staff in school communities, that difference and conflict can be epistemically generative, as they are seen at Juntos, and that an expansive sense of community and ontological interdependence could result from such an endeavor. It would also involve not essentializing minoritized groups, not erasing the differences within, among and between groups, as well as acknowledging mutual constitutions, intersections and intermeshing of oppressions in students’ and communities’ lives.

This study has shown Latinx immigrant families engage in rich literacy and educational practices across generations and beyond familial ties, providing a multitude of examples to education practitioners of how highly educated and complexly literate these communities are, across generations and identities. Schools and educational settings
across the lifespan could recognize this wealth of knowledge and literacy practices and view Latinx immigrants and families through deepened resource-orientations, in ways that build on Moll et al.’s (1992) *funds of knowledge* and Gallo & Link’s (2013) *political funds of knowledge*, as well as on Delgado Bernal et al.’s (2006) research on *Chicana/Latina education in everyday life*.

In general, this study provides an in-depth perspective on the daily human rights abuses that heterogeneous Latinx immigrant communities face, and could provide education practitioners with a textured picture of the process of resistance through the local and translocal mobilizing of intergenerational literacy, teaching/learning and inquiry in out-of-school communal and extrafamilial spaces in order to survive at the *borderlands* (1987/2007).

Further, this study does not romanticize or view struggling against coloniality (e.g., Mignolo, 2011) as an either/or or pure process. Thus, it provides a picture that is more realistic about the complexity of communally defining a process for devising and bringing about a pluriversal shared vision of justice. Schools and educational spaces that aim to be sites of social justice facilitation could learn from the complexity that negotiating across differences in this context entails. Education researchers aiming to carry out research that resists coloniality could also draw lessons from this textured process of carrying out practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Simon et al., 2012), so that their research practice is able to contribute to social movements and grassroots education while learning from them and generating knowledge from shared practice.
Lastly, the lenses of practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Campano, 2009; Simon et al, 2012) and of coloniality (e.g., Mignolo, 211, 2012) could also be useful to education practitioners, researchers and grassroots organizers as they seek to understand the layered ways in which our inquiries are tied to coloniality logics and realities. Concepts like “settler colonialism” (Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2012; Walia, 2013), “inquiry as stance” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), “intermeshed oppressions” (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014) and “organizing as communal dialectic inquiry” (this study) could shape the theorizing and practice in schools, universities and grassroots education and organizing spaces. It could lead these practitioners and settings to be attentive to (or further attend to) historicizing (Gutierrez, 2008) literacy, research and organizing, as well as centering systemic inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; 2009) and intergenerational relationships based on ontological interdependence and care (Walia, 2013) across generative difference and heterogeneity.

**Implications for Research**

Literature on the intergenerational socialization and mobilization of Latinx immigrants will be enriched by this research as it generates knowledge about these processes through the lenses of literacy as critical social practice (e.g., Street, 1984) and of extrafamilial (e.g., Gadsden, 2002; Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008) and multidirectional intergenerational learning. Specifically, this study has shown that the intergenerational, extrafamilial and multidirectional engagement of literacy is fundamental to the political mobilization of Latinx immigrants in the U.S.
Further, this study suggests that research on immigrant and non-dominant communities’ mobilization would be enriched by attending to the intergenerational and extrafamilial literacy and education practice-led negotiations within and across groups involved in organizing for justice within our communities and beyond. The everyday out-of-school intergenerational pedagogies and literacies of these communities demonstrate that communities labeled in the mainstream as uneducated, illiterate or “behind” engage and facilitate rich literacies and grassroots education everyday, and that such literacies and education are crucial in resistance of oppression. Furthermore, these literacies and educational practices facilitate a communal pedagogy of resistance that contributes important knowledge to how oppressed communities learn, teach and organize across differences and from tension and conflict.

The concept of communal leadership in the movement for immigrant rights merits further research, as do the digital literacies and multilingual practices of intergenerational immigrant rights mobilization. Systemic inquiry on these could yield key insights into Latinx communities’ organizing and everyday community, literacy and language education, as well. Moreover, further study on the narratives and discourses around “family” (Pallares, 2015; Pallares & Flores-Gonzales, 2011) and shared being or community belonging, as well as on the roles of nonprofits (e.g., Cordero-Guzman, Martin, Quiroz-Becerra, Theodore, 2008; Terriquez & Kwon, 2014) in Latinx immigrant socialization and mobilization would benefit from taking up pedagogy and literacy lenses to understand how discourses, ontological senses of being, and activist roles are shaped in the process of organizing for immigrant rights.
Furthermore, this study has shown an ongoing turn in organizing logics towards understanding identities and oppressions as intermeshed (Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 2014). Research into the transformation of immigrant rights movements from being solely focused on citizenship to addressing intermeshed oppressions affecting immigrants and those they consider part of their people is necessary. Such work could help us understand socialization and mobilization of immigrants coalitionally and dialectically based on difference. As this turn is taking shape beyond the immigrant rights movement, as well, research on this wider transformation towards intermeshed organizing is also warranted.

Ultimately, researchers who want to carry out colonially-resisting research could draw from practitioner inquiry’s framework (Lytle, 2000), particularly from its focus on what I believe is decolonial reflexivity or its “inquiry stance”. Conceptualizing practitioner inquiry as a methodology to resist coloniality could contribute deepened understandings of the complexity of carrying out social justice research through a lens that, among other colonially-resisting aspects of it, rejects either/or dichotomies and the dichotomy of research/practice; welcomes a dialectic between inside/outside positionalities and difference; conceives of knowledge production as a collective process that arises from practice; and believes in making one’s research and practice public and accountable to those most affected by them.

As a practitioner researcher, I have learned a great deal from gaining knowledge about the process of organizing and of carrying out research without clinging to certainty, and from instead allowing uncertainty and inquiry be epistemologically generative. From this study, I know practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Simon et al, 2012), employed as a colonially-resisting methodology, can yield textured, complex and
transformative knowledge about the process of challenging coloniality in research and in other practice contexts, as well.

As noted earlier, through this study I learned that Latinx immigrants enact practitioner inquiry as an organizing methodology and that as organizing practitioners, Juntos’s Latinx immigrants are practitioner researchers. Thus, this research expands this methodology’s framework of who is a practitioner researcher and what/how inquiry communities are and look. It also shows that practitioner research is already a fundamental methodology for communal educational practice and knowledge production that resists coloniality and brings about change outside of formal education spaces. This is a contribution to the conceptualization of practitioner inquiry that I hope shapes future applications of this methodology, and its impact in resisting coloniality in research and practice.

Implications for Juntos

This research sought to be most useful to Juntos. I hope the process itself of being part of this project felt generative for all who generously allowed me to learn from them and from our shared work together. As the organization moves forward in very uncertain times under a white supremacist government that is proud to attack immigrants, refugees, and fellow oppressed and minoritized communities, and that intends to increase and strengthen its violence and destruction, I believe it could be most useful for Juntos to:

(a) Document the educational, inquiry and dialectic practices and pedagogies of the organization in order to be able to more systematically learn from these, locally and translocally.
(b) Document and engage in communal inquiry into the leadership model of the organization, and over time systematically examine it.

(c) Document and communally inquire into how small and large campaigns have been won in the past, and how coalitional work has functioned and could function (“what happens when questions”) in the future.

(d) Purposefully inquire into issues related to sustaining of the organization over time given that its pedagogy and leadership model is so powerful. What could be ways to capitalize on these and ensure the organization deepens this communal pedagogy and practice as the political context of the U.S. gets more challenging?

(e) Document the organization’s existing popular education practices and curriculum, and from there build new curriculum that builds upon generating knowledge from across differences. Harness this pedagogy to strengthen the intergenerational, communal and translocal organizing.

(f) Define a process for establishing relationships with volunteers and outside researchers who are not most affected by oppressions that impact immigrant lives, particularly those undocumented and possessing non-dominant identities.

Currently, a lot of those negotiations take place organically but I suspect that as the current political climate gets harsher, there will be a large flow of well-meaning volunteers and researchers whose contributions could help or deter Juntos’s communal pedagogy of resistance, depending on who they are and how they work in the organization.

The list above is only a set of suggestions and is not meant to be prescriptive, top-down, or to come across as directives from someone who knows what the lessons
from this study should be for a diverse and complex community of organizing practitioners. I believe the lessons for Juntos will come to be most clear to me once I have had a chance to discuss these findings at (a) presentation(s) with the organization. For now, this is a beginning draft of possible insights for Juntos.

I feel overwhelmingly indebted to María, Erick, Olivia Mamá, Olivia Hija, Jasmine, Yared, Juan Carlos, Lluli, Erika, Erika Guadalupe and Miguel, and to the many other Latinx immigrants at Juntos, Mijente and beyond with whom I share an organizing practice. There is so much I have yet to learn from documentation of our work together and I feel very energized to continue communally learning from our practices, and building a new common sense together that cherishes and protects all of us.

*Se puede o no se puede? Sí se puede!!!*
APPENDIX A: PRACTITIONER INQUIRY: A FRAMEWORK (Lytle, 2000)

This was a handout I from EDUC669: Practitioner Inquiry, which I took in Spring 2010 and co-taught in Fall 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Practitioner Inquiry</th>
<th>Becoming a Practitioner Inquirer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEGACY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where does the research come from?</td>
<td>Where do I come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What traditions or disciplines is this work connected to, and how/why does this matter?</td>
<td>What are my social, cultural, political and educational frameworks?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What traditions or disciplines do I come from, and how/why does this matter?</td>
<td>What is my experience with research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCATION/POSITIONALITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is doing the work and where is the work being done?</td>
<td>Who am I to be doing this work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the relationships among the participants?</td>
<td>What is my positionality on a continuum from insider to outsider? My location in the work? Is the research on/with/for?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What perspectives do they bring?</td>
<td>To what extent and in what ways is the work intended to be collaborative/participatory?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How is my positionality defined by others? (Who are the “others”?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAYS OF KNOWING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the theory of knowledge (epistemology) in this research?</td>
<td>What assumptions am I/are we making about knowers and the nature of knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the theory of getting knowledge (methodology)?</td>
<td>What do I/we understand as the relationships of knowledge and practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do I/we position myself/others as generators of knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORIENTATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the research about? For? Why?</td>
<td>What am I/are we studying?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the questions framed/presented?</td>
<td>What is my/our purpose(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I/we frame questions to guide my inquiry?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How/do these questions evolve throughout the process of the inquiry?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**METHODS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What kind of research is this?</th>
<th>What kind of research am I/are we doing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What counts as data in this study?</td>
<td>What counts as data for my study and how will I/we collect, organize, analyze, and interpret them? What ethical issues will/may arise during this study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are they collected, analyzed, and interpreted?</td>
<td>By whom?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMUNITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the social organization of the research?</th>
<th>What is the social organization of the work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the communities to which the researcher(s) belongs?</td>
<td>What are the communities to which I/we belong?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do these matter?</td>
<td>Why do these matter?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEIGHBORHOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is the audience for the research?</th>
<th>Who am I/are we talking to in my research?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why does this matter?</td>
<td>Why does this matter?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## APPENDIX B: CHART OF STUDY METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Data Methods</th>
<th>Analysis Questions</th>
<th>Schedule/Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do Latinx immigrants organize for their rights?</td>
<td>Juntos’s Committees</td>
<td>Observations and Field Notes (of my own and shared practice)</td>
<td>What practices are part of organizing (including but not limited to teaching/learning practices)?</td>
<td>Approx. once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a. What literacy practices do these Latinx immigrants mobilize in the process of organizing for their rights?</td>
<td>Everyday practices of organizing at office, on the streets</td>
<td>Photographs of Juntos members and I engaging in pedagogical and/or literacy practices</td>
<td>Are any of these practices intergenerational? If so, How? Why? Where/When?</td>
<td>Approx. once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. How do I, as a practitioner researcher, work alongside fellow Latinx immigrant organizers to support their/our work for change?</td>
<td>Participant Interviews (Approx. 11 total participants for whole study; some participants)</td>
<td>What practices are part of organizing (including but not limited to teaching/learning practices)?</td>
<td>How are we reflecting (or not) on our practice? What happens when/as we do?</td>
<td>1-2 Interviews per participant over the course of the study + member check interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. How do Latinx immigrants organize for their rights?

1a. What literacy practices do these Latinx immigrants mobilize in the process of organizing for their rights?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Observations and Field Notes (of my own and shared practice)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What practices are part of organizing (including but not limited to teaching/learning practices)?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are any of these practices intergenerational? If so, how? Why? Where/When?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How are we reflecting (or not) on our practice? What happens when/as we do?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What inquiries, themes, issues, emotions, patterns arise from the data?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events and Conferences</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Observations and Field Notes (of my own and shared practice)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 12-13 (2015) at MiJente gathering in Chicago, IL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local actions around Mayor Nutter’s rolling back of Executive Order eliminating the relationship between ICE and the Police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional convenings and actions in Harrisburg, PA; Baltimore, MD; Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Convening &amp; Tribunal in Philadelphia, PA.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Interviews</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Observations and Field Notes (of my own and shared practice)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Approx. 11 total participants for whole study; 1-2 Interviews per participant over the course of the study + member check interviews)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Observations and Field Notes (of my own and shared practice)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photographs of study participants engaging in organizing for their rights publicly

What practices are part of organizing (including but not limited to teaching/learning practices)?

Are any of these practices intergenerational? If so, how? Why? Where/When?

How are we reflecting (or not) on our practice? What happens when/as we do?

What inquiries, themes, issues, emotions, patterns arise from the data?

Local and National Conferences/Gatherings

1-2 Interviews per participant over the course of the study + member check interviews
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Local and National Conferences/Gatherings</th>
<th>What inquiries, themes, issues, emotions, patterns arise from the data?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1b. How do I, as a practitioner researcher, work alongside fellow Latinx immigrant organizers to support their/our work for change?</td>
<td>some participants engage in gatherings and some do not)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol – October 2015

1. What’s your first name and your age?

2. Where were you born and when did you migrate to the U.S., if you migrated?
   a. If you were born here, where were you born and where did your family migrate from (and why)?

3. How long have you been involved in community organizing work for immigrant rights?

4. What do you define as “immigrant rights”?
   a. Why do you think advocating for immigrant rights is important?
   b. Do you see “immigrant rights” connecting to other issues of equity in our country and world?

5. How did you get involved in this work? (specifically at Juntos, too)

6. Why did you get involved in this work?

7. What do people involved in working for immigrants’ rights do to defend and protect immigrant rights?

8. What do you do, individually and as part of the community, to advance immigrant rights?

9. How does the movement address or not address intersectionality?
   a. What are some things the movement could do better, that Juntos could do better in this regard?

10. What does “nothing about us without us” motto mean to you, and/or “I am my own best advocate”? Do you know how it has been used at Juntos?

11. Do you consider yourself a leader in the movement for immigrant rights?
a. If so, why?
   i. How do you define leadership?

b. If not, why not?
   i. How do you define leadership?

12. What would you say have been crucial moments for you in your involvement in fighting for immigrant rights? Why? (specifically at Juntos)

13. As you know, I am a teacher in the community, and so I’m interested in the teaching and learning practices that are part of our work for immigrant rights.

   a. Would you say you have learned anything from your involvement in this work?
      i. If so, what would you say you have learned?
      ii. How, and from whom, have you learned these things?

   b. Would you say you have taught others (been a teacher to others) while you’ve been involved?
      i. If so, what would you say you have taught others, and who are those others?

14. What is your ideal vision for the world?
   a. Where does the struggle and movement for immigrant rights fall in that vision?

15. What has been challenging from being involved in this movement? Why?
   a. What do you think could or should be done to address these challenges?

16. What has been positive about being involved in this movement for immigrant rights? Why?

17. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your involvement, practices, teaching and learning in the immigrant rights movement in our city?

18. As we close, I’d like to ask you a few questions about participating in this study. What do you understand this study to be about?

19. Why did you decide to join this study?
20. What do you think is the use of this study for our work in immigrant rights organizing?

21. Is there anything else you’d like to share about your participation in this study?

Thank you so very much!
APPENDIX D: MEMBER CHECKING INSTRUMENT

October 2016

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study and for talking with me one more time to go over your interview transcript. I will begin by asking you some demographic questions again.

1. What’s your name?

2. If you rather I use a pseudonym for your name, which name would you like me to use?

3. How old are you?

4. How old were you when you began to get involved at Juntos?

5. If you feel comfortable to share this (it is absolutely okay if not), could you tell me where you were born and what your citizenship status is?

6. Do you have family members who are undocumented or who are recipients of temporary protection from deportation programs (DACA, TPS, etc.)?

7. What stood out to you when you read your interview?

8. Did any questions come up for you?

9. Do you want to take out anything from the interview? If so, why? (I am happy to take it out).

10. Do you want to add anything to the interview? If so, why?

11. After reading the interviews, I realize there is one more question I wanted to ask: [insert questions that came up for me from the transcript]

12. From your interview, these are some of the key things I have learned:
13. What do you think about these findings? Do you think there’s something I am not considering that I should consider? Is there anything here that I have misunderstood? Is there anything you want to add to what I have shared here / anything I should pay more attention to?

Thank you so much!
APPENDIX E: ABRIDGED TIMELINE OF JUNTOS’S ORGANIZING 2011-2016

**Abridged Juntos Timeline 2011-2016**

### 2011
- **Erika** becomes Juntos’s Executive Director
- Guided by organizing models of fellow immigrant rights organizations in New Orleans and Los Angeles, Juntos becomes re-structured around committees.
- **Olivia Hija** joins Juntos
- **Juan Carlos** joins Juntos and participates in the re-structuring and supports fundraising efforts.
- **Miguel** is hired as Juntos’s Youth Organizer

### 2012
- **Olivia Mamat** joins Juntos
- **Juan Carlos** joins Juntos’s Board of Directors
- **Erike Guadalupe** joins Juntos

**Comité de Mamás** (Mothers Committee) is founded. It is facilitated by new staff member Adriana.

**Fuerza and Mothers Committee** becomes heavily involved in the fight to stop the mass closing of dozens of public schools in Philadelphia. In does so in tandem with Juntos’s.

**Olivia Mamat** is a leader in this committee.

**In June 2012, then President Obama passes Executive Order to implement a new program that temporarily protects a selected group of undocumented youth (about 1.7 million youth) from deportation. The program is called **DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)**.**
Jasmine is hired as Lead Organizer and facilitates Norristown and Philadelphia immigration committees.

Starting in November 2013, Norristown immigration committee organize to get Norristown Chief of Police to stop collaboration between ICE and police (such collaboration is referred to as ICE Holds because one of its central practices involves police holding people it racially profiles as being undocumented for ICE, so that ICE may check their status and enter people into deportation proceedings if they are found to be undocumented.

Immigration Committees from Philadelphia and Norristown challenge anti-immigrant legislation ($870) passed in U.S. Senate. Committees also read and examine the federal Immigration Reform bill ($744). Collectively, committees decide to not support this bill.

Juntas and other local social justice organizations begin to meet to build a coalition to stop ICE Holds in Philadelphia. Their coalition will come to be named the Pennsylvania Family Unity Network (PFUN).

PFUN Coalition drafts language for Executive Order that would end all ICE and police collaboration in Philadelphia.

Juntas becomes more involved in national organizing as part of Not1More, a network of organizations across the U.S. working to stop ALL deportations.

In December 2013, Juntas does a large civil disobedience action denouncing deportations outside of the ICE offices in Philadelphia, where Juntas members risk arrest. Juan Carlos is one of those members. No arrests are made.
Erika Guadalupe joins Junto's Board of Directors

Yared starts his internship at Junto's

Alicia begins her internship at Junto's (November)

Junto's Norristown campaign to end ICE raids is successful and Norristown police end collaboration with ICE.

Junto's immigration committees in Norristown and Philadelphia continue to meet and carry out workshops for community on their rights. Lawyers in attendance and workshops are carried out prepare community members to defend their rights in case of police or immigration contact.

Junto begins to see END cases (which are cases to stop the deportation of people who have been placed in deportation proceedings). Junto successfully wins a case that allows one father to remain with his family in Norristown.

After heavy organizing by PFUN Coalition, in April 2014 then Philadelphia Mayor Nutter signs Executive Order to end collaboration between police and ICE. The legislation remains one of the most progressive ones in the country.

In August, Junto takes on two more END cases from Norristown. The organization successfully wins both END cases at the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015, making it possible for two people to stay in the U.S. with their families.

#FreeToDream action takes place in Harrisburg led by Fuerza youth. Across all actions related to the Dream Act legislation, Junto does all of the language access. Within a few months, Junto stops working on this campaign.

Aguí y Allá [Here and There] and Familias Separadas [Separated Lives]. Art Project between local artist Michelle Angela and Junto begin. Projects are intergenerational and result in a series of temporary murals across the city of Philadelphia, as well as in mobile murals that will be completed in summer 2014.

In Fall, Fuerza youth attend Latinx youth retreat in Boston to meet fellow Latinx youth leaders across the region. They also go to Washington, DC to take part in Son Jarocho workshops and meet other immigrant youth leaders in DC.

In August, a week of activist action culminates with Junto being part of a large protest to get then President Obama to give administrative relief to undocumented immigrants. During that week Olivia Mama and Juan Carlos go to DC to meet with national non-profits and politicians to demand that no decision be made about the immigrant community without immigrants who are most affected shaping the conversation. This is where Nothing About Us Without Us and I Am My Own Best Advocate lemas come from.

In November, Obama announces Executive Order to implement an extension to DACA, and the addition of a program that would give temporary protection from deportation to a selected group of parents of children. The program is called DAPA [Deferred Action for Parents of Americans].
Juntos takes on one more **END case** in January. The organization is successful in keeping this community member home with their family.

In February 2015, Juntos joins coalition with PA immigrant rights organizations and **denounces SB9**.

In April 2015, Juntos begins to organize to **close the Berks Family Detention Center**. A coalition has not yet formed but multiple organizations work together to protest at the center in April and June 2015. Members from Juntos’s immigration committees from Norristown and Philadelphia participate in protests. Eventually, the #ShutDownBerks Coalition gets formed.

In Spring 2015, **Erika, Oliva, Jasmine, and Alicia** fly to Arizona to participate in **Not1More** convening with immigrant intergenerational Latinx immigrant leaders from across the country.

Juntos begins carrying out **immigration clinics** with lawyers in attendance. These clinics, led by community members themselves, guide people in applying and extending their DACA coverage, as well as in applying to other immigration relief programs. They are carried out throughout the year.

**The clinics require prior community workshops** for people to learn how to help others know whether they qualify for existing immigration programs and to prepare deportation defense packets, as well.

**Miguel** leaves his paid position at Juntos (summer) and continues to be a volunteer.

**Yared** takes his position as Youth Organizer.

Between Jan and April, Juntos organizes jornaleros (day laborers) in Philadelphia and over the year their organizing successfully stops police from harassing them for looking for work outside of hardware chain store.

**The Women’s Committee** (Juntos) gets founded by **Olivia Mardé and Olivia Hija** and it participates in #ShutDownBerks Campaign. **María** joins women’s committee and immigration committee. **Women’s committee goes to sleep in Fall 2015.**

**LGBTQ Cafecitos** (coffee hours) are started by an LGBTQ youth member and take place through Spring 2015.

High school students intern at Juntos and school workshops continue in local high schools. **Erick** becomes more involved in youth committee.

In October 2015, Juntos youth go to Washington DC to take part in **Son Jarocho workshops** and meet other immigrant youth leaders in DC.
ACROSS ALL COMMITTEES:

Yared and a fellow community member begin intergenerational Son Jarocho workshops at Juntos.

September - “100 Women 100 Miles March” happens. Juntos women walk 100 miles to bring attention of immigrant detention to the whole country and to the Pope, who is visiting the same month. March stops at York County Detention Center.

September - Pope visits Philadelphia. Juntos organizes over 150 people to do a dawn march from South Philadelphia to Center city to listen to the Pope speak on immigration.

September - Juntos begins a new END case to a father of three out of immigrant detention.

October of 2015 the state of Pennsylvania publicly acknowledges that it erroneously issued a license to the Berks Family Detention Center.

In November 2015, Juntos co-hosts LGBTQ event that features Jennicet, along with three local trans Latinx immigrants.

In December 2015, Juntos members from Norristown and Philadelphia travel to Chicago, Illinois to participate in the launching of Mijente, a national network for Latinx and Chicanx organizing in the U.S.
Olivia Hijl starts paid position as Lead & Youth Organizer (Summer 2016).

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney re-instates Executive Order banning immigration and police collaboration.

Know Your Rights trainings continue in Norristown and in Philadelphia (especially after Donald Trump gets elected in November), as well as Legal Clinics.

#ShutDownBerks Campaign continues. As a result of the Campaign’s work, Berks has its license taken away in February 2016 but Center remains open.

At a Spring 2016 protest, Erika gets arrested along with another immigrant rights activist for hugging the incarcerated women and children who are standing outside of the center while coalition members protest the Center.

Juntos is unable to win END case of father. The organization is able to help him go into sanctuary at a local church to avoid being deported.

In coalition with 50+ organizations, Juntos submits an Urgent Action Appeal to United Nations (UN) to end family detention in U.S. Juntos members hold press conference at City Hall with local legislators to announce the Urgent Appeal.

Jasmine leaves her position as Lead Organizer (March 2016).

Yared leaves her position as Youth Organizer (Summer 2016).

Alicia’s on-site internship ends (May 2016).

Jasmine, Yared and Alicia continue to be Juntos volunteers.

Numerous anti-immigrant bills are introduced in Pennsylvania.

Tied U.S. Supreme Court decision leads to complete stop of DACA+ and DAPA, which never got to be implemented.

In Spring, Fuerza committee work focuses on racism and anti-black racism. Youth meet with Mijente leader to learn from her experiences participating in direct action and getting arrested in Arizona to challenge then candidate Donald Trump’s hateful rhetoric.

ACROSS ALL COMMITTEES:

In Spring, Juntos members travel to Harrisburg to talk with anti-immigrant legislators and stop support for xenophobic bills.

In Summer, Llull and Erick carry out civil disobedience action calling for a Moratorium on All Deportations. They both get arrested alongside two other community members.

In Summer 2016, Mijente network and Not1More organizations arrive in Philadelphia to join Juntos and other local social justice organizations at Democratic National Convention. Together, they denounce mass deportations and anti-immigrant policies, anti-Black racism, environmental injustice, mass incarceration, abuse of LGBTQ communities, imperialism, and more, in manner that highlights coalitional action for justice.


In December 2016, Juntos members attend Mijente’s 2nd Convening in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
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