Liberate this Music, at Least: The Table(s) ‘bout to Turn on Education

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Abstract

Federal contemporary education reform such as President Obama's Promise initiatives construct and circulate crisis discourse that promotes a moral obligation among local actors to intervene in remaking targeted locations for capital accumulation and economic growth. The Promise discourse coupled with promising practices carry harmful flows that erases and alters the memory of place. The local Promise Zone construction is, in its implementation, a colonial act that devalues local knowledges and views space as empty, ripe for the extraction of labor, knowledge and resources. Black musical aesthetics and intellectual traditions are centered as a form of social investigation to name the coloniality inherent in the deficit-oriented, data-driven discourse of contemporary education reform initiatives. This research explored the spatial imagination and knowledge within collaborative community change initiatives constituted by the local Promise Zone designation. Afrosonic inspired educational research in the Pan-Afrikan intellectual tradition centered the process of inquiry in collaborative community change spaces to understand the ideological acceptance of normalized knowledges that rationalizes disparity, deprivation and destruction in the reconfiguration of social-material reality. Pedagogical and theoretical tools were established to inform a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change conceptualized as SONAR and a student/intellectual-artist identity. The research literally and figuratively digs in the repository of creative intellectual texts, listens to the local/global knowledge and discourse, chops and layers samples and puts them *in the mix* to turn the table(s) on normative knowledge systems and structures toward decolonizing the architecture of

knowledge for health and wellbeing. Conceptualizations of SONAR and student/intellectual-artist actively listens to sounds, silences, voices and rhythms to inform collection building and encourage knowledge-making activities that address complex local/global challenges. The knowledge-making practice of SONAR opens conceptual space for student/intellectual-artists to engage in critical dialogue, autonomous learning and imagination. SONAR is a form of storytelling, a mixtape (soundtrack) of community learning and change.

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Dedication

I dedicate this to Ciera, Joshua, Nailah and Miles.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

> The concern of the educator must not be to integrate the African-American student into a basically dysfunctional educational system but, rather, to work towards its destruction as a source of black oppression."-Milton R. Coleman

A community member participating in a local visioning session asked, "How do we stop gentrification?" referencing a recent change in ownership and evictions at an apartment complex adjacent to downtown and other structural changes in targeted areas and neighborhoods. The public library director in attendance associated the community members' inquiry as a reference question asked at a library's reference desk. Shiraz Durrani (2008) related a similar story between Kenyan coffee farmers and a university library worker. The farmers asked the library worker:

> "We hear that our coffee sells for thousands of pounds in London, yet we do not earn enough from our labour to buy our own coffee in local shops let alone feed and clothe our families. You tell us why not, you who have all the information at your fingertips, you tell us what happens to our coffee money?" (p. 157).

In a university library with one of the best agricultural libraries in Eastern Africa, the library worker was not equipped to answer the question posed by local farmers. These are deep reference questions being asked in the community concerning "the nature and impact of knowledge on individuals and society" (Dick 1999, p. 313). They are community inquiries that knowledge systems such as education, libraries, information and communication technologies should be structured to address. In the city considered in this study, critical questions are being asked by the community about complex challenges they see in the Promise Zone designation. Is the local public library able to

answer the questions being asked in the community about complex local/global challenges?

In 2016, the city received a federally appointed Promise Zone (PZ) designation. The PZ designation created collaborative opportunities for divergent communities to participate in addressing complex local/global challenges such as education reform and generational poverty. This PZ designation was bound as a case to trace community inquiries, discourse and actions through Afrosonic inspired (Banks, 2011; Campbell, 2022; Fouche, 2011; McKittrick, 2016b; Weheliye, 2005; Wise Intelligent, 2016; Woods, 1998/2017) educational research in the Pan-Afrikan intellectual tradition (King, 2017; King, 2018). The case research approach considered the social and material restructuring mediated by the knowledge and discourse spread by PZ-related initiatives. A relational, social-spatial and acoustemological analysis layered and mixed sound and texts to surface and name the colonial logic inherent in the PZ discourse and local practice while acknowledging already existing alternative knowledges. The process of inquiry was centered to develop pedagogical and theoretical tools informing a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change that restructures knowledge for health and wellbeing.

Introduction to the Problem

Since the establishment of American librarianship in the Gilded Age (1880 - 1900) and the proliferation of public libraries through Progressive Era reforms, libraries were founded on providing access to information essential to democracy with cultural, social and education goals (Bausman, 2016; Elmborg, 2016; Gregory and Higgins, 2018;

Kranich, 2013; Wiegand, 2015). Bausman (2016) relates that "what exactly this meant and how best to achieve it generated decades of fierce debate and an intense evolutionary process" (p. 274). As social and educational institutions were forming, several conflicting narratives were taking shape in the national discourse (Elmborg, 2016). On one side of the debate, public libraries were "uniquely poised to grapple with the socioeconomic instability of marginalized communities…and perfectly positioned to fill educational and acculturation gaps," while on the other side, the library was "simply a neutral provider of leisure activity" (Bausmen, 2016, p. 274). These opposing views of ideological discourse—still vividly alive—mask and unmask hidden assumptions and theoretical paradigms that shape libraries, library leadership and library practice. Libraries are part of dialectical epistemological cycles where "material circumstances condition the creation and circulation of certain meanings and forms of knowledge" (Dick, 1999, p. 312). Shannon Mattern (2014) asserts libraries need a "strong epistemological framework - a narrative that explains how the library promotes learning and stewards knowledge" (Mattern, 2014, para. 41). A narrative that, adds J.M. Budd (2003), acknowledges the cultural production and symbolic power of libraries. With the metaphor "library as infrastructure," Mattern (2014) locates the library as a knowledge institution, part of a "network of integrated, mutually reinforcing, evolving infrastructures" suggesting a critical need to understand how libraries "function *as*, and *as part of*, infrastructural ecologies - as sites where spatial, technological, intellectual and social infrastructures shape and inform one another" (para. 7, emphasis in original). The library as infrastructure metaphor can be understood as part of the "lively infrastructure" of the city

"conceptualized as a sociotechnical assemblage," a relationship between the material and the social that constitutes "urban functionality, sociality and identity" (Amin, 2014, p. 137-138). Dialectical epistemological shifts heard in the inquiries about the local PZ designation circulate knowledge and meanings aimed at restructuring people and place. Although the local public library is situated to address the social and educational challenges raised by the local PZ designation, its participation is limited and shaped by the ideological assumptions and theoretical paradigms inherent in the local and federal discourse.

The local "Promise Zone" was constructed when partnering community organizations culled data to create a narrative characteristic of high concentrations of poverty (39 percent) and high percentages of individuals with less than a high school diploma (~30 percent) among other deficit data and information related to employment, housing, crime, health and transportation. The PZ designation invited the community to collaboratively address the deficits of the geographically specified location based on rhetoric that suggests global competition threatens America's preeminence, creating a moral and economic crisis due to low quality education and mediocrity in failing schools. The crisis ideology precipitated an impetus toward educational accountability and a moral obligation to intervene.

Background, Context, and Theoretical Framework

The Obama Administration's Promise Neighborhoods (PNs) program is a place-based, federal initiative that centers educational reform to address intergenerational poverty and build community capacity (Horsford & Sampson, 2014, U.S. Department of

Education, 2019). The vision of PNs is to ensure youth grow up in neighborhoods that have "access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successful transition to college and a career" (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). As of June 2016, twenty-two designated Promise Zones were established in urban, rural and tribal communities across the United States (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021). The PNs epistemological framework replicates the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) cradle-to-career pipeline and place-based intention to end intergenerational poverty. Aware that cities would implement the model differently, a robust evaluation and reporting structure was established to allow for pivoting when and where necessary, while common measures were established to recognize best practices and scale accordingly (Obama, 2007). Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) has been heralded as the gold standard of successful place-based educational reform and is being replicated and scaled with the Promise initiatives of the Obama Administration. HCZ's audacious mission is to end intergenerational poverty in Central Harlem and to be a global leader for others to do the same (Harlem Children's Zone, n.d., Our Mission & Values).

The Theory of Change and deficit discourse of the local PZ designation, as framed, masks racial and class-based inequality while spreading rhetoric of a moral and economic crisis that threatens America's global preeminence. Educational disparity data suggest students of color and poor students do not perform as well as their white, middle-class peers. The failing schools they are concentrated in contribute to the decline of neighborhoods and generational poverty necessitating education reform. Successful

interventions are based on the replication of HCZ's pipeline of programs for families and children with a focus on improving educational outcomes measured by attainment, achievement and engagement (Page & Stone, 2010). An HCZ (2009) white paper suggests the organization has had success in the Central Harlem neighborhood where child poverty is more than double the national average. It describes high poverty neighborhoods as having a *gravitational pull of negative forces* on *fragile families* where most *poor* children "grow up ill-prepared to find good jobs with decent wages as adults and many fall into substance abuse or end up incarcerated" (p. 3). The document relates the evolution of earlier forms of the HCZ in the 1990s to the organizational ineffectiveness of many nonprofits today, suggesting they lack funding and resources which would enable them to effectively use data to enhance and grow their programs to scale. HCZ believes, "armed with a comprehensive model, a strategic plan, and adequate resources - including strong management and infrastructure - many organizations can transform the way they work with poor children and become dramatically more effective" (HCZ, 2009, p. 9-10). HCZ's rallying cry is to do "*Whatever It Takes*"[1] to break the cycle of poverty by focusing intensively on the social and educational development of children. Neither the discourse and rhetoric of the federal Promise initiatives nor HCZ's Theory of Change provide a critical analysis of place or the educational (knowledge) system. They are also silent on Afrikan-centered and indigenous educational and epistemological contributions.

The documentary film (and book) *Waiting for Superman: How We Can Save America's Failing Schools* features Geoffrey Canada's Harlem Children Zone as an

exemplar of high performing charter schools. Huddleson and Helfenbein (2018) are critical of the dominant discourse of so-called contemporary education reform efforts in the popular culture public text, *Waiting for Superman* and perceive it as "an opportunity, bordering on an imperative" to put the film in conversation with "cultural studies, as articulated by Stuart Hall" and curriculum theorizing that examines "hegemonic forces in education" (p. 323). A two-part retrospective and critique by Streeter Sweeper (2020) produced ten-years after the documentary debuted states the film mirrors the school reform movement. The critique points to an argument in the film about the impact of external factors on educational success pitting experts blaming failing schools on failing neighborhoods against contemporary educational reformers who suggest the problem of failing neighborhoods are dependent on failing schools (Streeter Sweeper, 2020). The educational reformer's conflation of declining neighborhoods on failing schools oversimplifies the complexity of structural and persistent inequities within dominant systems of knowledge and spatial practices such as "segregative, federal housing policies" that create "economically exploitative and predatory relationships" (Taylor, 2012, p. 186). The place-based approach of PNs and HCZ suggests at minimum a need for a place-conscious pedagogy (Gruenwald, 2003). Within the place-based approach, space is undertheorized necessitating "place inquiry and spatial methods" (Butler & Sinclair, 2020) to understand how the local PZ designation impacts material conditions, social change and knowledge systems. This reflects a pathology inherent in change narratives and youth discourses which focuses solely on interventions targeted at individuals (Wright, 2020), rendering systemic and institutionalized racial segregation,

neoliberal economic exploitation of communities of color, and restructuring of capital in high poverty neighborhoods invisible or, if acknowledged, as unproblematic (Aalbers, 2014; Buendia and Areas, 2006; Taylor, 2012). Critical geography, by contrast, provides tools of analysis that acknowledge and attend to the geographical relationships between people and places, the relationship between the social and material, and how those relationships are inscribed with politics and ideologies (Gruenwald, 2003). Within that framework, critical social-spatial analysis considers how marginalized groups construct space/place and create alternative epistemologies.

A critical geography approach to educational research focuses on how knowledge systems, practices and polices reify or resist geographies of difference and othering (Buendia & Ares, 2006; Helfenbein & Buendia, 2016) as perpetuated by the contemporary education reform discourse and theory of change. Blackburn Cohen (2018) establishes three major themes from critical geography that question globalization and addresses human experience: imagination, manifestation and contradiction. Imagination in this context refers to a spatial imagination discourse as the ideal. Manifestation is defined as the social-material reconfigurations and the ideological acceptance that "disregards the stark inequalities it is known to produce." Contradiction is defined as the "disjuncture between the imagined (i.e. spatial imagination) and how it manifests" and is central to maintaining the established orders of power" (Blackburn Cohen, 2018, p. 126). Critical spatial analysis thus "reveals the unfolding of policies or interventions over time and their impacts on various webs of relations...juxtaposing the movement or transformation of space alongside the lived context of reality that characterizes *Place* and

the multitude of ways it can be experienced" (Blackburn Cohen, 2018, p. 135-136 emphasis in original). Critical geography provides a social-spatial analysis to understand the social-material reconfigurations and ideological acceptance of contemporary education reform discourse that justifies inequality and deprivation the present knowledge system produces while obscuring existing relational epistemologies that resist differentiation and marginalization. In a similar way, critical sound inquiry, or acoustemology, offers a valuable epistemological and ontological approach. Sonic epistemologies center aural/oral practices to locate the spatial imagination heard in the discourse and locally produced knowledge, represented as "graphic records" such as plans, white papers, maps, videos, etc.

In applying a sound inquiry approach to educational reform, it's helpful to recall Carter G. Woodson, who in 1933 asked whether the "educated" are better equipped to solve complex challenges or just better equipped to unconsciously reinforce dominant forms of knowledge and oppression. Eight decades later, there is ample evidence to suggest it is the latter. Schools often fail to prepare students of color to deal with a society that treats them racially inferior (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). Hip hop artists Dead Prez (2000) implore listeners to be cautious of recurring education reform promises i.e. dialectical epistemological cycles aimed at social-material reconstructions. In the song *They Schools,* Dead Prez points out this phenomenon:

> "You see how quick they be telling niggas get a diploma so you can get a job, knowwhatimsayin? But they don't never tell you how the job gonna exploit you every time, Knowwhatimsayin? That's why I be like fuck they schools!

Dominant ideologies are reified in initiatives such as recurring federal education reform and poverty programs as well as in texts such as *Waiting for Superman*. Listening (attending) to popular and community-based forms of education and creative texts is an avenue to critique and resist contradictions in federal education reform initiatives and policies that are not otherwise being discussed, namely, the market-driven educational aims evident in HCZ's cradle-to-career promise and Theory of Change approaches that reinforce dominant technologies of governance and practice (Suspitsyna, 2010) among competing and humanizing epistemologies.

At What Cost?

Uncritically replicating HCZ's "pipeline" framework as a theory of change strategy in high poverty locations is akin to building a literal pipeline[3] across sovereign indigenous land. It is a colonial act that devalues indigenous knowledge systems and ways of being that amounts to viewing space as empty, ripe for the extraction of labor, knowledge and resources. Replicating the HCZ pipeline enacted through the discursive and material construction of Promise Zones enacts harmful flows that erase and alter the memory of place (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2009). The assimilationist educational assumption within HCZ's theory of change asserts that measuring bodies in compulsory institutionalized forms of education and moving them to and through the hallowed halls of higher education is invariably good. The assumption is that the earning potential offered by a college degree (or certification in some cases) will allow one entry into a modicum of middle-class ease thereby ending intergenerational poverty. The Theory of Change is silent on the social-spatial, historical, political, and economic construction of

disproportionately funded schools and school districts and how the resulting concentration of poverty in place persists despite federal education reforms, urban renewal projects, antipoverty initiatives and social science research. Continuing this practice and theory unexamined is tantamount to the acceptance of psychic abuse in the production cycle of "educated servants" (Wilson, 1993, p.18).

Cultural and Aesthetic Aims of Education and Ocularcentrism

Rincon-Gallardo (2020) argues that institutionalized forms of education or schooling are detrimental to well-being and that schooling should not be confused with learning--thereby suggesting the assumption that compulsory schooling is inherently good should be questioned. Schooling is best understood as one form of education and, as a practice, should be repositioned as a cultural and aesthetic expression that encourages transformative possibilities (Todd, 2018). According to Smith (1997), "aesthetics as much as economics guides the interpretations of social life" (p. 502) and art matters as much as geography or place. Attempts to illustrate the importance of art-based ways of knowing have been almost "exclusively a visual affair" (Smith, 1997, p. 503). Music, according to Smith (1997) of all the arts "has perhaps the most transgressive potential," and that exploring acoustemology, "one might hope for a geography in which sound is as important as sight and hearing as valued as looking" (p. 524).

Afrikan Intellectual and Aesthetic Tradition and Blues Epistemologies

Afrikan intellectual and aesthetic tradition has theorized and continues to theorize education. Erasing, misrepresenting and excluding Afrikan, Afrikan diasporic and indigenous ways of knowing is systematic and intentional. Boutte et al. (2017) states "the

intellectual and real struggle to legitimize African epistemologies is not only for the well-being of people in the African Diaspora, but for all people, because *human* freedom from dehumanizing structure of hegemony is in the balance" (p. 66). Naturalizing racial and economic difference in place, according to McKittrick & Woods (2007) "can reduce black lives to essential measurable "facts" rather than presenting communities that have struggled, resisted, and significantly contributed to the production of space." (p. 6). Hsu (2018) calls this metrication, defined as "the process of turning the human experience of learning into metrics that evaluate student performance.... flatten the purpose of education by producing an efficient, compliant workforce" (p. 132). Bang & Vossoughi (2016) state "apprenticing young people into the codes of power they are required to enter but not necessarily critique or re-imagine" such as the workforce, financial and economic systems, educational environments, and neighborhoods and communities, "leave systems and epistemological and ontological assumptions intact" which hinder transformative potential (p. 175). Explicitly or implicitly, there is an assumption that equity work "means developing more effective designs for assimilating historically underrepresented peoples into normative forms of knowing and disciplinary knowledge," and that efforts such as these "become singularly focused on increasing nondominant students' mastery of dominant forms" (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016, p. 175). HCZ's Theory of Change interventions such as "peacemakers" (Page & Stone, 2010) are designed to specifically wrap services around elementary school-age children and essentially shepherd them through schools by day and through nonprofit organizational programming in the evening to "improve measurable educational outcomes," i.e., increase their mastery of dominant

forms. Uncritical acceptance of this theory of change by well-intentioned actors replicating such interventions locally aims to remake students socially and morally, but if students don't change, push them out of school (Morris, 2016) into a pipeline toward prison. Thus we return to Woodson's still-current concern about education equipping us to address complex local/global challenges or to simply reinforce dominant forms of knowledge and oppression.

How might we shift the econometric, colonial education reform and intergenerational poverty discourse toward aesthetic and cultural forms of education and social investigation? I argue Black musical aesthetics (McKittrick, 2016b) and intellectual traditions can not only function as a form of social investigation but can also remake knowledge systems differently.

The research explored the spatial imagination and materiality of discourse and knowledge of the local 2016 Promise Zone designation inclusive of inquiries raised in collaborative community change initiatives. Afrosonic inspired (Banks, 2011; Campbell, 2022; Fouche, 2011; McKittrick, 2016b; Weheliye, 2005; Wise Intelligent, 2016; Woods, 1998/2017) educational research in the Pan-African / Black intellectual tradition (King, 2017; King, 2018) conceptualized a praxis of librarianship and a genre of collaborative community change to restructure the knowledge based on "deep maps" (Harris, 2015) inclusive of the lived experiences, "collective intelligence" (Alkalimat, 2012) and "graphic records" (Budd, 2002) that represent the community's knowledges. The information, ideas, stories, narratives, and texts shared –that is, the collective intelligence--represent an "ongoing referential conversation," part of the spatial

imaginary and materiality of intellectual inquiry (McKittrick, 2021, p. 33) within collaborative community change. We need to develop our senses to recognize persistent colonial logics and listen to, listen for, and plan with alternative human knowledges. Through the sense of hearing, the aural/oral or sonic way of knowing challenges Western ocularcentrism (Gergen, 2015; Moten, 2003; Samuels et al., 2010; Wargo, 2018; Weheliye, 2003) in its 'compulsory silencing of institutional learning" (Hsu, 2018, p. 131). Emphasizing the process of inquiry, pedagogical and theoretical tools and practices were conceptualized that can empower the transformative potential within communities to persist in the work toward social transformation (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Barab et al., 2004). The aim is to shift the discourse of education and its current proclivity to reduce communities to easily claimed facts and data in service (only, ever) to economic mobility; the aim is to be inclusive of different ways of knowing and to theorize cultural and aesthetic forms of liberatory and participatory community-engaged scholarship that restructures knowledge toward health and wellbeing.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research is rooted in an acknowledgement of black life as scientifically creative and of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s as valid, unfinished practice. Creative-intellectual texts and performative acts construct space and place, name oppression, and create alternative ways of being human. Black Print Culture and blues / hip hop epistemology (Woods, 2007), as part of the Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition, disrupts dominant colonial discourse by sampling, looping and layering divergent voices and knowledges to make sense of

complex local/global phenomena and create new knowledge as embodied pedagogy and theory development. The sections that follow will establish a sonic-inspired Black Methodology with breaks, cuts, blends, rhythms, and repetition inclusive of often neglected organic intellectual contributions, critique, and solutions that address education and economic deprivation in place. Black bibliographic, citation, and referencing culture and tradition is modeled as community action and creative praxis to assess and inform community-oriented library praxis and community-engaged scholarship. Mixing of divergent voices and texts is a key aspect of Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition. The "interdisciplinary guide-quotes" (p. 871) that head the next section introduce the explication as a "rhythmic praxis" to think through and across ideas (McKittrick et al. 2018, p. 872). This praxis, tradition, and methodology theoretically informed the case approach, praxis of librarianship, and genre of collaborative community change. The guide quotes that follow are in the spirit of Sylvia Wynter.

Black Methodology

> We can just chant down Babylon. But the way we move in these streets, a lot of babies doomed to repeat, liberate this music at least, Lawd have mercy. -Wise Intelligent / MuthaFukaWhat?
>
> The table(s) bout to turn. Janelle Monae / Turntables
>
> It's bigger than the dirty south or bicoastal. It's global, war and the weapon we choose is Pro Tools – Pharoahe Monch / New World Symphony
>
> Imagine! If you could change the world through song, no longer do we have to pay back school loans. Imagine! / Common / Imagine
>
> The Free Southern Theater (FST) during the freedom struggles of the 1960s

envisioned a new theater that drew inspiration from black musical traditions such as blues

and jazz that would use "imagination, innovation, and improvisation to create theatrical events" followed by audience dialogue significant to the lives of participants (Lipsitz, 2016, p. 273). Rather than outputs of theatrical performances or "discursive flattened artefacts" (McKittrick, 2022, p. 5) what is important is the *creative act*. What the creative action, performance, event, or text *is* does not matter as much as what the action, performance, event, or text *does*. Black methodology creates "conditions through which relationality, rebellion, conversation, interdisciplinarity, and disobedience are fostered. Thus, the text is not simply a representation" (McKittrick, 2021, p. 51-52). Black musical traditions "attach importance to the skill of improvisation, emphasizing performance rather than composition, creation rather than interpretation, and spontaneity rather than formality" (Smith, 1997, p. 516). Theater, music, text, and performance form a creative praxis (theory and practice) of participation, investigation, improvisation, pedagogy, and dialogue. This multimodal creative praxis or Black Methodology centers creative expression, theory development, and action.

Black methodology is both a way of being and an analytical frame that recognizes black life as scientifically creative (McKittrick, 2021). Black knowledge is a method, a "black creative praxis" that makes black life "through in/as creative text" (McKittrick, 2021, p. 43). Black life is both science and art, a scientifically creative praxis. Black knowledge is often expressed as black musical in(ter)ventions (Campbell, 2022) as a "black musical aesthetic" (McKittrick, 2016b), an alternative knowledge system and what Woods (2007) describes as blues / hip hop universities and social investigation practice. Music enables the construction of new communities, institutions, and social practices; it

forms repositories of collective memory and functions as an alternative academy (Lipsitz, 2016). Blues, jazz, and hip hop intellectual-artists constitute a "virtual" network through which a collective process of idea exchange and social discourse is developed (Meacham, 2001, 222), extending across space and time as evidenced by the practice of naming "blues-based intellectual movements to capture shifts in consciousness, political economies, spatialization, and rhythm"… "Ragtime, the Jazz Age, the Swing Era, Bebop, post-Bop, the Rock and Roll Era, and the Hip Hop Era" (Woods, 2007, p. 70). A blues / hip hop worldview provides student/intellectual-artists with a visual language, performance, and sonic text to create conditions for dialogue, imagination, innovation and improvisation. It is an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship and a counterlanguage. The counterlanguage is dynamic and visual resembling the colonizer's language but different, transformed. As hooks (1989) acknowledges, "language is also a place of struggle" (n.p.). Blues / hip hop epistemology is useful for considering the neoliberal logics and deficit-oriented rhetoric within the context of contemporary educational policy and funding structure of the local PZ designation. Participation in music making, listening, and sharing are part of a tradition of resistance and investigation that exposes inequity in existing systems of knowledge and provides a theoretical framework for social transformation (McKittrick, 2016b). Therefore, black life and black musical intellectual and aesthetic tradition can be understood as human praxis - a way of being, a way of study to legitimize and liberate black musical epistemologies not only in the making of black life, but human well-being and freedom from dehumanizing knowledge systems and hegemony (Boutte et al., 2017).

As McKittrick (2022) guides, “Black methodologies do not follow a trajectory of seeking, finding, and making an analytical site knowable;” instead, they are “wavering knowledge processes that move in and out of clarity...theorized as pedagogical prompts [that] spiral and cascade, encouraging us to learn and teach.” The prompts which are written into creative-intellectual texts, McKittrick continues, “are not endlessly explained and unpacked...but require imagination and memory and study” (McKittrick, 2022, p.6). Cascade is defined as a process whereby information or knowledge is successfully passed on or shared. Spiraling and cascading prompts written into creative-intellectual print and sonic texts constitute a circulating knowledge process of investigation and scientifically creative human praxis. It is a reading practice and listening practice that “enables lessons, clues, and prompts about how we might collectively live through and resist white supremacy” (McKittrick, 2022, p. 6). Black texts and narratives require reading and listening practices that demand a relational approach and scientifically creative frame to hear “first, how our present system of knowledge, a biocentric system of knowledge upheld by capitalist financing, is a self-referential system that profits from recursive normalization; and second, to read and notice the conditions through which self-replicating knowledge systems are breached and liberation is made possible” (McKittrick, 2021, p. 43). In other words, Black methodology is a scientifically creative praxis of investigation and analysis of the present knowledge system and a reading/listening practice (i.e. practice of study or being student, intellectual and artist) to make liberation possible and encourage transformative potential. Scientific creative praxis expressed through the *mix/remix* provides “a model of modern black temporality

and cultural practice rooted in and through the sonic" (Weheliye, 2005, p. 73). Centering the DJ within hip hop culture as a digital griot (Banks, 2011) and as DJ scholarship (Denise, 2019) and part of Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition allows for a conceptualization of collaborative community change to collaboratively learn about and critically assess the local/global challenges raised by the PZ designation toward restructuring knowledge for community health and wellbeing. Putting texts *in the mix* is a relational, already-existing knowledge system that informs the sonic-inspired praxis and educational research in the Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition.

In the Mix

The practice of listening, (re)searching, sampling and layering voices, grooves and any kind of sounds *in the mix* is an important aspect of collaborative community change and community-engaged scholarship. As Banks (2011) suggests, "finding the right mix is a difficult task because theoretical and practical models abound" (Banks, 2011, p. 36) for community-engaged work. Banks (2011) situates the DJ as a digital griot, community-based or community-engaged scholar active in building community and creating conditions where a community can create collaborative texts by using the shared or collective knowledge of the community. DJ Lynnee Denise (2019) coined the term "DJ scholarship" as a mix-mode research practice that resists erasure and recognizes sampling as a citational practice. Erasure resistance is embodied by employing four cultural DJ practices: chasing samples, digging through the crates, studying album cover art and reading liner notes. The DJ/Producer both listens to the sounds of the street and practices "crate digging" or what is referred to as "digging in the crates" or simply

“digging” to look for music or samples (Banks, 2011; Denise, 2019; Welburn, 2013). Studying album cover art is a process of looking for visual cues. Reading liner notes is analogous to an audionarratological analysis extended to the aural dimensions and silences of written texts to understand how sounds, noises, music and voices contribute to the creation of real and imagined spaces and worlds (Mildorf & Kinzel, 2016, p. 19).

The process of putting sounds/samples *in the mix* is a compositional process of chopping, cutting, combining components, looping, phrasing, beat making, mixing, remixing, and more. This practice allows for “narrative, text, and history to continue while allowing for new voices, new arguments” (Banks, 2011, p. 29). The collective knowledge of the community is sampled with prompts to promote learning and the creation of new knowledge and then shared in a participatory and relational call and response process. Knowledge that can then be collected, organized, and retrieved by community for recombination and use. Endres et al. (2016) describes critical rhetorical fieldwork as entailing an examination of everyday rhetorical practices as they occur in the field while seeking "an account of the power of discursive systems in reflecting, engaging with, and (re)making worlds” (Endres et al., 2016, p. 515-516). The rhetorical and intellectual work of the DJ (Banks, 2011), works from the repositories of collective memory and in the field looking for visual cues, listening to sounds and discourse in the acoustic environment, digging in the creative-intellectual texts to sample and layer narratives, history, analysis, and instruction as spiraling and cascading prompts in the mix. The mix, remix, and mixtape align with the referential dialogue and citational practices of Black methodology and print practice, providing theoretical and conceptual

tools for community engaged, social-spatial research to read and notice colonial logics and to imagine new possibilities through the transgressive power of music and sonic epistemology for social-spatial, educational research.

Recall the guide quotes. Common implores us to "Imagine if we could change the world through song." Wise Intelligent suggests, "we can just chant down Babylon" - [e.g. hegemony, white supremacy, neoliberalism, coloniality] – "but the way we move in these streets, a lot of babies are doomed to repeat." In a song titled *Tranquillo* by Lupe Fiasco ft. Rick Ross and Big K.R.I.T., Rick Ross says, "School district full of killas, I mean these niggas ferocious." School district administrators and education reformers, viewed through this lens, are pushing babies through recursive forms of epistemic violence. If black scientific life is not acknowledged and validated to break the cycle of dominant epistemologies reified in local place-based education reform initiatives, babies are doomed to repeat cycles of poverty and educated servitude. Ross continues, "Only violence and drugs. There was nothing for us. All I had was this music, I couldn't afford to do much." In *I Believe,* T.I. says "sell dope to get some money, shit I wanna do law but I can't go to school, ain't got the money to. Rather give me fifty years than a scholarship. Anything to keep me outta politics. I believe politicians pull a lot of tricks, The War on Drugs, crack epidemic, all o' 'dat"–all o' 'dat Promise Zone / Promise Neighborhoods, federal/local and global education reforms.[2] Imagine, Common continues, "no longer do we have to pay back school loans. Imagine!" Instead of prescribed Promise initiatives, imagine government supporting the restructuring of knowledge based on scientifically creative expression. Imagine that. Wise Intelligent implores us to "liberate this music at

least, Lawd have mercy!" How can the sonic interventions of Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition shift the normalizing educational discourse in local community collaborative initiatives toward liberatory and aesthetic aims of education? Can you imagine government-supported cultural and aesthetic forms of education?

In the song *Cold World,* Wise Intelligent claims he is "just a scholar from the goddamn jects", the projects, the hood, the ghetto, any place with high concentrations of poverty. Is his claim of being "just a scholar" different from what Wong (2021) refers to as an "overrepresented genre-specific figure of educational research [*contemporary education reformer*]...who has come to control the way of knowing "education" and being an "educational researcher" [*contemporary education reformer*] (p.30)? Wise Intelligent answers us: "My solution, infiltrate the current state of degradation and counteract the blatant suppression of education." In *World Symphony*, Pharoahe Monch also performs the work of a scholar, recognizing the long tradition of musical inventions and social-spatial "intellectual warfare" (Carruthers, 1999; Rashid, 2012) enacted through hip hop: it is "bigger than the dirty south or bicoastal, it's global, war, and the weapon we choose is Pro Tools." Pro Tools is a digital audio workstation (DAW), software used for music creation and production. These organic intellectual-artists use Pro Tools and other music production hardware and software as educational technology: edtech as a form of liberatory, African-Centered knowledge production (Rashid, 2012). Pharoah Monch and Erykah Badu demonstrate the profundity of hip hop and offer additional analysis and practice in a remix of Erykah Badu's classic song *The Healer* when Badu's hook lets us know, "It's bigger than religion. Hip hop. It's bigger than my nigga. Hip hop. It's bigger

than the government." Pharoahe says, "It's unity. It's faith. It's change. It's hope." *Liberate this music, at least, Lawd have mercy!*

Blues / hip hop epistemology and black musical in(ter)ventions inform a process of collaborative community change to transform education and place for human wellbeing and freedom from dehumanizing knowledge systems. This research literally and figuratively digs in the repository of creative intellectual texts, listens to the local knowledge and discourse, chops and layers samples and puts them *in the mix* to "turn the table(s)" – turntables--on contemporary education (re)form (an allusion and prompt to Janelle Monae's song *Turntables*). Weheliye (2005) describes this as thinking sound, "a practice that interfaces historically seemingly disparate texts in order to excavate their intensities (which only emerge in the process of juxtaposition and recontextualization), much as DJs treat records in their mixes" (p. 73). Foregrounding the Promise Zone process of inquiry, the tables are turned on normative knowledge systems that "measure and assess the unfree," and different voices and texts are mixed to "open up unexpected and surprising ways to think about liberation, knowledge, history, race, gender, narrative, and blackness...as analytical and intellectual sites that can tell us something new about our academic concerns and our anticolonial futures" (McKittrick, 2021, p. 50).

This sonic-inspired Black methodology is creative human praxis; it is the "generating and gathering of ideas – across-with-outside-within-against normative disciplines – that seek out liberation within our present system of knowledge" (McKittrick, 2021, p. 47-48). It is interdisciplinary, dynamic and relational. It is

improvisational and community-oriented, a form of study, learning, and action. It is "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 161).

Research Questions

RQ1: How does the local PZ designation

- Constitute / materialize space/place?
- Constitute / materialize identity?
- Produce, share local knowledge?

RQ2: How might music in the blues / hip hop intellectual tradition of social investigation remake education differently?

Research Methods

This research bounds the city's 2016 Promise Zone designation as a case, an organizing structure (Merriam, 1998) to theorize a praxis of librarianship and a liberatory participatory community learning process and movement that subverts colonial logics by centering an Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition. A sonic-inspired Black methodology theoretically informed an embedded single case research design within the context of neighborhood/city locations and meanings established by the local PZ designation. The embedded issues of the case design are as follows: knowledge/discourse; space/place; identity; acoustemology. *Knowledge/discourse* entails the local knowledge produced, the spatial imagination or desired change, and the social and material change that manifested. *Space/place* considers the meanings surrounding and making/remaking of physical locations, locales and spaces. *Identity* is concerned with

how identities and roles such as student and education reformer i.e. local actors are constructed and performed. *Acoustemology* examines sonic ways of knowing to address ocularcentrism in research and the silencing effects of institutionalized education. The challenge is to develop aural/oral methodological, analytical and technological tools and practices to hear/listen to the complex issues raised by the local PZ designation. An additional challenge is to consider how sound, noise, music, voice and the aural dimensions of written texts create real and imagined spaces/places and worlds (Mildorf & Kinzel, 2016). The case is conceptualized as an ongoing, referential conversation about social, spatial, historical, political, and technological issues raised by the PZ designation. Insights and information gathered lead to new questions and directions for what Stake (1995) describes as "progressively focused" case work.

Data collection consisted of interviews, collection of locally produced knowledge, and researcher audio memos and sound recordings. Locally produced knowledge was in the form of documents, maps, white papers, videos, audio clips, etc. Audio fieldwork listened to and captured sounds in the acoustic environment bound by the local PZ map. To encourage participation, emails were sent to contacts and known entities employing snowball sampling to gain access to hidden populations and information (Noy, 2008). In addition to audio field recordings and interviews, audio journaling and audio research memos captured the researcher's reflections and interesting findings from written sources and interviews. A hermeneutic circle of analysis (Moules, 2002; Speight Vaughn, 2020) undergirded by the scientifically creative praxis of Black methodology was used to analyze the data.

Definition of Terms

Acoustemology is a term originally introduced by Steven Feld to expand and critique existing vocabulary such as 'soundscape' and 'acoustic ecology' used by sound researchers in disciplines such as anthropology and ethnomusicology. Acoustemology is an analytical term that both foregrounds a sonic way of knowing and suggests the study of a sonic way of knowing (Rice, 2018).

Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowledge, and here are multiple and often competing epistemologies or different ways of knowing. Epistemology considers what is known, how we know, how we come to know, and the situations in which knowledge is encountered. Underlying epistemological positions and assumptions are not always known or explicit, but institutions are often developed and decisions made based on epistemological paradigms. The neologism *social epistemology* was first mentioned by Jesse Shera and Margaret Egan as a theoretical paradigm for librarianship and libraries based on epistemological foundations. It is defined as "the study of those processes by which society *as a whole* seeks to achieve a perceptive or understanding relation to the total environment – physical, psychological, and intellectual" (Budd, 2002, p. 93 citing Egan and Shera, 1952, p. 132, original emphasis). Jesse Shera's proposal for social epistemology suggests that the theoretical foundations of librarianship must address issues such as: how we know, how we come to know, and how knowledge becomes social knowledge. Additionally, it must address issues with existing bibliographic tools and systems and bring them in line with "the realities of the communication process and the findings of epistemological inquiry" (Zandonade, 2004).

Space/Place is challenging to define as there are conflicting definitions of what constitutes space and place in theoretical and conceptual literature. Here I rely on Butler & Sinclair's (2020) conceptualization of space and place derived from Agnew, Cresswell, Lefebvre, Soja and others. Generally, space is an abstract realm, and place is concrete, such as a specific geographic location or building. There is a dialectical relationship between place and social relations in the context of power and systems of oppression. Space is a social construction imbued with experience and meaning as a result of inhabitants' daily activities and uses of place. Drawing on Agnew's definition of place, Butler & Sinclair (2020) identify three fundamental aspects: a location, a locale, and a sense of place. *Location* is a specific fixed point in space which may include both the built and natural environment. A *locale* is the material setting of a particular location where people's lived experiences, performances, etc. are conducted. The location and locale of a place may be similar or identical for everyone, whereas *sense of place* is rather ambiguous depending on one's social positionality. Butler and Sinclair (2020) identify two key dimensions of sense of place: The first is a meaning-making dimension which understands places as cultural constructs with different meanings for different people that are made and remade as we perceive and make sense of places. The second is a political dimension understood as an embodiment of entities and structures that produce systems of power and agency that can perpetuate, resist and remake forms of oppression and humanity. Place is central to the formation and maintenance of social structures as well as sites of struggle and resistance to cycles of oppression and hegemony related to race, class, gender, and across multiple intersecting identities. Performance of music and dance

also plays a role in a locale's identity (Niaah, 2008). One's position, identity, knowledge, and organization (e.g. hierarchical ordering and differentiation) within society influences how one makes sense of place and whether one's experiences are welcoming, empowering or oppressive. To summarize, place is conceptualized as "a complex interplay of location, locale, and the meaning people make of a location, and also as a key component in understanding systems of power" (Butler & Sinclair, 2020, p. 68). I use space/place to convey this complex interplay of location, locale, social construction, performance, and sense of place.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra, started by Horace Tapscott in the 1960s reflects in a local *lively* infrastructural context the houses, streets and neighborhoods of a global social-spatial and political Afrikan diaspora that forms an interconnected "global relay system transmitting experiences, ideas and aspirations back and forth" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 134). Arkestra is a term that blends orchestra with Noah's Ark. Tapscott described Noah's Ark "as an enclosed space that went somewhere to help save part of the world" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 135). This imagined global community and local space was imagined as cultural safe houses where a collective of artists, intellectuals and musicians could listen to the streets, develop the sound according to their own ideas in safe spaces and then circulate those texts - ideas, music and art - back out into the streets and global community. African Americans experienced a complicated politics of place such as racial zoning, racialized policing and mortgage redlining that confined them to segregated neighborhoods and an artificial housing market which logically influenced Tapscott's desire for a cultural "safe house" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 136). Tapscott changed the scale of racialized space by exploring "possibilities that might exist in small spaces at the local level" and by creating "ensembles to perform and teach differ forms of music, dance, theater, and poetry" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 134). This work of knowledge-making in safe, small spaces produced scientifically creative texts that, when published/disseminated, spread knowledge throughout the interconnected local/global community. Tapscott also listened to street life, drawing inspiration from the "theatricality and exuberant festivity of urban crowds" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 136). The Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra and

Tapscott's imagination convincingly demonstrates how the "marginalization and devaluation of Black cultural contributions (and their creators) stems from the spatialization of race and the racialization of space" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 133). The construction of local/global space and musical aesthetic of Tapscott's social-spatial imagination and artist collective known as the Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra is representative of Afrikan diasporic knowledge systems that center community for a more egalitarian and democratic understanding of the arts. The social-spatial imagination of the Pan Afrikan People's Arkestra was "not so much "community-based art making" but "art-based community making" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 138). Arkestra is a useful social-spatial and sonic onto-epistemological perspective to inform a relational theoretical framework for this literature review. Sankofa, an African principle meaning to retrieve or go back and bring forward guides the practice of (re)search (digging), sampling, mixing and layering of past and present. Situating and scaling space (local/global) across time, tracing shifts in social political constructions that shape / inform knowledge systems and structures including formal and nonformal education.

Theoretical Framework

This literature review is a relational mixing and layering of black studies as social movement, intellectual tradition, and its institutionalized form (Alkalimat, 2021). The purpose is to highlight Afrikan diasporic contributions to education and social-spatial constructions that have and continue to (re)make dominant and recursive colonial logics inherent in and silenced by contemporary education reform and neighborhood revitalization initiatives. The local Promise Zone designation and contemporary federal

education reform and poverty initiatives will be situated in historical and contemporary contexts. Together the Afrikan diasporic contributions and contemporary education reform and poverty initiatives can be read relationally to better situate and inform actions.

Review of the Research Literature

The Obama Administration Promise initiatives are part of a recurring cycle of modern education reforms backed by education policies which began with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and most recently include Race to the Top (RTTT) legislation. Education policies, place-based education reform, and poverty initiatives are circulated to encourage collaborative community partnerships for social reorganization and the enactment of neoliberal forms of economics in a "fragmented neo-plantation model of governance that has been rebuilt and expanded globally" (Woods, 2007, p. 57) as a contemporary education reform movement. Woods describes the Mississippi Delta plantation regime as a "deeply rooted American form of social organization and philosophy" that shapes the organizing principles of neoliberalism designed to reproduce forms of plantation capitalism such as "resource monopoly; extreme ethnic, class racial, and gender polarization; an export orientation; and intense regulation of work, family speech, and thought" (p. 56). This plantation social organization and philosophy can be used as an analytic to understand the contemporary neoliberal and historical colonial acts and practices of the local Promise Zone education reform and poverty initiatives. A *colonial act* is both a practice and a performance of power intended to produce docile minds (wa thiongo, 2009).

According to Suspitsyna (2010), the "new technology of governance" of the contemporary neoliberal iteration of governmentality consists of privatization, shifting responsibilities of the state and individualism. These new neoliberal forms shift the regulation of people's behavior from "social sciences to budget disciplines and accountancy" where some functions of the state are "assumed by nongovernmental organizations" (Suspitsyna, 2010, p. 571). Neoliberal governmentality "continues to rely on expert authority...but is deeply suspicious of that authority" subjecting it to regular checks and audits (Suspitsyna, 2010, p. 571). The mistrust is characteristic of and operationalized by data, evidence and an "audit culture" that permeates institutions and "challenges the grounds of the legitimacy of knowledge" (p. 571). Neoliberalism thus creates a new managerialism that reforms the management structure of public service organizations (Suspitsyna, 2010). With respect to education policy and reform, accountability is established as "a rhetoric and a technology of governmentality," that values measurement and evaluation and depends on data and evidence validated by scientifically based research and standardized tests. The creation of evidence, data and metrics becomes its own purpose, according to Matsushita (2017), which leads to the deterioration and inverting of thought on education. Education-related challenges are reduced to issues and questions of evidence or educational outcome data which equates to "no longer thinking at all" and the "development and introduction of an educational system intended to create the evidence required more dependably and efficiently" (Matsushita, 2017, p. 114). School districts, school administrators, education reformers and public service organization leaders (such as in the local PZ designation) become

"accountable actors" created by the rhetoric and discourse and charged with the responsibility of student achievement and learning, a responsibility which is measured and informed by data.

The knowledge system inherent in dominant models of governance informs education reform and policy, and at the same time silences and veils criticisms and alternative knowledge systems and pedagogy. The research literature that engages this critical analysis describes the dominant discursive and symbolic power of federally legitimated education reform, poverty initiatives, and knowledge systems that not only makes and remakes education but remakes locations and locales (space/place). Lipman (2003) demonstrates the "persistent refusal to address underlying issues of race, gender, and class inequality and oppressions" (p. 349) in place-based federal education reform and poverty initiatives.

Walter Mignolo (2009) describes how "from a detached and neutral point of observation the knowing subject maps the world and its problems, classifies people and projects into what is good for them" (p.160).

Inherent in the local promise zone designation is an interrelation between a politics of identity and knowledge that constitutes a choice or what Mignolo (2009) refers to as a decolonial option for actors. As Suspitsyna (2010) puts it accountability and a new managerialism of neoliberalism "facilitates production of new subjectivities" (p. 578). Not only does discourse construct actors such as an "urban gentry of managers and professionals" (Lipman, 2003, p. 333), discourse through maps and other communication modalities also prescribes certain behaviors toward the reclamation of space. Lipman

(2003) exclaims, "the center city is being 'reclaimed' by the new urban gentry" (p. 334)! Acting with a form of "neoliberal urbanism" cities and federal governments "use maps and neighborhood typologies to get rid of what they see as declining neighborhoods" (Aalbers, 2014, p. 529). The power and knowledge embedded in maps and the mapping of decline and deficits have a "performative use" that may both intentionally or unintentionally prescribe certain behaviors (Aalbers, 2014, p. 528). "Public and private actors...actively and passively structure the process of neighborhood decline, e.g. by producing maps that not only *describe* but also *prescribe* neighborhood decline" (Aalbers, 2014, p. 529). Lipman (2003) argues:

> "One role of the state is to secure the claims on urban space of a new (mainly white) urban gentry of managers and professionals by reinforcing a corporate culture of efficiency and rationality while evicting these marginalized 'others.' This process is legitimated by discourses of regeneration, progress, and purification: the state assists real estate developers and elite 'civic leaders' in cleaning up bad neighborhoods,' 'revitalizing blighted areas,' and keeping 'gangbangers off the streets'" (Lipman, 2003, p. 333).

Eight years later Lipman applies this argument to two of our most primal spaces/places: "Education and housing policies are historically intertwined in the racialized spatialization of inequality in the USA," she states, and "Residential segregation has been a principal source of racially segregated schooling, and schools have long been a primary selling point of market housing in specific neighborhoods" (Lipman, 2011, p. 223) and "The data show that education policy is constitutive of racialized restructuring of urban space and managerial governance of the public sphere" (Lipman, 2011, p. 217). Circulating federal knowledges in this way comes to constitute local identities and knowledge-making such as mapping and measuring space/place that describes and

prescribes erasure and mobility, and colonial practices and acts are indistinguishable from racial segregation of schools and neighborhoods.

Groundings and Return to the Source

Afrikan diasporic theories in the 60s constructed liberatory and revolutionary identities which counter today's neoliberal assumptions and offer essential theoretical grounding. Amilcar Cabral and Walter Rodney theorized a liberatory and revolutionary praxis using history, knowledge, culture and education. Rodney's "guerrilla intellectual" conception and "groundings with the people" (Rodney, 2019; Vaught, 2015) and Cabral's "return to the source" (Manji & Fletcher, 2013; King, 2017) enacted a body-politics of knowledge to counteract colonial/imperial subjectivity while struggling for liberation. Mignolo summarizes:

> "Body-politics describes decolonial technologies enacted by bodies who realized that they were considered less human at the moment they realized that the very act of describing them as less human was a radical un-human consideration. Thus, the lack of humanity is placed in imperial actors, institutions and knowledges that had the arrogance of deciding that certain people they did not like were less human. Body-politics is a fundamental component of decolonial thinking, decolonial doing and the decolonial option...Body-politics of knowledge has had its more pronounced manifestations in the United States, as a consequence of the Civil Rights movement" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 174).

The literature names an intentional attempt to "circumscribe and stunt the epistemological horizon of Africans/blacks" (p.38) which, reversing "epistemological ethnocentrism" (p.38), demanded a "countervailing historiography" that "invoked history as a weapon of generating a new revolutionary consciousness" (Adeleke, 2000, p. 39).

Acknowledging the control Europeans have and have had over the development and dissemination of knowledge, Walter Rodney introduced the concept of "guerilla

intellectual" to successfully challenge Eurocentric historiography (Adeleke, 2000, p. 41). The "guerilla intellectual" must 1) become free from the entrapment of bourgeois society, 2) transcend a disciplinary focus and 3) ground the theoretical underpinnings of their convictions with the practical realities and experiences of the masses (Adeleke, 2000). Amilcar Cabral recognized that the black intellectual was a "product of imperialist cultural transformation" that required a reversal "only if the intellectual returned to the masses and acquired better understanding and appreciation of original culture" a process that consisted of "the cultural re-education of the intellectual" (Adeleke, 2000, p. 48).

Mignolo uses Linda T. Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999) section of the first chapter titled 'On Being Human' to establish the "interrelations between the politics of identity and epistemology" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 172) as different from identity politics to set up the decolonial option. The politics of identity "is open to whoever wants to join, while the latter tends to be bounded by the definition of a given identity" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 171-172). Using Smith's text to look at this dynamic in Australian society, Mignolo (2009) posits that one "can choose the decolonial option: engage in knowledge-making to 'advance' the Māori cause rather than to 'advance' the discipline (e.g. anthropology)" (p. 172). To be involved in truly participatory education reform and community collaborative initiatives thus involves choosing between the decolonial option or choose to advance the neoliberal disciplinary knowledge of education reform; one cannot choose one without rejecting the other. Fals-Borda (1991) names those who choose the former as "politically aligned outside intellectuals." The decolonial option and politics of identity allows one a choice to be

politically aligned outside intellectuals. Mignolo (2009) continues tying Smith's text with an earlier report:

> A New Zealand anthropologist of Anglo descent *has no right* to guide the 'locals' in what is good or bad for the Māori population. That is precisely the *problem* that appears in the report of the *Harvard International Review*, where a group of US experts believe they can really decide what is good and what is bad for 'developing countries'...I am just saying, following Wiredu's dictum ('African, know thyself'), that there is a good chance that Māoris would know what is good or bad for them better than an expert from Harvard or a white anthropologist from New Zealand. And there is an also good chance that an expert from Harvard may 'know' what is good for him or her and his or her people, even when he or she thinks that they are stating what is good for 'them', the underdeveloped countries and people" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 173).

Harvard education reformers such as Geoffery Canada were presented in the documentary film *Waiting for Superman* (Guggenheim, 2011) as knowing what is good for a broken education system and as having the simple ingredients to remedy the problem of failing public schools in the U.S. But education reformers in the film do not consider what teachers, students and families think is good or bad, although they may know what is good for themselves even when speaking solely in terms of what is good for public school systems. This lack of consideration, or lack of inquiry or silencing, has a profound impact on Black communities. As Hill (1993) states, "the price paid by African Americans for the promise of educational equality has been great under legal desegregation and integration of African Americans into the Anglo educational mainstream: African Americans have been forced to adopt the European cultural heritage that dominates the educational milieu and thereby abandon their own cultural ties" (p. 681-682). With respect to the dictum 'African, know thyself' in the current context of the "cult of accountability", Ambrosio (2013) says, "knowing thyself begins with taking an

inventory of our historical formation, with determining how we have been secretly imprinted by history; how our language, thoughts, and identities have been informed by various currents of philosophical thought and cultural practices. However, critical understanding of the self also requires the development of an ethical stance, a set of values, principles, and virtues to guide one's moral conduct" (p. 328). Urban schools and spaces are constructed and bounded geographically by past and present disparities, injustices, practices and technologies that construct and reify differentiated subjects and spaces (Buendia & Ares, 2006). In this context, developing an ethical stance toward education in African-American communities, or knowing oneself as a student/intellectual-artist, requires deliberate reexamining, reclaiming, and revoicing.

Africana and Black Studies

Pan-Afrikan and Black radical traditions have articulated theories and actions that countered pervasive exclusions, omissions, and distortions within schooling while simultaneously addressing structural and systematic racism and white supremist ideology. Many of the concerns that African-centered scholars and youth faced from the late nineteenth and through the twentieth centuries are central to contemporary experiences of antiblack, colonizing, racial, sexual, and ordering. To address these pervasively destructive social challenges, Blacks created spaces and knowledge producing institutions such as schools, book publishing platforms, newspapers and library collections collectively understood as the Black intellectual tradition (Alkalimat, 2012; Alkalimat, 2021). Some key individuals and organizations are as follows: Arturo Schomburg and John Bruce established the Negro Society for Historical Research in 1911. The collection

amassed by Schomburg became the basis for what is today New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week, wrote *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1990/1933) and founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 (see Givens, 2021). John Henrick Clark was a founding member of the African Heritage Studies Association between 1968-1970. The Institute of the Black World (White, 2012; White, 2015) was established in Atlanta during the same period as African Heritage Studies Association. Intellectual activists of the 1960s and 1970s recognized institutional forms of racism and needed "new strategies...to overcome the increasing complexities presented by structural racism" (White, 2015).

During the years 1965-1970, Black students, as part of the Black Campus Movement, forced the institutionalization of Black Studies into the academy (Rogers, 2012). Many of these programs exist in varying degrees today (Alkalimat, 2013; Dawkins et al., 2021). A radical form of the movement advocated for the creation of a Black University. This concept was discussed and conceptualized in Black periodicals such as the Negro Digest / Black World between 1968-1970. Black studies in predominantly white organizations were an acceptable demand, but where the black community was concerned artists and intellectuals called for the creation of the Black Communiversity. *Black Communiversity* is an iteration of the Black University with a focus on including Black artists. The Black community would be the campus of the Black Communiversity, where artists, intellectuals, community members, students, activists will

come together. The Black Communiversity would, “educate our people from the cradle to the grave” (Killens, 1969).

Black print culture began with black newspapers, with *Freedoms Journal* 1758-1799, and much later *The Chicago Defender* in 1905-2003. Black print cultural practices created a virtual community that crossed not only geographic, but temporal, spatial and biopolitical boarders to create an emancipatory cosmology (a mobile, interconnected system of bodies governed by a set of predictive laws) (Fraser, 2016). Alkalimat, 2012 delineated the bibliographic history of Black studies that documented trans-generational scholarship beginning in the 20th century. Three main topics included the grand narrative of the Black experience, the African American intellectual tradition, and the transformation of the bibliography into the webliography enabled by digital technology. The grand narrative bibliography covers material from Africa through slavery up until the time of compiling the bibliography. This genre is represented by book length bibliographies. The black intellectual tradition is contained in the periodical literature that contains the threads of Black intellectual and artistic production, also understood as Black Print Culture. Digital technology and the Internet have changed the construction and use of bibliography and contributed to the loss of Black Print Culture. This shift creates a challenge and an opportunity for a new digital approach to compiling and circulating Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic thought (Alkalimat, 2012).

The Black Arts Movement is considered the cultural arm of the Black Power Movement. Larry Neal and Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka) were key figures in theorizing the Blacks Arts Movement. Amiri Baraka formed the Black Arts Repertory Theater

(BARTS) in Harlem during the same time as Harlem Youth Opportunity Arts (HARYOU). BARTS was one of the innovations in Harlem education inspired by the Black Power Movement (Rickford, 2019). When spaces like BARTS were created but when they ceased to exist the knowledge production shifted to anthologies, such as *Black Fire! An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (Ongiri, 2009). Bibliographies and anthologies were key to the Black Intellectual tradition (Alkalimat, 2012). Music was also central to the Black Arts Movement. *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss. Song!* is a soundtrack to the Blaxploitation film by the same name. The mixed-media album combines cover art, liner notes and the film to convey a message. Soundtracks to Blaxploitation films often eclipsed the films and emerged as part of the African American musical tradition serving as counternarratives (Ongiri, 2009).

Indigenous Afrikan intellectualism in the United States

Toure (2009) elevated John Henrick Clarke as "an exemplar of indigenous intellectualism in Afrikan culture in the United States" (p. 10). The term indigenous is used here to stress both the "double erasure" of indigenous and black culture/identity through settler colonialism and antiblackness on "selfsame land" (Tuck & Habtom, 2019) and the intellectual and creative contributions by diasporic Africans born in the United State as used by Toure. Toure (2009) demonstrates how John Henrick Clarke and his forbears "launched independent historical research and training initiatives" (p. 7) as "part of a movement for the indigenization of Afrikan academic intellectualism that can be traced back to the early nineteenth century" (p. 10) which existed primarily outside of the European academy and in spite of barriers to university education. Afrikan diasporic

intellectuals, with and without university degrees, "assumed the responsibility for producing knowledge about themselves and their relationship to the world that also involved a process of training informed by research and pedagogical methodologies, theoretical assumptions, and a publication mandate" (Toure, 2009, p. 13). Of these, Toure says:

> "Joel A. Rogers (1880-1966) is perhaps the premier figure responsible for the popularization of the role of Afrikans in European world history. Rogers, who never earned a university degree of any sort, dedicated some fifty years to original research and publication, traveling Europe and North Afrika and examining and collecting primary and secondary documents and historical artifacts in the French, Portuguese, Spanish, and German languages (in addition to English), in which he had gained fluency" (Toure, 2009, p. 3).

Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU)

Historically, Harlem has tried many different approaches to education (Erickson, 2019; Rickford, 2019). Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited or HARYOU, "was an antipoverty program established in 1964 through a partnership of the City of New York and the national government to address issues of poverty for the youths of central Harlem" (Toure, 2009, p. 120). HARYOU of the early 1960s might be considered today as a youth-led participatory action research (YPAR) project. HARYOU challenged academic/social perceptions of African American youth as problems and instead saw them as co-leaders in community change (Erickson, 2019). HARYOU rejected the strategy that HCZ would later champion which relied on a saturation or "wrap-around" of services to individual youth. It instead opted for "a community action-based initiative that mobilized residents, particularly youth, to transform social institutions in Harlem" (Currie et al., 2015, p. 16). In addition to its youth-led community research program, HARYOU

centered African and African American history and art. African and African American history played a central part of the HARYOU program; it made history inseparable from community action (Erickson, 2019). The history program was led by Dr. John Henrick Clarke. Clarke was hired in June 1964 to the Heritage Teaching Program of HARYOU's Community Action Institute, where he worked until December 1968...Clarke's curriculum guides and bibliographies for the study and teaching of U.S. and continental Afrikan history that were much in demand by the public at large" (Toure, 2009, p. 99-100). Clarke's position as director of the Heritage Teaching Program of HARYOU-ACT's Community Action Institute gave him an opportunity to "construct and control what was, in fact, a community-based and –oriented Africana Studies program that each week taught and trained several hundred Afrikan youths and adults...It was, moreover, an Africana Studies program that directly sought to cultivate youth and adult leadership committed to effective social action" (Toure, 2009, p. 120). HARYOU Arts parallels HCZ's Academy of Arts and Civic Engagement that pairs youth with skilled artists, dancers, etc. from the community.

Internal/Domestic Colonies

Theoretical perspectives attempting to explain the status of Afro-Americans in the United States, until the last 20 years "were all in the range of biological determinism to racial equality through assimilation...After assimilation concepts were put to a reality test by the civil rights movement during the 1960's and found wanting" (Staples, 1987, p. 9). "The internal colonialism model addresses itself to a process and situation where racial minorities are not only economically exploited but are subjected to attacks on their

cultural integrity and dehumanized as well" (Staples, 1987, p. 20-21). "Colonialism is not a static system and can take on different forms in various periods...Racial oppression as well as the ideology that sustains it have changed as the imperatives of political and economic conditions require modifications in its character" (Staples, 1987, p. 14). Reviving Robert Allen's (1990), *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, Calderon-Zaks (2010) highlights lessons we can learn by demonstrating overlooked contributions of "not only the process of internal colonialism, but also a documentation of a transition from a largely colonial world to a mainly neo-colonial one *during* that process" (p. 39 emphasis in original). "The colonial analogy was applied in the early 1960s in social movement circles by Harold Cruse, and academically by Kenneth Clarke" (Calderon-Zaks, p. 39).

Planners and interpreters of the 1960s upheavals, such as the Ford Foundation, were seldom critiqued for their role as "imperial advisors." "More than just an analogy, Allen noticed that the Ford Foundation employed the same neo-colonial strategy in the third world as it did in the US big-city ghettos, via the carrot-and-the-stick tactic, involving the same advisers with the same advice in both cases" (p. 41). Specifically, McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation "finance[d] the militant-sounding black "leaders" that would protect the interests of capital" (Calderon-Zaks, p. 42). In this way, radicalism of the 1960s and 1970s was co-opted by "corporatist," philanthropic and private interventions that assimilated and subtly transformed the rhetoric and actions of Black Power (Allen, 1990).

Hip Hop

In the Forward to the reissued, 1993 edition of Chancellor Willams' book *The Rebirth of African Civilization,* Anderson Thompson celebrates the Pan-Africanist Renaissance and the resurgence of a new generation "continuing the struggle for African liberation" (p. vi). One year prior, book publishing in general saw what some deemed a literary revival when in June 1992, "Terry McMillan (*"Waiting to Exhale"*), Toni Morrison (*"Jazz"*), and Alice Walker (*"Possessing the Secret of Joy"*) soared together on the New York Times best seller list*"* (Thompson, 1999). In the same period, hip hop was "motivating children toward positive attitudes and lifestyles" (Wise Intelligent, 2016b). From "1988 to 1993 Black college enrollment went up forty-seven percent and that was because of the music," (Kweli, 2015) according to MK Assante. "Music is in the mix; writing is in the mix" in the new and renewing possibilities of DJs providing the mix (Banks, 2011, p. 35). Those experiencing this Pan-African Renaissance understood that sonic ways of knowing and sonic technologies offer transformative potential for education, space/place, and alternative knowledge. McKittrick (2006) posits, "music, as a geographic act, is an available space through which blackness can be read as an integral and meaningful part of the landscape. This identifies the soundscape as contestation, which publicly and privately communicates geographic possibilities. It is a space and place used by several black artists to "say" the historical present" (p. 139).

In addition to space and knowledge production, hip hop appropriated and innovated sonic technologies such as "the ghetto blaster (or boom box)[4] and the turntable symbolizing the unwillingness of minority populations to be voiceless or silent" (Smith

1997, p. 520). Smith continues: “Music challenges fixed mappings of the spatial structure and social order of the city. It confronts its listeners with the iniquitous division of urban space and brings us face to face with a complex geography of racism,” and ultimately states, “Rap has its own ideas about urban renewal” (p. 521).

Compulsory Silencing in our Schools

Dominant normalized knowledges have located knowledge in the mind (Mignolo, 2009) and Western ocularcentrism in particular (Gergen, 2015; Moten, 2003; Samuels et al., 2010; Wargo, 2018; Weheliye, 2003) locates knowledge in the senses as a ‘compulsory silencing of institutional learning” (Hsu, 2018, p. 131). Silencing has led to a hierarchical ordering of senses that privileges writing and printed text over auditory processes such as listening, speaking, discussing, making, and collective brainstorming” (Hsu, 2018, p. 131). Silencing in our schools can also be seen when students hold or voice the belief that “academic success is unattainable for them” (Cammarota & Romero, 2006, p. 16). School-sponsored silencing is exercised and experienced through curricula that highlight the contributions of the dominant group thus silencing cultural heritage knowledge and language, teacher-student relationships, pedagogy, and racist ideologies and discourse. Silencing through these various forms allow colonial acts and actors to “permeate attitudes, policies, and actions and thus instigate the treatment of students of color as intellectually inferior and ultimately uneducable (Cammarota & Romero, 2006, p. 17). Hsu (2018) argues for a “sonic rehabilitation of learning and a sounded pedagogy to “remodel the mission of education and reconfigure pedagogical relationships” (Hsu, 2018, p. 133). Rhythmic and sonic texts are said to be more variable, able to more easily

adapt to contextual factors, in contrast to singular and formalistic conceptions of text (Meacham, 2001).

With the rise of new and emerging information and communication technologies in the multimodal communication environment, students need to learn various compositional literacies and digital writing practices. Banks (2011) attributes mix and remix tropes associated with digital writing practice to the rhetorical excellence and rhetorical agility of exemplary and everyday African American DJs in the Hip Hop tradition who "created writing practices that helped make postmodern conceptions of writing possible" (p. 2). Selfe (2009) "explores the history of aural composing modalities (speech, music, sound)" and acknowledges sound in the composition classroom is "undervalued as a compositional mode" (p. 617). Limiting composing modalities by privileging print "as the only acceptable way to make or exchange meaning" raises issues of "rhetorical sovereignty" for today's students (p. 618). When listening is taught, it often involves teaching students to approach sound as another form of text...simply more content to be interpreted" (Ceraso, 2022, p. 102). Ceraso (2022) argues for approaches to multimodality that address the "affective, embodied, lived experience of multimodality in more explicit ways" and advocates that sound is ideally suited as a "medium for better understanding multimodal experiences" (Ceraso, 2022, p. 104). "Multimodal listening moves away from organ-specific definitions and instead conceives of listening as ...a bodily practice that approaches sound as a holistic experience" (Ceraso, 2022, p. 105). Wargo (2018) suggests that without such practice, listening to education (in)equity is not taken seriously. Whether configured as text or as the sound and rhythm of place, "sound

is a palpable force in marking educational injustice" (Wargo, 2018, p. 382). *Sound matters!*

Summary

This literature review demonstrates the theoretical and epistemological fortitude of Afrikans. Through social, political, and economic examination of relevant periods, the literature shows the persistence of colonial epistemologies as well as the innovation and scientific creativity of Afrikans in the diaspora to develop alternative knowledge structures and systems. Music epistemologies build solidarities across time and space. This rich intellectual and aesthetic tradition can and should inform local education reform through epistemic disobedience and epistemic de-linking of schooling to the modern, Western assumptions driving reform policy and initiatives. Mignolo (2009) informs us, "[t]here are many kinds of 'our modernity' around the globe...while there is one 'their' modernity within the 'heterogeneity' of France, England, Germany and the United States" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 173). Afrosonic modernity is 'our' modernity, an Afrikan intellectual and aesthetic modernity. "The sonic remains an important zone from and through which to theorize the fundamentality of Afro-diasporic formation to the currents of Western modernity, since this field remains, to put it bluntly, the principal modality in which Afro-diasporic cultures have been articulated" (Weheliye, 2005, p. 5). To pursue one's own modernity, "we have to decolonize being, and to do so we have to start by decolonizing knowledge" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 171). Blues/hip hop epistemology is a decolonizing knowledge "to build the future of 'our' modernity – not independent from 'their modernity' (because Western expansion is a fact), but unrepentantly, unashamedly,

impenitently ‘ours’” (Mignolo, 2009, p. 169). In other words, “We bein Black out here, unapologetically” (Wise Intelligent, 2013) to create necessary spaces and sonic subjectivities.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The 2016 PZ designation was bound as a case in an embedded research design. The embedded issues – knowledge, space/place, identity and acoustemology – will structure data collection and intellectual inquiries that emerge as a result of data collection. This chapter will describe the qualitative methodology and analytical approach and the aural/oral data collection methods that include individual and collaborative conversations with artist/entrepreneurs, education reformers, and revitalization leaders in and around the area demarcated as PZ. A brief historical background is necessary to understand the beginning and ongoing community collaborative inquiry that establishes this research. In many ways, a project I conducted as a librarian called A Year of Hip Hop 2018 served as an exploratory case study. The resulting text/documentary *We Are Everywhere Now* represents both new knowledge generated and a shift in conditions and relationships which inspired new inquiries and actions addressed in this research.

Background: We Are Everywhere Now

The documentary *We Are Everywhere Now* (Pionear Group, 2019) is a record of both an ending and a beginning. It documented the last days leading up to the closing of an intergenerational autonomous creative space where a community of artists "felt part of something bigger than themselves." The documentary was an exclamation by displaced and marginalized artists that "we are everywhere now!"; and it was the first published work by Pionear Group, a failed artist collective spatial imaginary. The impetus of Pionear Group was to maintain solidarities across space and time and to (re)claim social

space/place. The group's vision was to enact a "performer-centered geography as citizenry" (Niaah, 2008) by performing identities as artists, intellectuals, entrepreneurs and place-makers—identities that colonial logics and practices strip away and attempt to silence. The documentary also simultaneously and spontaneously signaled the temporally bounded end of the collaborative inquiry, A Year of Hip Hop 2018 (AYoHH). AYoHH is both an acronym and a meaningful sound: "A-yohh"is the breathy call and response chant hip hop heads signify. AYoHH 2018 was a community inquiry and response to the discursive construction of space and epistemic erasure and silencing of everyday lived experiences within the area demarcated as PZ. AYoHH challenged the assumed rules about who could participate in imagining an equitable future and what counts as knowledge. It challenged one-and-done projects, prescriptive service-based solutions, econometric educational aims, and easily answered questions as ineffective approaches to complex phenomenon such as poverty and education. AYoHH favored participation, community, and creative action as a model of collaborative community change. It explored how to improve educational outcomes in and around the area demarcated as "Promise Zone" through the lens of hip hop culture. This community inquiry aligned with what Woods (2007) describes as a "blues tradition of investigation and interpretation" (p. 54) and what Speight Vaughn (2020) conceptualized as "a blues methodology that merged liminal space (historically marginalized community), ontology (blues epistemology/alterity) and practices (social theorizing) into a critical cultural social investigation." AYoHH aligned with a black musical aesthetic and tradition that acknowledges "relationships between epistemology, place, and citizenship that transcend

boundaries" (p. 1092), a tradition that has united communities across neighborhoods, cities, regions, ethnicities, and nations and that is being carried on by hip hop (Woods, 2007). AYoHH created prompts and opportunities for participants to produce and perform, e.g., collaborative CDs or "mixtapes"; performances; street photography that answered the question "what's good?" within specified zip codes; a mural by emerging artist Moon; panel discussions; workshops; and the documentary *We Are Everywhere Now,* among other creative texts. The documentary pointed toward new inquiries and toward the author "be(com)ing scholar"[5] (Allen-Handy & Thomas-El, 2018), doctoral student and intellectual-artist, notions of what DJ Lynnee Denise (2019) calls "DJ Scholarship" rooted in a performative practice of "erasure resistance" (p. 64). For a brief moment in space/time, in what is often called "the margins," A Year of Hip Hop gave artists, entrepreneurs, and practitioners a space of "radical openness" where they could"speak the voice of resistance" (hooks, 1989). A performative, improvisational, embodied, rhythmic vernacular emerged which otherwise is silenced by the practices and knowledge of contemporary reform and neighborhood revitalization. As *We Are Everywhere Now* documents, the margin is not a safe nor stable place, it is always at risk. In marginal space there is an instability and momentum that points to the complexities of the iterative nature of participatory research wherein the engaged scholar attempts to, "move with the movement as conditions and relationships change" and actions emerge (Langdon et al., 2021). Equity-oriented, participatory social justice research acknowledges that interventions cannot be completed in a single project; the expectation therefore is to empower the transformative potential within communities to continue the

ongoing work toward social change (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Barab et al., 2004). Participatory community-based approaches to knowledge generation are a spiraling praxis of interrelated processes combining social investigation, pedagogy and action, reflection and learning (Fals-Borda, 1998; Green, 2003; Hall, 2005). Black studies, anti-colonial studies, liberatory praxis, participatory communication (Barranquero, 2011; Gumucio Dagron, 2001), and participatory research (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Hall, 2005; Payne, 2017; Swantz, 2008; Tandon et al, 2016) are epistemological approaches and ways of being that employ divergent texts, memories, stories, songs to subvert dominant colonial knowledge systems, and science, by centering grassroots, indigenous, art and other ways of knowing. AYoHH was an exploratory practitioner inquiry that provides insight and context for the current research methodology.

It has been six years since the official start of the collaborative community inquiry AYoHH—and after many intellectual curiosities, frustrations, inquiry creep and ocular slippage, *we are still everywhere*! The documentary, like many locally produced artifacts, documents, plans, reports, and videos which were developed as a result of collaborative inquiry processes, lingers or rather languishes in oblivion. The documentary and other creative texts of AYoHH are examples of locally produced *community knowledge.* Documents such as these, produced as a result of comprehensive collaborative community initiatives, raise an important question related to knowledge and its impact on community and society: How might referential texts created in dialogic inquiry processes be used to facilitate learning, reflexivity, participation, and engagement in addressing complex local challenges, opportunities and aspirations?

The purpose of this research was to explore the spatial imaginary and materiality of the local 2016 Promise Zone designation through Afrosonic inspired (Banks, 2011; Campbell, 2022; Fouche, 2011; McKittrick, 2016b; Weheliye, 2005; Wise Intelligent, 2016; Woods, 1998/2017) education research in the Pan-African / Black intellectual tradition (King, 2017; King, 2018). The research considered the relationship between epistemology, space/place, acoustemology and participation across boundaries. The research placed the emphasis on the process of inquiry to develop pedagogical, methodological, and theoretical tools and practices useful for social transformation.

Research Design

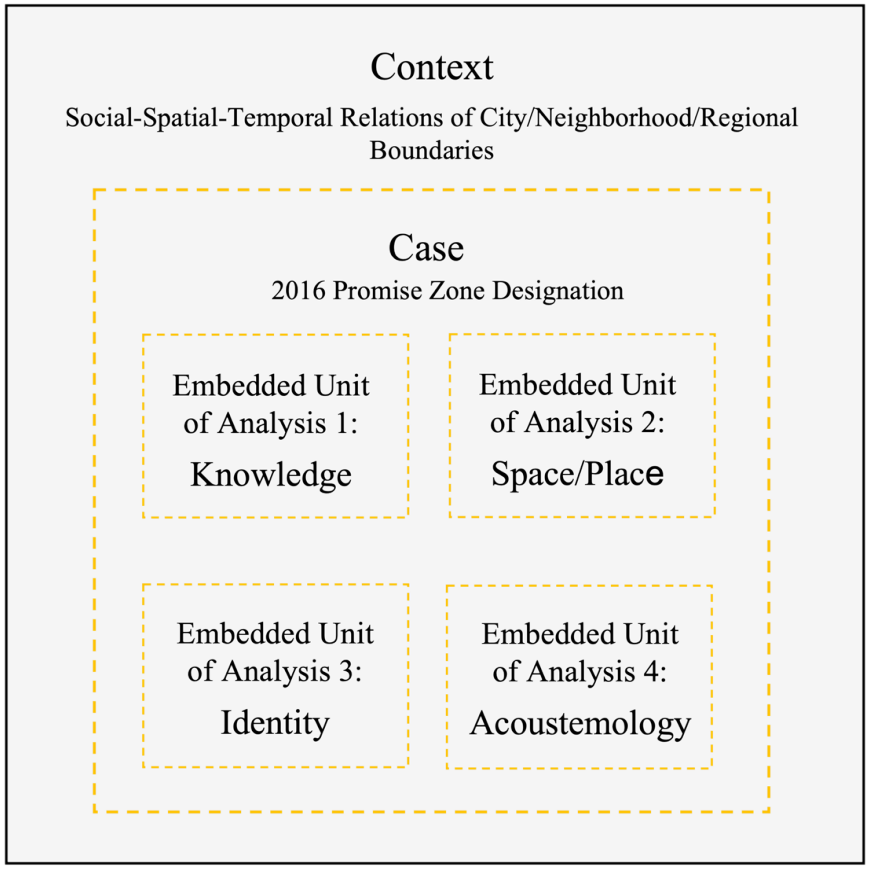
A sonic-inspired Black methodology theoretically informed the embedded single case research design bounded by the 2016 Promise Zone (PZ) designation. Local neighborhood/city/regional boundaries and social-spatial-temporal relations provided the context for the case. A *case study research design* is the study of the complexity of a bounded, integrated system, organized and selected because of some issue and context (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). Issues are abstract and entangled with historical, social, political and personal contexts, which are all important in the study of a case (Stake, 1995). Case work is understood as being "progressively focused" (Stake, 1995 p. 133), which means the organizing concepts, design and questions change somewhat when new information is discovered. This beneficial movement of case research does not lessen the rigor with which study procedures are followed (Yin, 2009). When designed around complex units of analysis or issues, the focus of the case study follows inquiries across different phases (Kohlbacher, 2006; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) and

maintains the benefit of flexibility without sacrificing rigor. Issues in the embedded case design consist of the following:

- Embedded Unit of Analysis 1: Knowledge/Discourse
- Embedded Unit of Analysis 2: Space/Place
- Embedded Unit of Analysis 3: Identity
- Embedded Unit of Analysis 4: Acoustemology

Figure 3.1

Embedded Case Research Design



The embedded design approach helped structure and guide data collection and intellectual curiosity.

Sounds in the Acoustic Environment

Four audio field recording sessions were randomly selected and scheduled. Each audio recording session corresponded to a 6-hour time block and was numbered 1-4. Using a one-week calendar grid numbered one through seven (1-7), the four recording sessions were randomly selected by using a random number generator (range of 1-7). The following numbers were generated in this order – 4, 2, 1, 6. Table 3.1 lists the randomized order, six-hour time blocks and day of week for the audio field recording sessions.

Table 3.1

Randomization of Audio Recording Fieldwork Sessions

Session	Random Number (1-7)	6-hour time block	Day of Week
Audio Session 1	4	4AM-10AM	Wednesday
Audio Session 2	2	10AM – 4PM	Monday
Audio Session 3	1	4PM – 10PM	Sunday
Audio Session 4	6	10PM – 4AM	Friday

The Audio Field Recording Schedule listed in Table 3.2 was loosely followed. The time was spent in the field sampling the sonic environment during each of the six-hour time blocks across different days of the week in and around the PZ. Interviews were also recorded with a handheld multi-directional audio recorder that captured not only the vocal aspects of the conversation but the sonic environment surprisingly well. During conversations, written notes were jotted down and later audio notes were recorded. For example, an interesting sound or something a participant said was jotted down and later reflected on and noted in an audio journal or memo.

Table 3.2

Audio Field Recording Schedule

Day of Week	Time of Day
Sunday	4PM – 10PM
Monday	10AM – 4PM
Wednesday	4AM-10AM
Friday	10PM – 4AM

Research Questions

RQ1: How does the local PZ designation

a. Constitute / materialize space/place?

b. Constitute / materialize identity?

c. Produce, share local knowledge?

RQ2: How might music in the blues / hip hop intellectual tradition of social investigation remake education differently?

Research Site

The location of the research was a Midwestern city with a population less than 120,000. It is an emerging small/big city with aspirations of transformation, innovation and economic growth. The city might be described as developing its identity. I like to describe it as figuring out its identity as a small metropolitan city with regional growth potential. There are two universities and a community college. Plans have been developed and investments made over the past fifteen years in the redevelopment of the core and surrounding neighborhoods creating narratives and aspirations of an inclusive city conducive to economic growth and talent attraction. Racism, segregation, and economic exploitation exists within its infrastructures and power dynamics.

Local initiatives from soil remediation and sewer projects to neighborhood revitalization and housing initiatives are shifting and ongoing. Sewer work started in 2016 and will continue through 2040 to improve an aging and outdated sewer system. Soil remediation work across twelve neighborhoods near the downtown area has continued since 2007. Projects to spur economic growth and attract talent to the city have seen the construction of new hotels, businesses, event spaces, and luxury apartments in and around the downtown area. Local and regional connectivity is being imagined and manifested through the construction and extension of trails, smart streets and transportation planning. Public transportation is meager and regional transportation is an aspiration. Given regional population growth goals and aging utility infrastructure improvements, transportation infrastructure is in a continuous state of construction and decline. School zoning cut neighborhoods up, sending students who live across the street from one another to different schools. Of the four hundred or so school-age youth in one neighborhood in the Promise Zone, every public school in the city was represented. School zoning has been a common concern among parents.

There is one private data consulting firm in the city that has primarily been retained for evidence-informed, data-driven decision making and program evaluation and which serves as the evaluator of numerous programs run by different nonprofit organizations. Methods are primarily biased towards surveys and quantitative methods, a quantitative centrism in measuring outcomes, and success of interventions.

Table 3.3 provides a statistical snapshot which reveals a relatively small geographic area at the city scale covering 47 square miles. Within this area, twenty-two

percent of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher, which is seven percent lower than the state average. Eighteen percent of the population is living below the poverty line, which is six percent higher than that of the state as a whole. There are four metro areas with an average population of two million within approximately 170 miles of the city. The local metro area has a population of approximately 314,000.

Table 3.3

Statistical Snapshot of Area

	Population	Geographic Area (Square Miles)	Percent High School Graduation or Higher	Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Percent Below Poverty
City	117,000	47	91	22	18
County	180,000	233	92	27	14
Metro Area (MSA)	314,000	1500	93	28	11
State			91	29	12

The city prides itself on its collaborative and transformational spirit. The collaborative and partnering spirit of organizations, institutions and nonprofits was part of the rhetoric of the PZ one-page document announcing and explaining the initiative (See Appendix E for PZ Designation One Page document). A list of approximately twelve organizations were named as the robust team of community partners. Since 2016, there have been many organizations and individuals entering, leading and exiting the initiative. The public library was not included in the original PZ imagination and has had a tenuous connection with it since 2017. The library has been added last minute to PZ-related grants and projects on a few occasions with limited, non-leadership roles. Library leaders have pondered, questioned and even offered services and expertise to the PZ initiative,

thinking the lack of inclusion was a library perception issue, an assumption that libraries are all about books, meeting room space and to a degree early childhood education. Arguably, the public as well as library leaders have become unconscious of the cultural production and symbolic power of libraries (Budd, 2003). Prior to 2017, the public library had not been known for its outreach and engagement in the community beyond early childhood centers and youth events. Of library staff members, the researcher has had the most sustained relationship with PZ-related initiatives as a library leader since 2017.

Ethical Concerns and Reciprocity

I have been involved in several community initiatives, served as a Board of Director or committee member for many nonprofit organizations, participated in neighborhood revitalization efforts and visioning processes across multiple identities – librarian, resident, volunteer, organizer, conceptualizer, etc. Through my involvement I have been privy to information and practices that an outside researcher or participant would likely not have access to. I have learned things about certain practices that have occurred within collaborative initiatives. I have formed biases and have often been openly critical, which has in certain cases impacted my participation and level of engagement. This level of knowledge raises some concern with engaging particular organizations and/or individuals in leader positions regarding the Promise Zone designation. It is difficult to erase my memory or knowledge of certain practices or facts, although that knowledge did not impact participation, findings, creative actions, or criticality. Maintaining a level of confidentiality of individuals within participatory

community projects raises a level of concern between academic practice and participatory research paradigms.

In terms of reciprocity, community information belongs to the community. Participatory research is predicated upon building and sustaining relationships in a spiraling and ongoing research praxis. To honor black life as scientifically creative human praxis and relational approaches recognizes a collective as opposed to an extractive knowledge paradigm. The research design was chosen to enhance awareness of community knowledge and encourage participation. It respects divergent voices and ways of knowing. Through the referencing and citational practices of black creative praxis, the development of trust and reciprocity will continue.

Reflexivity and Positionality

I just looked at the pictures
Didn't have a manual to build this
Just assemble it from feeling
By looking at pictures
I was given tools meant for building
With no instruction for the wielding
But look at the picture
It ain't even close to the description
And yet it's working as I wished it
By looking at pictures
And even though parts of it are missing
It's still complete in the depiction.
(Oddisee / Built by Pictures)

As a library leader, I both created and participated in community collaborative inquiry processes related to the PZ designation. I have been involved with initiatives that addressed issues such as poverty reduction, early childhood education improvement, food

security, education issues related to the school-to-prison nexus, and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Art and sonic ways of knowing, particularly through the lens of hip hop culture, have formed the basis of much of my community work and intellectual pursuits. As of August 2022, I entered academia determined to fulfill my mission of be(com)ing student/intellectual-artist while continuing to conduct research in an Afrikan diasporic intellectual and aesthetic tradition. Through this process of being/becoming student/intellectual-artist, I feel like Speight Vaughn (2020) as if I am "running in search of a theoretical and conceptual shelter from the hegemonic storm" (p. 1094). Reflecting on A Year of Hip Hop (AYoHH) and community inquiry conceptualizations leading up to and through AYoHH provides context and demonstrates the ongoing and spiraling nature of research, research creep, failure and ambivalence I have experienced. As Banks (2011) advises scholars pursuing community work, "it's all in the mix," as opposed to a single argument one might make or a singular search for success. Community-engaged scholarship is about commitment and service rather than success, and in fact, "committing to community work is an exercise in learning that one has only momentary successes in the midst of glaring, obvious failure" (Banks 2011 p. 40).

In 2017, colleagues and I were theorizing about "community inquiry" and ways to demonstrate the public library's impact. This theorizing was mostly prompted by shifts in library science and the nonprofit ecosystem toward evidence-based and data-informed discourse as well as changes in how individuals and communities accessed, looked for, and used information. In this highly conceptual and innovative space, I created the role and title Social Impact Research Manager for myself. It was an aspirational role, one I

imagined would require a terminal degree. The person would lead a team of librarians with specialist practices that aligned with emerging trends in society that impact on libraries or trends that libraries can impact within their community. I related the Impact Department to research and development. The team would conceptualize and evaluate new programs and services that addressed community challenges, opportunities and aspirations. Successful projects would be operationalized into library praxis. The 2016 Promise Zone designation provided an opportunity to conceptualize and explore community inquiry, programmatic evaluation, and representations of impact. I imagined the Social Impact Research Manager would lead collaborative research projects with communities and other institutional partners. AYoHH was one such project, an exploratory community collaborative inquiry aligned with the local Promise Zone designation.

The guiding question of AYoHH was, how can the city improve educational opportunities for 16-24 year-olds in and around the area demarcated as PZ? I mostly kept the PZ language despite my critique to align with the discourse and be taken seriously. I positioned my inquiry at the top end of the pipeline because there were not many programs or services at this end. My positioning was a kind of "youthwork paradox" wherein "community-based educational sites (CBESs)" must encompass many logics within a complex political terrain (Baldridge, 2020) to best serve marginalized populations. AYoHH encompassed inquiries across topics, issues, performances and events ranging from the local hip hop community, youth bike repair, Hip Hop Architecture Camp, street photography, popular music education, and creative

entrepreneurship to a reimagined inquiry called A Promise of Trees. (A Promise of Trees is an example of research creep.) These inquires sought to engage participants and leverage strengths from local assets to critique dominant paradigms and practices and create or support alternatives.

The “success,” buzz, creativity, and imagination of AYoHH created opportunities for me to participate in various community collaborative initiatives that scaled from the neighborhood to the regional level. My name is often not among the first group of individuals, stakeholders, experts, put forth (nor is the local public library) when community collaborations are being formed. I am part of the B team. When the question is raised, “Who is not here that needs to be here?” or when there is an intention to include “disruptors” or “people who think outside of the box,” there is often one or two among the A team who put forth my name. I have been invited to and participated in many community collaborative inquiry processes as a resident, “disruptor,” or “person who thinks outside of the box.” The “disruptor” or “person who thinks outside of the box” identity has afforded me latitude in becoming more vocal and openly critical about inquiry processes - power dynamics, designs, actions, and the lack of reflexivity, creativity and historicity. Bouncing from one initiative to the next, I have grown increasingly frustrated by and ambivalent about "official” community collaborative initiatives. There is a dialectical relationship between what I deem “official” community initiatives and “unofficial” projects like AYoHH and actions and experiences of everyday individuals constructing space/place. The willingness of AYoHH’s creative collaborators to try something different and learn more about local issues regardless of measurable

outcomes of success held a participatory welcome that I couldn't find in the official spaces.

It is important to note that AYoHH was not a library-wide initiative; it was my own leadership project, although fully supported and funded by the library (at least initially). The things learned through AYoHH never found their way into library practice, despite my leadership role. I was, however, afforded space to continue community work. AYoHH overlapped with a visit to Harlem Children's Zone. In 2018, I attended HCZ's Practitioners Institute with a group of individuals from the area. My visit helped me to see opportunities and challenges in implementing the HCZ model locally. I saw that some of the acknowledged issues with the PZ discourse could be effectively addressed by AYoHH,such as the immediate and glaring issue with the narrative and map that constructed the Promise Zone. As a resident and library leader, I did not see myself represented and wondered how others saw themselves and their community, especially those in and around the area designated as PZ. The prescribed educational outcomes measured as attainment, achievement and engagement also troubled me, considering what might be required of nonformal educators to impact those measures, not to mention the criticisms by educators of contemporary education policies and practices. I also recognized that Afrikan diasporic contributions and epistemologies were omitted from the change discourse that targeted African American families and youth.

I am an American born Afrikan raised in the Midwest. I am hip hop and part of the hip hop generation born between 1965 and 1984 (Cromartie, 2018). I am a librarian, a doctoral student be(com)ing scholar (Allen-Handy & Thomas-El, 2018) resident of a

neighborhood engaged in a revitalization effort and resident in the Promise Zone. I relate to Oddisee's Built by Pictures quoted above. One might say I conceptualized and implemented community inquiries by just looking at pictures. I was not apprenticed nor socialized into socially transformative research or praxis. I drew on my positionality as a librarian, the African-centered education I gave myself (Woodson, 1933),[6] experience, curiosity, imagination, improvisation, and hip hop culture. In essence, I just looked at the pictures and assembled the tools given from feeling. Community inquiry has been beta tested by my experience, in other words, but I know that parts are missing.

Research Procedures

Conversations that consisted of topical individual interviews was the project's primary mode of engagement with research participants. Topics discussed in interviews were aligned with the embedded case issues. After IRB approval, an email was sent to individuals and organizations announcing the research and providing information on the research process as a way to encourage participation. Snowball sampling was used to obtain documents or learn of other initiatives or individuals for participation in the research study. Employing snowball sampling has been effective when trying to obtain access to and information on "hidden populations", those often marginalized by hegemonic power but also those "hidden-by-choice" referring to those who enjoy a certain social status (Noy, 2008). Potential participants had the option to select if they would like to provide more in-depth information e.g. be interviewed or opt out of communications. Audio field notes and audio research memos were used to capture the researcher's reflections in the field as well as to document interesting findings.

Participants

A total of sixteen interviews were conducted with artists/entrepreneurs in the margins, practitioners, and neighborhood revitalization leaders. Locally generated knowledge in the form of plans, surveys, newsletters, documents, videos, etc. was researched and collected. Research participants were asked about local knowledge generated and many shared resources. Data collection ceased when no new themes emerged and saturation was achieved.

Data Collection

The following instruments were used to collect data:

- Audio field recording
- Audio journaling and audio research memos
- Conversation: individual interviews

Data Analysis Procedures

Relational analytical praxis and hermeneutic interpretation were used to analyze data. The hermeneutic circle of analysis is an ongoing process of interpretation that starts with reflection in the field. It is an active process of making sense of situations and circumstances all the time. It is a curiosity-driven process that begins with "vague understandings and expands them through co-constructed knowledge in research" (Speight Vaughn, 2020, p. 1098). Hermeneutic interpretation aligns with Black creative praxis. Relational analytical praxis implies searching through the data as a DJ/Producer digs through stacks of record collections, listening to texts, spinning the audio back allowing for general impressions to emerge, something that resonates or lingers,

contradictions, familiarities, and echoes that might expand possibilities of understanding. Interview data was listened to for interpretations as opposed to a search for themes in, "an attempt to escape the practice of fracturing the data" (Moules, 2002, p. 14). The search for interpretations put the data in an infinite process of discovery and learning. Interpretation and impressions from interviews were read with local knowledge and audio field recordings. In this relational analysis, the integrity of the data stays intact and open to interpretation, reinterpretation, remix, innovation, and creative expression. Moules (2002) explains metaphorically entering the hermeneutic circle as a process of interpretation:

> Being in the circle is disciplined yet creative, rigorous yet expansive. There is an inherent process of immersion in, and dynamic and evolving interaction with the data as a whole and the data in part, through extensive readings, re-readings, reflection, and writing. (p. 15).

An eclectic process of oral/aural coding and transcription allowed for a multimodal entrance into the data, listening and reading which allowed for nonverbal cues, lost in transcription to inform as part of one's whole oral expression signaling comfort, discomfort, passion, excitement, confusion, etc. This allowed for emphasis to be placed on the transcribed text with reading for meaning, context and consistency. Those nonverbal cues were initially coded but ultimately were dropped. It is a limitation of this research that I couldn't include them in my analysis. The oral coding practice can, however, be developed, especially for generating creative outputs from research data. Oral/aural information is lost if audio recorded interviews are simply transcribed and coded.

Validity

Member-checking was employed to verify with study participants if the interpretations were accurately reflected. Additionally, a vignette was used to convey meanings consistent with relational and reflective nature of Afrosonic tradition and participatory research practice that reflects the data back to the community in a collective call and response manner (Banks, 2011; Speight Vaughn, 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

Limitations of this embedded case design can be understood as focus and flexibility; time; research creep; and failure. Flexibility in case research can be a limitation if new information that is gathered leads to inquiry creep, following curiosities beyond the scope of the bounded case. Collecting and chasing local knowledge quickly reached saturation, especially when it became evident that events, videos, and other forms of local knowledge were relevant, creating a limitation. A failure to shift focus can be a limitation if concentration on embedded issues fails to return to the larger unit of analysis. It is possible, as Yin (2009) describes, that the original bounded phenomenon of interest becomes the context of the case, shifting the original design. For example, the embedded issue, Knowledge, might become the case and the case, the PZ designation, might become the context. (See Figure 3.1 above.) A significant amount of locally generated knowledge exists which could not all be analyzed or captured. Time became a limitation given the amount of data that can be collected with case research. The research period limited flexibility which limited key lines of inquiry into recorded texts and into

food, health and cultural related issues. The research was limited to a four-week research period. Finally, case study research designs may fail if too many demands are expected.

Assumptions

In the song, *I Can't Breathe* by H.E.R. (2020), several questions are raised about the contradictions within society and the ambivalence felt. I Can't Breathe was a social justice movement, rallying cry, and a timely anthem, given the suffocating conjuncture of the rise of persistent antiblack police violence and the global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. In the song, H.E.R. asks the humanizing question, "If we all agree that we are equal as people, then why can't we see what is evil?" I assume that in the local context it is possible to collaboratively identify the oppression in our present systems and how alternatives are being created for those conditions. Equity-oriented, participatory social justice research acknowledges that interventions cannot be completed in a single project and assumes relationships and community work will be ongoing.

Scope and Delimitations

The research was conducted for four weeks during the first part of 2023 and covered the geographic areas that extend from the core of the city outward encompassing high poverty areas and neighborhoods where active change initiatives were occurring. The city geographically covers approximately 47 square miles. If a circle was drawn around the geographic area of study, the area covered was approximately a 5-mile radius vector extending outward from the core in directions not inclusive of environmental barriers (e.g. river) or social-political boundaries (e.g. city/county/state lines). The Promise Zone is a geographically specific location, although related initiatives socially

and operationally have not been strictly bound to the demarcated area and have encompassed an area as wide as the region.

The intent of this participatory research is to engage marginalized populations as well as organizations and individuals actively addressing issues related to local poverty and education reform. This case research is bounded by the local PZ designation within the context of the case study. As indicated, several community collaborative and city initiatives have been implemented since 2016 to address education and poverty initiatives encompassing all or parts of the demarcated PZ. These initiatives produced their own local knowledge and established their own practices and approaches. Considering the number of local initiatives developed since the 2016 PZ designation, a four-week research period limited the scope and breadth of data collection. Emphasis was placed on inquiry, geographic location and diversity of research participants. Preference was given to initiatives in the demarcated area. Audio fieldwork was limited to the area mostly known as southside or Center City, in parks and on trails.

CHAPTER 4. SPACE/PLACE, IDENTITY AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The city's Promise Zone (PZ) designation is an acknowledgment, an awareness, and a realization of the city's proclivity for cooperation and willingness to initiate transformational ideas. In an archived audio recording announcing the PZ designation, the mayor recounts a conversation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) secretary concerning the city's application. The HUD secretary said the one thing that helped to distinguish the city's application from other applicants was the extraordinary level of *cooperation*, a level of cooperation that stood out to those reviewing the application. The mayor goes on to talk about how the word *transformational* has been used a fair amount thus linking the Promise Zone designation to other transformational ideas such as the Medical School imagination. The mayor describes the transformational potential of the PZ designation as a partnership in layering and leveraging strategic investments to create jobs by retooling inner city neighborhoods and the downtown business district. The PZ designation, stated the mayor, allows for much needed resources for neighborhood level change (Winnecke, 2016). Some organizations locally aligns with state and federal initiatives to cooperate and launch transformational ideas that remake geographically defined places. The cooperation narrative articulated by the mayor has become part of the city's culture, advertised as a community of difference-makers with a welcoming spirit, a place where transformational ideas are initiated (E-REP website). The Medical School imagination, now constructed and operational in the city's downtown, has evolved into the infrastructural centerpiece of becoming a national leader in youth mental health. Layering and leveraging of funding

such as nearly $100 million from the Regional Cities Initiative, subsequently named Regional Economic Acceleration & Development Initiative (READI), a Promise Neighborhoods Grant ($30 million), and HUD's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA, City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development, 2018) as well as opioid settlement funding resulting in over $600,000 annually for the next 18 years has resulted in massive *investments in city infrastructure*. Instances of cooperation and *coalition building* constitute spaces/places where strategies and transformational ideas are understood and local knowledge is generated to remake place. Research questions ask how we might hear space/place, identities, and local knowledge constituted by the PZ designation to remake education differently. This chapter will address findings related to the first research question (RQ1): How does the local Promise Zone designation: Constitute / materialize space/place; Identity (subjectivity); Produce, share local knowledge? Chapter Five, The Sonic Environment, will address RQ2 - How might music in the blues / hip hop intellectual tradition of social investigation remake education differently?

Articulation and Interpretation of Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen research participants. Interviews ranged in length from thirty minutes to roughly ninety minutes. Emphasis was placed on individual conversations (Speight Vaughn, 2020) and a reflexive interview design (Denzin, 2001) that approximated new knowledge construction. The research interview created a space that allowed for reflection and introspection. A few research participants acknowledged the intentional design effort and thanked the researcher for the

opportunity and the space to reflect on their work. Verbal consent can be found in Appendix A and interview questions Appendix B.

Interview questions were grouped by four themes aligned with the research questions: local knowledge, space/place, identity, sonic environment. The first section (four questions) was related to local knowledge. Questions asked participants to think about how their work is situated to address local complex challenges. Work was presented as practice, work or art practice and set up with, "I use the terms your work, your practice, your art practice as a way to understand what you do and how you do what you do across your divergent identities or intersectionality." Participants were free to talk about how their work/art practice intersects at present or potentially in the future with local issues. Other questions in this section explored how they learn about local/global issues and if documents or information was consulted or created by them that informed their work.

The second section (six questions) was related to space/place and asked about changes locally within the last five years. Questions also inquired about local culture, arts and music. The third section comprised six questions related to one's sense of identity. Questions asked about their attitudes and perceptions about their work, how they arrived at doing the work they do, and some perceptions about place.

The final section (five questions) was concerned with the sonic environment. Research participants were asked to take a moment to listen to the environment and identify sounds they hear. A health practitioner noted using this type of question with

clients. Another participant found this line of questioning too abstract, stating "I am too analytical for these questions." A few others struggled or declined answering the question about soundtrack to their life, music not being something they are into. Participants were explicitly asked to use their imagination twice,, once about midway through and once at the end. Both questions asked participants to imagine hearing something significantly changing in the community. Taken as a whole, each interview was related with other interviews to form themes that surfaced organically. Three distinct spaces/places emerged. Questions related to local knowledge suggest its impact on social inquiry, social/material transformation (change), and participation. In addition to semi-structured interviews, local knowledge was investigated sonically and through local texts.

Research Participants

Research participants included professionals and practitioners as well as artist/entrepreneurs who work in or around the area demarcated as the City's Promise Zone. All research participants' work/art practice intersected with issues related to PZ goal areas and represented a mix of identities or ways of being/knowing. Demographic data was not relevant to the study; therefore, no participant demographic data was collected. All names used are gender neutral pseudonyms.

Coding

Data analysis was performed in accordance with black methodology and relational analysis, reading across the different texts (interviews, documents, audio recordings). Interview data was read/listened to together as a whole. Oral coding (Bernauer, 2015) and traditional transcribed data was combined, both listening to

recorded interviews while reading transcripts prior to and during coding. An eclectic coding strategy initially involved *in vivo* oral coding and process coding, which led to values coding. Process coding showed what individuals were trying to accomplish in their work but lacked cohesion with other aspects like knowledge generation and space/place. Values coding illuminated distinct processes and approaches and distinguished how the work of community change was conceptualized and executed. A model of distinct and overlapping spaces emerged. The coding process followed what Saldana (2016) refers to as "pragmatic eclecticism," i.e., trying different coding methods and extensive analytic memos (mostly analytic audio memos) to arrive at a substantive analysis in line with newer interpretivist qualitative methodologies such as performance ethnography and discourse analysis (p. 70).

The Promise Zone Designation and Neighborhood Revitalization

Ten census tracts[7] (10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, and 37.02) were combined to demarcate (map) the geographic area articulated as the city's Promise Zone. See Promise Zone Map in Appendix D. Data from those census tracts was used to construct a PZ narrative. Census tracts, neighborhood associations, and nonprofit service organizations all structure, organize and measure the city as a way of making sense of education and poverty—but the convenience and comparability of this way of knowing obscures lived experiences and local knowledge.

A network of neighborhood associations provides the structure for nonprofits serving as backbone organizations to initiate and lead neighborhood revitalization initiatives at the neighborhood level. There are approximately fifty-five neighborhoods in

the city that are represented by a distinct overseeing organization. Of these, twelve active and three inactive or non-member neighborhood associations overlap the PZ. Hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the city compete for sustainable funding and inclusion. Many nonprofits have mission statements that overlap education- and poverty-related services, forming a competitive and institutionalizing culture that sorts nonprofits as potential partnering organizations. A few nonprofit organizations have leapt over what one research participant described as "mom and pop" entities to become successful, corporate-like institutions that compete and cooperate alternately in an effort to understand and align with opportunities that layer and leverage funding to initiate transformational ideas. Broadly accepted data infrastructures that silence other ways of knowing presage alternative knowledge systems and creative expressions.

Locally contextualized deficit data and information, culled from census tracts, institutional data, and stakeholder knowledge constitute a discourse of circulating narratives that is placed over and on communities, muffling, covering, erasing, and misrepresenting the everyday experiences and realities of humans living in those places. Coalitions (temporary bodies), form to understand the goals outlined in the designation / funding opportunity by analyzing local strategies and gaps. The *rich information* gleaned from this process of coalition building (social organization) is used to produce outputs (applications and plans) and collaborative community change spaces and is publicly acknowledged as the sole knowledge/discourse that constitutes the PZ and other neighborhood revitalization spaces/places and identities. The PZ designation and neighborhood revitalization demonstrates the collaborative spirit of difference makers (an

identification), who produce local knowledge in spaces/places created to initiate transformative ideas.

The local PZ designation and neighborhood revitalization are intentional collaborative planning efforts that operationalize an institutionalizing apparatus within an official collaborative community change space. Temporary bodies are formed that produce a rich amount of data that lead to outputs - application submissions and short-term outcomes, i.e., small wins. Designations, funding opportunities, and planning are the impetus for bringing people together where ideas are generated based on goals and priorities of the opportunity. If a designation or grant is not awarded, there is a belief that something good has still happened out of the intentional collaborative effort. Learning happens, and local knowledge is generated through collaboration. The intentional collaborative planning effort is associated with coalition building.

The Promise Zone Designation

The local PZ collective effort is organized and structured as a lead agency guiding lead partners and implementation partners (See Appendix E). This organizational structure emulates the backbone support of collective impact. Practitioners representing nonprofit organizations came together to apply for the federal PZ designation. Part of the intentional planning effort entailed creating a process to collect community feedback from different stakeholders. Data collected addressed the six specific PZ goal areas - housing, health, job development, economic development, education and crime. Data collection tried to understand: What are the particular needs? What are the strategies that we are currently doing that could be leveraged as opposed to going out and trying to do

something completely different? And then what are the gaps? What do we need to be doing in order to realize the strategies we are currently doing to the fullest? The rich collection of information gathered through collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and information exchange led to the application submitted to the federal Department of Education. Once the PZ designation was awarded, an evaluation framework was wrapped around the strategies developed and represented in the application. Data was then collected through surveys to monitor progress toward the different indicators in an evaluation plan. A thick logic model evaluation tracking document for each of the goal areas was produced. But to bring that to life a bit more, a one-to-two-page document for each goal area was developed to show a snapshot of the progress. The PZ designation, which does not have funding attached, constituted collaborative spaces and cooperative identities and generated locally contextualized knowledge aligned with the six goal areas of the federal promise initiative. The PZ designation structured collaborative community change as a process of initiating transformational ideas (best practices), sharing data and measurement, pursuing funding, and constructing hierarchical social organization, i.e., lead organizations and implementation partners. Coalition building and the subsequent layering and leveraging of funding to initiate transformative ideas is a way of knowing and being that became the official space of collaborative community change replicated to apply for a Promise Neighborhood (PN) Grant (awarded in 2023 after four reapplications).

As mentioned, there is no funding attached to the PZ designation. Official space is therefore constituted as a requirement to pursue funding such as the PN Grant. This

community has worked for almost ten years to try to get a Promise Neighborhood Grant. The PN Grant is a competitive thirty-million-dollar grant initiative leveraging an additional thirty million for a total of sixty million dollars. Applying for the PN grant mirrored the structure of the PZ designation process with different leads and partners. The PN application process has a local university as the lead organization and several implementation partners involved. A hierarchical participation and engagement structure centralizes power. Partners provide input and function as implementors. An executive team serves as arbiters and decision makers. Research participants criticize these structures stating, systems are broken and decisions made by people in power continue to result in disparities. Funding is coming in, but the right people are not at the table to allocate those funds. At the same time, however, collaboration is valued because it leads to different opportunities. The PN Grant inspired the local school corporation to "*go back to Community Schools*" and write another full-service Community School application. There is an attitude that institutionalizing collaborative engagement is preferred to nothing. The spaces/places and local knowledge constituted by the PZ designation and PN grant process set the stage for official space. The institutionalizing apparatus is replicated alongside neighborhood associations in the development of a neighborhood revitalization intervention. The PZ designation established an official space of collaborative community change - coalition building, bringing people, groups, organizations, neighborhood associations together to pursue opportunities that facilitate change through transformational ideas i.e. best practices.

Neighborhood Revitalization

Neighborhood revitalization is a collaboratively created intervention/model to attract investments to retool neighborhoods, a model replicated alongside neighborhood associations that are commodified, storied and sold. Neighborhood revitalization has backbone organizational support. Neighborhood revitalization and the Kids Zone approach are understood as innovations, transformational ideas aligned with the PZ exemplar's cradle-to-career continuum and theory of change. Neighborhood revitalization is purported to address complex local/global issues such as, in the words of one research participant, "the natural way cities grow and marketplace forces of suburban sprawl to contentious social issues like systemic racism, generational poverty and all the things that live underneath that." Those involved in neighborhood revitalization believe in telling stories of neighbors to drive investments, quality of life planning, shared measurements, and best practices. They are also aware that residents are not informing processes and that communication between them is sparse. Massive investments in city infrastructure transform place, but residents don't feel like those investments are for them, e.g. recent-past developments like the Aquatic Center, farmers market, reinstating an old neighborhood archway, and downtown development. There is an attitude that those who make funding decisions are unwilling to invest in local innovation and an overall belief that nonprofits need sustainable funding. There is a realization that "this is not a rehearsal" and that decisions made will have consequences.

Neighborhood revitalization aims to create an intervention or model alongside neighborhood associations with a goal of building communities of change, securing investments and implementing best practices. Neighborhood revitalization constituted by

the city's PZ designation constructs deficit narratives about communities in geographically defined areas operationalizing an institutionalizing apparatus as official collaborative change space. See Table 4.1 for research participant responses about the space/place, process, discourse and local knowledge produced by neighborhood revitalization constituted by the local PZ designation. The next section will discuss the emergence of a model of distinct and overlapping collaborative community change spaces.

Table 4.1

Neighborhood Revitalization Discourse and Responses

Discourse	Example Quote
Neighborhood Revitalization	Neighborhood revitalization tries to *"create an intervention that is voiced by residents for them to be their own change agents or Communities of Change. It aims to bring investment to disinvested communities. The work is in agreement with Neighborhood Associations. We wanted them to be what was facing both the neighbors and the wider community, which causes some confusion about the backbone organizations role in the community. We want to tell the narrative of their community the way that they want it to be told. We [the backbone agency] don't want to be the hero of the story by any means"* *"Our organization has taken responsibility for the success of the kids that we're working with in our neighborhood and we are implementing a model that we believe will end generational poverty in our neighborhood through the work of youth development, family development and neighborhood development. That is the work of the organization. I have tried to increase my influence in the community and become more of a thought partner or somebody who can challenge the status quo in a way that's acceptable"*
Quality of Life Planning	*"The first thing we published was a quality-of-life plan event by the neighbors. That was done through listening sessions. We found, the quality-of-life plan was not very accessible to neighbors; It was 60 pages, it had six priority areas and 90 strategic plans. The action*

	items were not very accessible, so we worked with the local leadership team to condense the plan down, to make it a more accessible plan change document. *We've tried to simplify it down because assets-based community development with quality-of-life plans and steering committees, planning committees, asset mapping, all that stuff we have found is not accessible to neighbors or the wider community. Some people latent within communities care about that stuff but your everyday person, in our experience, they don't care about it. They don't want to know about the literature, so we tried to simplify it down to four basic things: Listen, align, act, and measure. Listening first, inquiring first, asking neighbors first, then aligning behind the data that comes from that and then acting based on the community's voice"* *"We now have a quality-of-life plan that we were part of creating similar to the quality-of-life plan from the other neighborhood. We copied off their paper for that"*
Transformational Ideas	*"A cradle to adult continuum exists whether you build it or not"* *"There are some things that could and should be critiqued, but the core idea of keeping an individual kid at the center of a change planning process that they identify and then wrap around them as a community to make sure they succeed, that core idea, I still think is powerful and I'm still encouraged at the fact that conversation is continuing to move forward"* *"I have seen some alignment. People are starting to understand neighborhood revitalization, they're starting to understand kids zone approach. They're starting to understand these pieces that used to be innovative and kind of outside the system. They're starting to see the value and benefit"*
Implementing Best Practices	*"I believe in best practices. I believe that we can learn best practices and approaches. I believe in that deeply"* *"When I started here, it wasn't best practice oriented and best practice is really all I know about. So, I started to say, what's the best practice for this? And slowly over time, we've been able to like model into what those things are. What's the best practice after school*

	programming? Oh, that's easy, there's a million answers to that question. Let's just go get those things and implement them" *"We're going to identify the national best practices and norms that people are doing and bring things we're not doing to our community. We also already know we have things going on in our community they don't that we're already sharing"*
Data Informed Decision Making	*"None of us measure kindergarten readiness the same...One of the pieces that we know about this community is school corporations are very protective with their data. So, one of our goals is to get one tool that all counties agree on"* *"We have a lot of data that we have to deal with from the Census Bureau*" *"We did a baseline measurement off of the quality of life plan we created asking the residents perspective of their lived experience here in the neighborhood...Basically, anything that was in the quality of life plan we wanted to have a data point from a resident perspective. That baseline was captured in 2018. We're actually doing the five year follow up this summer. We're very, very, very excited about getting that data"*
Different Attitudes About Data	"*You got to talk to the people who are living it, who experience it and a lot of the so-called community leaders will look at the data, go around the people who are experiencing the issue and never talk to them about the problem, how to fix it. But they'll rely on the data to do it*" *"Introducing yourself is very important because you can't collect real data and real stats unless people are honest. They can mark whatever they want on a piece of paper and you don't get real answers unless they know you. You have to know people in order to get real, authentic communication. Authentic and active listening happens in a comfortable setting"*
Sharing Data and Community Learning	*"To do these learning processes and then then publish it, whatever that even means to the wider community would be very powerful, I know that I would love to learn in that way and it would help storytelling for neighbors to be able to tell their own story instead of*

	the outside community placing narratives on to them, I think there's a lot of potential for that"
Pursuing Funding	*"Nasty side of society or just the realities of society is that the lead agency has to fund our work"* *"I just saw it coming. I now get a quarter million. I didn't know they were going to change funding, but their literature was really beginning to point at this third grade reading. I just started to invest in, hey, what can we do with this? I wrote a big grant to someone else and got it and then luckily, at that point, I could move my grant request to them...now we're in seven schools. There's been a ramping up of these programs. I think the issue was maybe identified 7-8 years ago as a priority. What we've seen is that intensification by funders"* *"We are now challenged as an organization. Do you follow the money so you can provide services in the community or the concepts, not just the money. Do you follow the initiative that we need to be doing? Do you leave these other kids behind?"*
Coalition Building	*"When people come together, I draw energy from people. So, I really enjoy these kinds of collective things. I still have hope for them, even though a lot of them really frustrate me"* *"Collaboration work is hard"* *"Community collaborations do fall into the trap of more talk and less action. We reach a point where action is hard or pushing up against the systems and the decision makers and the leaders is hard. I think that there are a lot of passionate folks and a lot of collaborative tables having a lot of great conversations and good action happening too. But turning it into action is hard and the work is hard, literally it takes time. But then it also is politically hard because people don't want to do those difficult things. So, overcoming the barriers and building of the political will for change is hard"* *"Humans need a way to express themselves and their emotions. When you don't have those outlets, things are inside and they explode. Division is the major issue. When you get people together, then you have the ideas. Then you have the expression. Once people unite and find a common ground and foundation to work from, a common goal, when you have that, then you can build. You can have*

honest conversations that lead to action that lead to change. But as long as you divide it you cannot stand"

"Overcoming barriers and building the political will for change is hard"

"If you are strong minded enough you can really make an impression here. You can really express yourself if you are not opposed to opposition. If you are courageous and strong you can be heard, but it's going to take a relentlessness if you're trying to do something different. Now, if you are coming with stuff everybody else is doing, they're going to get you in there. But if you're doing something different, it might take you a little while and you have to talk to some people"

"My biggest problem, my only problem is division and lack of support. I get it. We are in the self-care generation and I got to take care of myself. But the purpose of self-care was originally so you could take care of other people better"

Model of Distinct but Overlapping Community Spaces

Each of the three spaces, official, network, and creative, will be described separately followed by a description of the concepts that emerged from the data to define those spaces. An institutionalizing apparatus constitutes spaces/places and identities through coalition building. Coalitions produce local knowledge and affect bodies, individual, collective and institutional bodies causing institutional trauma and a feeling of betrayal. Bodies feel trapped and alienated, they desire connection (community), belonging and creative expression. Criticisms, contradictions and questions are raised, thus constituting network and creative spaces. Coalition building characterized by official space creates temporary bodies for the purpose of generating outputs (applications and plans). Those outputs generate short term outcomes such as funding, nonprofit growth and awareness. There is a longing to move beyond awareness to sustainable change.

Official Space

Official space operationalizes an institutionalizing apparatus that remakes space. It is a collaborative process of social organization, a way of knowing and being to restructure place for capital accumulation. Official space generates narratives, measurement frameworks, and outputs that are aligned with opportunities and best practices. Relationships with local, state, national officials, and top-notch funders are valued which is a kind of seal of validation. Cooperation among partners is celebrated and is an asset.

Official space is a competitive space, so putting the right participants together helps in securing highly competitive awards. Many organizations create and share local knowledge and express a desire to be better at organizing and sharing information related to their mission and using data to inform practice or process. Although coalition building occurs, data, information, and people are siloed. Information is distributed via email, websites and newsletters. There is a strong belief that nonprofits require sustainable funding.

Expressed concerns and aspects of official space include:

- Incorporating/funding new or innovative ideas
- Establishing or maintaining engagement with community
- Neighbors are not informing processes
- Narratives are placed on communities
- Belief in data sharing; best practices; pursuing funding; service delivery

Examples include the PZ designation and the replication of Neighborhood Revitalization alongside neighborhood associations, city plans, Promise Neighborhood.

Institutionalizing Apparatus

There is a way of knowing and being in official space that values initiating transformational ideas (best practices), pursuing funding, and sharing data. This normalized way of knowing affects bodies and obscures other ways of knowing. Language used to talk about, plan and implement social and material change consist of the following terms: *understanding*, *alignment*, *engagement* and *awareness*. The ways of knowing that shape the discourse of official space can be interpreted as an institutionalizing apparatus and heard as sounds of institutionalization. The institutionalizing apparatus is a way of knowing and being operationalized as collaborative community change spaces to maintain power and restructure place toward capital accumulation. Values and beliefs that establish network space are distinct from official space, although the institutionalizing apparatus can be heard and felt in network space. The components and routines of the institutionalizing apparatus that obfuscates authentic participation, active listening, and dialogue consist of best practices, data-informed decision making, and funding pursuit. Coalition building brings people together into collaborative spaces to understand and align. The next sections will highlight the components and routines of the institutionalizing apparatus.

Implementing Best Practices

Searching for and learning from best practices is a way of understanding and addressing complex social phenomena. Best practices are approaches and solutions that

have demonstrated success and show promise in the local context. Best practices inform engagement strategies, program development, data use, and measurement. There is a belief that best practices exist to address many issues. The process involves searching for and weighing several best practices to address complex local/global issues. Two-generation approach, collective impact, and quality of life planning, are common examples of best practice. Best practices are understood, discussed, implemented, modeled, normed, and shared as the official way of transforming place.

Data-informed Decision Making

Data-informed decision making could be considered a best practice. Using local institutional data and large data sets to inform decision-making is valued. Evaluation frameworks and data describe a part of the local reality. Local data and information are used for application submissions and to inform and measure progress. Locally contextualized data frames narratives that constitute collaborative spaces, i.e., groups coming together to talk about local issues and measurable targets. Evaluation frameworks and instruments such as surveys and logic models are forms of data and data collection methods. Shared measures and data-informed decision making is valued and recognized as a challenge and opportunity for developing nonprofit capacity. Data sets and institutional data locally contextualized are used to problematize and define local issues and generate actions. It is believed that institutional data is crucial for advocacy and that institutions can withhold data.

There are varying attitudes locally about data. See Table 4.1 Different Attitudes About Data. Some suggest “you gotta talk to the people who are living it” and "you can't

collect real data unless people are honest." Measurement instruments and deficit data are proxies for engagement. The authenticity and veracity of "information on paper" or "having stats but not knowing the people" is challenged and other communication and engagement approaches have been theorized and planned.

Small nonprofits doing "work in a community development initiative simply do not have the capacity to track objective measures" but communicating local knowledge is crucial. Conceptualizations of a *centralized archival system* and learning through *micro experiments* has the potential to be very powerful in publishing and communicating with the wider community. Locally contextualized data or community knowledge is trapped in silos which creates opportunities for nonprofit development and improved local knowledge system. A local data sharing platform, the Grow Initiative, will provide data and training opportunities for nonprofit organizations to strengthen capacity. It should be noted the public library was not mentioned as a source or potential source of local knowledge. Schools were mentioned for their institutional data on student educational outcomes. Institutional data sharing was written into the PN Grant.

Pursuing Funding

Funding poses a fundamental question for work within nonprofit organizations. The value of pursuing funding is tied to a belief that nonprofits require sustainable funding. The practice of pursing funding suggests an alignment with designations and funding opportunities thereby shaping the work of nonprofit organizations and actions within collaborative community change spaces. Pursuing funding was a value code from

the data that aligns with the explicit goal of layering and leveraging (public/private) funding.

Shifts in funding priorities affect the work of local organizations. As funding is intensified, programs are scaled. Early learning became a funding priority and generous funding led to organizations expanding and scaling programs. As funding ends and new funding priorities are initiated, organizations must decide how to shift the work. Local funding changes will result in the "biggest issue facing the community...a hole for kids nine to seventeen." See Table 4.1 Pursuing Funding to hear how funding affects the work of local organizations.

Alignment & Understanding

Alignment and understanding are part of the discourse of local social change initiatives. We are "seeing alignment" and "people are starting to understand." The dictionary definition of *alignment* is to bring into line or into proper arrangement. Alignment happens when there is an understanding of the transformational potential outlined in opportunities that facilitate local change (designations and funding). Participants are brought in line; they are either persuaded of the impact of the transformational idea(s) being initiated as strategies in collaborative community change initiatives, or they are marginalized. If we pause to listen, we also hear what *understanding* means in collaborative community change spaces. In planning initiatives and actions, understanding is sought by evaluating current strategies and gaps. The group seeks to understand what strategies are in place locally and what gaps exist, aligned with best practices packaged with opportunities designed to facilitate local change.

Coalition Building

Coalition building is used to better understand the culture of cooperation and the language of collaboration. Intentional collaborative planning efforts, coalition building is loosely modeled after a collective impact framework. Coalitions are temporary bodies formed by bringing together representatives for a common purpose or action, purportedly to address complex local/global issues. Coalitions consist of practitioners, experts, and sometimes self-proclaimed disruptors or agitators politely working within the limits of official space. Coalitions as bodies allow an affective and discourse analysis of the ontological effect of the institutionalizing apparatus, i.e., how it affects bodies both individual and collective as well as how it affects discursive power and materialization. As demonstrated by the city's PZ and neighborhood revitalization, coalitions bring different groups/ideas together in spaces/places where community learning happens and local knowledge is generated. The institutionalizing apparatus operating within official space affects bodies pushing some to the margins, excluding and erasing experiences and knowledge of others. There is an attitude that coalition building (forming collaborative initiatives) is preferred over nothing. See Table 4.1 Coalition Building.

Collective impact is considered a best practice and local coalition building loosely follows collective impact 2.0. The evolving collective impact framework, collective impact 3.0, outlines a move from backbone organizations to containers for change; from shared measurement to strategic learning; from continuous communication to inclusive community engagement; from management to movement building (Cabaj & Weaver, 2016, p. 3). Coalition building supported by backbone agencies reproduce hierarchal structures and centralize power and decision-making. Lead organizations and executive

committees restrict participation and engagement. Emphasis is on process management and shared measurements. Continuous communication and data use has been identified as an area in need of improvement. Coalition building benefits local knowledge production and community learning but suffers from inclusive participation (including decision making) and engagement. Coalitions are constituted within official space and distinct from networks. Examples of coalitions include Coalition for Youth Success; Early Care and Education coalition; Healthy Communities Partnership; and the Promise Neighborhood Core Team. There is a recognized need for a paradigm shift, a move to more sustainable solutions, and doing the difficult work of pushing up against systems, decision makers, and challenging leaders.

Institutional Trauma and Betrayal

A research participant's words on the impact of institutionalization on community-based non-profits:

> *"I'm so tired of the culture here, which is we're the best nonprofit in town. We've leaped over these mom and pop [organizations]. We're like this big corporation. I've learned a lot from that; I've been very jazzed by it, but I also just love the grassroots."*

Institutionalization is frustrating, contradictory, and somewhat pretentious, exhibiting an exaggerated sense of importance and unwillingness to look internally at one's own practices. A research participant remarks, "we're not willing to take a hard look at what it would be to make our work environment more appealing to people." An aversion to change was echoed by others along with unaddressed challenges and concerns such as low penetration or participation by those described as most needing services. At the neighborhood level there is an unwillingness to invest in local innovation. This betrayal

and institutional trauma are felt both internally and externally. Portions of the community do not feel investments in infrastructure and services offered are for them nor representative of their values. Unaddressed epistemic and emotional violence leads practitioners and communities to create alternative solutions (network and creative spaces/places). Deficit narratives constructed from existing data sets which ignore or erase the lived reality of people in place suggest that institutionalization is not invested in building relationships to understand lived experiences in favor of efficient transactions and easily measurable outcomes understood as an institutionalizing apparatus.

Several research participants expressed the idea that people need services, but a lot more is needed! Systemic issues need to be addressed. Systems are broken and decisions result in disparities. There have been massive investments in city infrastructure and funding is coming in but the right people are not at the table to allocate those funds. Those working within institutions and outside of them desire community, a sense of belonging and healing. Acceptable disruption even in the form of network organization produces a kind of creative dissonance, a potential for healing and reframing narratives to focus on systems toward building "a pipeline to a sustainable life" as one research participant described. See Table 4.2 for examples of dialogue. Institutional trauma and betrayal lead to networks and creative spaces/places.

Networks can bridge, be an overlap between network and creative space, a link to new organizing structures, ways of being and knowing that remake space/place differently. There is a resituating of local/global issues/narratives and a different social organizing based on "community" in network space. Network space becomes a "problem

space." Instead of deficit narratives and geographic boundaries of place that erase lived experience, there is a need for a method of addressing spoken and unspoken questions, contradictions and contentious social issues left out by the institutionalizing apparatus of official space i.e. problem spaces emerge. Distinct communities overlap geographic boundaries and experience local/global issues and systems of oppression differently. Reports like the school-to-prison pipeline get commissioned and food desert data get resituated as food as medicine and inquiries that address challenges in the local food system. Issues get resituated within a community, problem spaces questions alongside for example youth and mental health, Black mental health, the Marshallese community, which open up cultural aspects and lived realities of people. There is a reckoning with the homogenizing and hierarchical structuring, contradictions and disparities within official space. The reality is institutional trauma and betrayal affects us all, those working in the institutions and those served and or betrayed by them. The institutionalizing apparatus is held together by how we know or come to know and how that shapes our actions and ways of being as individuals and groups.

Table 4.2

Evidence of Institutional Trauma and Betrayal

Research Participant Quotes
"Even us trying our best to organize a community mobilization effort that's rooted in residents, they are not opting into some of our things that we've built for them and it's because we've built it for them, they're not building it themselves. Design and agency truly was rooted in the residents and neighbors themselves. And then, those structures that were built to support those things were funded by the wider community"
"My frustrations lie in latent or like in ingrained institutions and systems that seem to be incapable of movement"

"Don't have the right people at the table...The money and the funds are coming in but you have people who are not connected to the community to disseminate the funds or put the funds in the right places”

“The neighbors that we talked to don't feel like the Aquatic Center is for them. My concern is that these massive infrastructure investments that I understand as a businessperson to be amazing for the neighborhood just don't really touch our families. There's a lot of negativity about it among the neighbors because people don't ask them. They don't ask them what they think when they're trying to do things like that. An entryway to the neighborhood? Yeah, everybody thinks that's a great idea except the neighbors”

“Infrastructure things are taken care of in some places and not taken care of elsewhere”
“good intentions they didn't take into account unintended consequences”

“challenging the status quo in an acceptable way”

Learn and Advocate

“People recognize me when they see me go out to their communities, they see the images in my office and the artifacts, whether it's their flag or gifts that they have given me. They recognize that and know I am an advocate for them”

“I go out with the families. I am in their churches, I'm in their homes. You get the smells, the senses first hand of what it's like, and even going to, let's say my patients, who are American and just dropping off something at their home you get a different sense of what people need and what they feel is important and their own sense of personal pride and struggles”

“I have the obligation to share that power and extend that power”

“I'll ask some questions of the processes right, putting all that information together. I go out to the nonprofits, to our school corporation even our local colleges and share that data and information with them to see how we can collaborate together to meet, to get access and equity and more awareness and more education for the local needs”

“Nobody was able to advocate for them but I've been able to do that”

“Food grown by and for people in the community, particularly historically marginalized community and it's like they're taking it back. It's like they're taking it back instead of relying on you know something external”

Network Space

Network space has a social justice orientation and is concerned with addressing identified barriers, challenges, and obstacles between institutions and marginalized populations. Network space is characterized by values of community building and shared power. Network building is political and functions to redress wrongs and redistribute power and resources. Network space listens to and learns about challenges faced by marginalized communities and is intimately aware of services and obstacles to service delivery. Challenging or "contentious" social issues not addressed in official space are often the impetus for creating networks. Networks urge official space to challenge the status quo. They provide a counter-narrative to official space discourse, urging a paradigm shift toward equity and social justice. Networks value culture, representation, social justice and inclusion. Awareness and communication in network space is about elevating the work of others and attempting to coordinate the work of those in the network. A key difference between official and network space is that the former leans toward institution building and the latter leans toward community building. In network space, there is an orientation toward learning to advocate and a common belief that decisions by people in power continue to result in disparities. Like official space, cooperation/collaboration is important. Networks compete for many of the same funding opportunities as those in official space. Both spaces acknowledge that relationship building and turning conversations into action is hard work. The opportunity for networks is to distance from official space and the institutionalizing apparatus and move toward community organizing and movement building.

Networks believe:

- The right people are purposefully not at the table when funds are being sought and dispersed.
- Collaborative community change spaces need to move beyond band aid solutions to developing sustainable solutions.
- Normalized change processes are not getting to the uncomfortable truths.
- Data is just words and numbers on paper, and reliable information comes from authentic engagement with people.
- Connections to diverse networks elevates awareness.

Examples of networks include Read Evansville, Center City Planning Initiative, And How Are The Children, Mental Health Matters Initiative, BRIDGE.

Learn and Advocate

Learning and advocating are in contradistinction to understanding and alignment. Learning and advocating recognize the lived experiences and knowledges of divergent communities. Learning and advocating aims to amplify local (indigenous) knowledges and develop community to advocate for themselves. Learning and advocating consist of educating oneself about social, political, historical, local/global issues that affect marginalized groups. Immersion into community is a common way of building relationships that are necessary to learn about challenges and opportunities to advocate on behalf of the community. People in network space are aware of existing services and learn about obstacles, barriers and traumas endured in obtaining services. They seek to build community capacity and redistribute power through network building. Networks are established as spaces for advocacy, sharing of culture and creation of space, cultural

spaces to devise solutions that meet the needs of community in a way that does not reinforce harm. They feel privileged and honored when accepted into a community and value their role as an advocate while working to a build community's capacity to advocate for themselves.

Community in network space is defined by how groups organize and define themselves as opposed to geographic locations, deficit narratives or dominant subjectivities or classifications. For example, politically aligned practitioners learn alongside the Marshallese community, food entrepreneurs or foodpreneurs, marginalized artists, youth disproportionately affected by school disciplinary practices, Black nurses, and, often, librarians. Work takes place within *community* safe spaces as opposed to "backed by" or "aligned with" institutional structures and relationships. Learning, advocacy, network and community capacity building are attempts to share knowledge and redistribute power as opposed to extracting and commodifying knowledge to attract investments that restructure (retool) demarcated geographic locations for capital accumulation.

Creative Space

Creative space is a space of opportunity, authenticity, possibility and openness based on one's lived reality. Creative space illuminates and sometimes critiques contradictions, hubris, hierarchical ordering and boundaries of official space. Creative space consists of discontents, radicals, creatives, agitators, innovators, and others/othered. Creative space is often defined by culture and a strong sense of belonging. Unlike the official and network spaces, creative space rests on the belief if there is no space, you

create it yourself– physical and or virtual – utilizing or appropriating available resources. In creative space the others/othered (re)claim their identity and exclaim "I am I be!" (Weheliye, 2003). Identity and creativity overshadow capital accumulation. There is an attitude that as long as I can pay my bills, keep the doors open, send my children to college, for example, creative space is preferred over official and institutional spaces.

Creative space is outside of official and network space and presents an opportunity to learn about lived experiences of people in place. In their own way, creative solutions are being implemented that address local/global issues and systemic disparities. Creative space is unaware of collaborative initiatives designed to address local/global issues but is often aware of and expresses a willingness to be involved in creative initiatives like developing artist cooperatives, maker districts, cultural/international festivals and alternative healing modalities.

Creatives believe:

- Big ideas scare people and are rejected by power.
- People do not want to do the difficult things required for true transformation, i.e., push up against the systems, decision makers, and leaders.

Examples include food entrepreneurs or foodpreneurs, barbershops/salons, art studios, somatic workers/therapists, Steph's [Black] First Friday, PG.

Vignette

A vignette is a short story or composite narrative often used to communicate key phenomena and interpretations. Vignettes are not real life. The vignette, *We Are Beginning to See Alignment*, was constructed from interview data. See Appendix C for

the vignette and a link to the author reading the vignette. The vignette helps to narratively weave contradictions and connections to each of the spaces, while illuminating that which is invisible and silenced in official space discourse. Listening will enhance the emotional experience. Engaging with the vignette in that way one might feel the success, frustrations, and ambivalence of participants across the three spaces.

Member Check

To establish the soundness of my research findings, study participants were asked if the conclusions drawn seem reasonable. Research participants were sent a document with findings and encouraged to be critical and push back where conclusions did not seem right. There was agreement among all respondents on the articulation of the three spaces. Minus a few organizational and grammatical suggestions, most respondents found the overall findings to be as one respondent put it, "ON POINT." The perceptions of local culture were "spot on." Regarding the three distinct but overlapping spaces labeled: 1) official space, 2) network space and 3) creative space, participants felt or experienced them in their work as indicated by the following responses:

> *"The categories, or spaces, are helpful and in alignment with what I have experienced in practice of community development"*
>
> *"I find the three spaces you identify to be recognizable in my own life and experience [locally], though I did not know it until I read this piece"*

One respondent felt it was not their place to correct a research participant's comment quoted in the network space section. Although, the researcher believes their feedback is the type of clarification and input member checking provides. The correction was not read as contradictory but clarifying. The correction was in response to, "*Data is just*

words and numbers on paper and reliable information comes from authentic engagement with people." The research participant responded:

> *"I think this is generally sound. Of course, I would like to correct that thinking to say that the reliable information from authentic engagement with people is data!! The most important kind."*

Here we get a better understanding of data, how data is understood and used. The clarification helps to suggest that official space prioritizes a type of data, data use and engagement with respect to data, process, measurement and outputs. Whereas in network space, authentic engagement with people is valued above all. The clarification states that information learned from reliable engagement with people is the most important kind of data. Put in the context of communication and data sharing challenges across spaces, acceptance of this understanding might have a profound impact across all spaces.

Description of the spaces provides an introduction of sorts to the space/place of community change initiatives, setting the stage for the sonic environment section and more precisely the vignette, which is a good sign. The vignette is a composite story of the data collected that when read together with the data provides deeper understanding. One participant showed their dialogic reading or in-text processing in their response, synthesizing information into their own words, not as certainty but as questioning for understanding. They demonstrated a form of inquiry with their response, an otherwise invisible aspect that occurs when collaboratively learning about complex local/global issues. The sonic environment...

> *"A portion of your narrative/summary brings a new way for me to consider the space I occupy and how I fill (empty?) it. The link/disconnect between the small but genuine talent that brings creative energy in a community."*

Pausing to listen to the sounds in our environment or taking control of our sonic environment by filling it with music or emptying it for silence to concentrate or meditate provides a different way of knowing and being in space and in the varying types of spaces that exist. This new awareness illuminated for the participant the link/disconnect experienced across the three spaces and how the culture of the city was perceived. Linking the description of the spaces with the sonic environment and city identity/culture the participant further surmised pulling from the text:

> *"fondness for country music and "opportunities in church" music (creative energy v establishment arts?) on the one hand AND "the right people are purposefully not at the table" [in official spaces] where "challenging or 'contentious' social issues are not addressed" (creative justice v establishment process?)"*

This observation and dialogic checking for understanding read with ideas cited from the document demonstrated division and opportunity, "link/disconnect" between constructing spaces within the city's culture and an establishment ethos or structuring of official space and the local arts community.

The ambiguity and uncertainty of the sonic aspect of the research became clear, especially when the vignette was experienced both as text and audio. Feedback on the written vignette suggests it needs an explanation and structure that can be better read and understood by readers. For example, one participant correctly assumed it was "informed by the qualitative data gathered in the interviews" and suggested if so to state it explicitly. Another participant assumed the vignette was taken from the transcript of a conversation with a particular research participant. The vignette received the most feedback and can be better presented for readers to understand its purpose. Not everyone had an opportunity to hear an audio recording of the vignette being read. Returning to the above participant

commenting on the vignette without hearing it read but seeing it situated within creative space, they thought it could be set to music and performed for those in official and network spaces creating a space/place and time together:

> *"the narrative/vignette format is brilliant at this level, and if "We are beginning to see alignment" as a performance piece (morality play) that could be set to music and painting and brought to a public setting for those of us occupying those "official spaces" and those filling the "network spaces" have to share a space/time for a bit."*

Research participants who both read and listened to the vignette offered the following:

> *"To hear your vignette versus reading it, provided two different feelings. To hear the "sonic' sound of your voice helped me to connect and understand sound, ways of knowing, and the connection to city arts and culture. Is there a way to incorporate your actual voice in the final analysis in your final dissertation product or the reading/listening audience?"*

> *"I have listened to the vignette multiple times and I find it discomfiting, beautiful, mysterious. The speaker's tone has an ambiguity that is likable and intriguing and unnerving. Uncomfortable. Especially for a gal who's just put out her shingle. I loved it."*

A few clarifications and suggestions were gleaned from the member check, and there was appreciation for being included and overall a validation of research findings. The vignette audio was a rough reading, but hearing the audio provided more information and feelings than the written form. It was suggested to find a way to present the audio along with the text as well as consider a public performance of the vignette.

CHAPTER 5. THE SONIC ENVIRONMENT

"I'm wrestlin' with words and ideas.
My ears is pricked, seein what will transmit.
The scribes can apply to transcript" (Mos Def)

A research participant expressed annoyance with "the daily press of productivity and numbers" that makes listening challenging. They offered an insightful interpretation, "I find when I take that extra pause to listen, I may learn something I didn't know about." The institutionalizing apparatus of official space uses repetition and replication which challenges critical listening and collaborative actions. Sharing data, implementing best practices, and a promise of college and career are repeated incessantly. In the midst of this noise, we must take an extra pause to listen to the sounds in the sonic environment so that we can see the space/place and identities of collaborative community change clearly.

The always present low percussive rumble of traffic, like the vibration of Om (Aum), can connect one to a wordless silence. Disparate sounds of the environment become discernable as potential sounds to connect with including the knowledge/discourse of collaborative community change, reverberate until they fade into oblivion like the tones of the Sanga bell when it lingers and fades away. A research participant stated, "When there is sound that we can access, that brings us into the present moment. There's no way that you can be actively listening to sounds and not be fully present with what's happening." *Sound connects*. *Sound heals.* In the "Black Vernacular tradition," it is through sound that "discursive communities of difference" come into existence (Havis, 2009). When we pause to actively listen, we begin to see space/place more clearly and hear hidden experiences, contradictions and opportunities. This chapter

will address research question two (RQ2) by pausing to listen to the sonic environment, to hear and see creative and network space. RQ2 asks how might music in the blues / hip hop intellectual tradition of social investigation remake education differently?

DuBois's cave allegory (Stoever, 2016) is an appropriate metaphor for the discursive and social constructions of space/place and identity constituted by the institutionalizing apparatus of official space. The demarcated geographic location designated as the City's Promise Zone is akin to encasing poor, mostly black and brown folks in a soundproof yet hyper-visible space, always on display for the gaze of well-meaning difference makers. The glass offers clarity of sight to measure the unfree while restricting and silencing those trapped inside. The marginalized, the excluded and those in poverty see the well-meaning difference makers moving about engaged in neighborhood revitalization and collaborative community change initiatives. They politely share their imaginations, reasoned criticisms and historic injustices; they point out the consequences of decisions that hinder their movements, expressions and development, but no one seems to dialogue with them. Eventually frustration builds, and they inquire, are you listening? They become aware of their entombment inside the thick invisible but tangible glass case placed on them and separating them from the rest of the city. Anxiety builds, triggering their generational trauma and betrayal. They create alternative spaces, media, healing modalities and knowledge systems in these conditions hardly aware that they are innovating in a vacuum, unheard, yet in plain sight of the gaze of well-intentioned difference makers who encased and continue to encase them. The relentlessness of some break through the glass disfigured by the effort and covered in

blood, only to find the well-meaning frightened by the sight of them. As a research participant's point aligns, "I'm an innovator and I have big ideas and I bring disruption to a lot of discussions. And like I said before, big ideas scare people." I turn to Pharoahe Monch lyrics to express the sentiment in the blues tradition:

> Hello, please do not be afraid...Hello, pardon my blood stains, this is the culmination of four hundred years of pain, institutionalized trauma that's forever ingrained...Hello, America this is what you have made. Baptized me under the water but my soul was never saved. The ghost of a million slaves...you show me violence, now I need you to feel my pain. I'm so sick and tired of this generational poverty its driving me in shame. But thank God we survived cause we're still alive today to talk about it. This wretched weapon so systemic is become old and decrepit. I am excellence evolved from the pestilence of step and fetch it (Stepin Fetchit). Visceral emotion imploded when you refused it. My delivery alone can turn misery into music"

Pharoahe Monch's lyrics are quoted in a song titled *Hello* by producer E. Jones. The way the song layers and blends divergent voices and sounds provides a framework for a sonic approach to social investigation, community learning and storytelling for collaborative community change. Bookended by samples from Louis Farrakhan and Kwame Ture (formally Stokely Carmichael), the song's body blends Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* into a dialogue with Monch. In the beginning of the song, we hear a VHS tape being inserted into a player, the initial whirl of the motors spinning into action before hearing Farrakhan speak. The Farrakhan sample sets up the song for the literal short duration of time (3:28) we will be engaged, "Just for the few minutes we are going to be here. Let's see if we can get some *directions for life* that create love. The first thing I want to talk to you about is *who you are*" Farrakhan exclaims. The VHS sound is appropriate. VHS tapes are a source for digging. DJ/Producers dig for samples on old VHS tapes. They also served as an alternative distribution medium. The speeches and lectures of Farrakhan and

other African diasporic scholars such as Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan and Dr. John Henrik Clarke speeches and lectures were disseminated via VHS and cassette tapes in the 1990s that, like the mixtape in the same era, formed part of an alternative knowledge system and a translocal community. A sample of Busta Rhymes, "yo, yo, yo" leads us into the slowed tempo of Cobain's first verse, "Load up on guns, bring your friends..." as it progresses into the repetitive chorus, "Hello, Hello, Hello, How Low..." dropping underneath Monch as he lyrically conjures an African diasporic figure emerging from a grave, "the ghost of a million slaves" representative of generational trauma. The repetition of "yo, hello and how low" attracts attention to the absurdity and prevalence of systemic racism and institutional trauma and betrayal punctuated by Monch's repetition, "*Hello*, please do not be afraid...*Hello*, pardon my blood stains...*Hello*, America! This is what you have made"! Here the song can be read against place-based education reform and generational poverty Promise initiatives that ensnare communities in a metaphorical soundproof glass box constituting an identity of being – low-income resident – that erases or flattens culture, ethnicity, race, opinion, voice, innovation, agency. Yo (vernacular) and *hello* attract attention to the persistence of inequality and violence! *How low* questions place-based Promise and colonial logics while obscuring the privatization of public schools, the de-professionalization of teaching and the compression of curriculum. *How low?* Locally contextualized knowledge used to construct deficit narratives placed on communities to pursue investments in retooling neighborhoods for capital accumulation. *Yo!* Let's resituate the local collaborative community change issue as generational trauma. A research participant acknowledges, "Youth, in particular their

mental health and well-being, are increasingly under assault." *Hello, how low?* Contributors on Genius.com suggest the hook *hello* to *how low* "underscore[s] the prevalence of nonsense in mainstream music." Here the repetition is considered simple or even dumb sounding. Another interpretation suggests "hello becomes hollow," representative of dumbed down repetitive and catchy lyrics over meaning and substance. It becomes easy to associate the repetition with the institutionalizing apparatus and replication of neighborhood revitalization models. Listen to or read the vignette (See Appendix C) to experience frustration caused by the erasure and omission of different knowledges.

Wise Intelligent's book, *Three-fifths an MC: The Manufacturing of a Dumbed Down Rapper* shows how the social political environment constitutes the identity of mainstream MCs as "racist caricatures" that become justification for apartheid schooling and the predatory prison industrial complex (Wise Intelligent, 2020). Pharoahe, on the other hand, has evolved out of the pestilence of Stepin Fetchit, a characterization narratively constituted by knowledge structures and systems that reinforces a dehumanizing image of black folks in America. Monch's lyrics are not all descriptive; he cautions others about the clever, trickster modes of survival resistance within hip hop while demonstrating a refusal, a philosophical and theoretical evolution, by epitomizing excellence in a blues / hip hop way of knowing and social investigation.

A song titled *I Don't Care* by Kabaka Pyramid shares a similar way of knowing in challenging racial fictions and fixations on black bodies: "we don't live in the streets and we don't live in the trees, white supremacy is worse than the Ebola disease. Please,

beg you listen to the facts. Mass incarceration and the prison filled with blacks. Lack of education why you think we slingin rocks?" (Kabaka). *Hello!* Please, we implore you to focus on systems and lived experiences. Turn from your colonial/imperial gaze and listen. Kabaka Pyramid later posits a way to heal, "A psychiatrist for this anxiety...(no) I rather do some rioting." Monch in Hello states, "My delivery alone can turn misery into music." Creative expression and social movements heal generational trauma while providing some *directions for life that create love*. Creative space can become a creative fugitivity that refuses colonial / imperial structures and classifications by embodying cathartic civil disobedience that burns the edifice to the ground to remake it based on equity and well-being.

In another Pharoahe Monch song, *Grand Illusion*, Monch says, "Put away your hope, same political policies...We all need a the rapist." A research participant's reflections on their experiences with clients echoes this lyric: "some people just know that they have trauma" and others "have been through heroic medical journeys by the time they get to me." Acknowledging a need for healing, care, love and alternatives, critical of the professional analysts, those so ready to spend on "just building a bigger damn jail" as one research participant put it and prescription drug peddling – psychiatrists, therapists (the rapists), professional accountability managers, i.e. well-meaning contemporary education reformers, neighborhood revitalizers and academics, Pharoahe calls them out "professional analyst, rhetoric ramblin', Symbicort, Advair, Albuterol, Ambien. I change the channel on commercials when I'm channelin', everybody's a star, lights, cameras." Peter Senge calls academics great at analysis and

McKittrick reminds us that description is not liberation. Visions or imaginations from freedom dreaming (Kelley, 2003) causes tension between knowledge structures in current reality. Peter Senge (1990/2006) explains that the creative tension is the gap between one's vison (imagination) and current reality. To resolve the tension, there are two possible actions: "pull reality toward the vision or pull the vision toward reality" (p. 140). I refer to the creative tension or gap as dissonance heard and felt against the reverberation of PZ actors "rhetoric ramblin" spouting reductionist solutions to complex local/global challenges separating the lead organizations and partners from mom-and-pop organizations while ignoring criticisms as well as the pain and trauma, the consequences of good intentions.

> "We are such a hyper individualistic culture that people think that things that are happening for them are just specific to them individually...What is the broader context, that's contributing to their symptoms? That often is very validating for people and sort of takes the pressure off feeling like something's wrong specifically with them. *There are a lot of things that are kind of upside down in our world*, that are not the way they should be and that *affects all of us*"
>
> "Hurting people that are already down and hurting, you know what I mean? Like addiction comes from pain. So, *we're asking the wrong questions*. It's not, why the addiction, why the drugs? It's *why are they in pain*? Why are they trying to fix this pain that they're in with this instead of other resources? So, people need community resources, they need housing, they need structural supports"
>
> "People end up on these pathways for a number of reasons and a lot of this is connected to other *social determinants of health* and particularly *mental health crises*, and in situations where we're *trying to just feel*"

The question, "why are they in pain?" shifts the focus from the body to what is producing the pain. Music and creative expression provide some healing. Music and creative expression are ways to express and feel joy, articulate a different reality, and bring people together socially and emotionally across creative conceptual space and

physical space. Listen to Khalia & Dre Island in *Wild Fire* tell us what to do when institutional trauma and betrayal cause deep emotional collapse. Khalia says, "I use the rhythm and the horn section to heal my aura when I need tuning." In dialogical fashion two questions are subsequently posed, "Tell me, tell me have you ever been in need of salvation? Tell me, tell me have you ever seen real restoration?" (Khalia & Dre Island – Wild Fire). *Are you listening?*

Hello ends with a sample from a speech by Kwame Ture (formally Stokely Carmichael). There were multiple Free Huey rallies where Ture spoke, but a recording of one on February 17, 1968 has been archived (Free Huey Rally in Oakland, 1968) and could be the source of the sample. Ture's sample at the end of the song says, "We must begin to develop number one and this is the most important thing we can do as a people. We must first develop an undying love for our people, our people, our people." In the speech Ture goes on to say, "Our slogan will become, first our people then and only then me and you as individuals. Our people first. Our people first." Referring to a research participant (See Table 4.1 under Coalition Building), "the purpose of self-care was originally so you could take care of other people better." Taking care of self in this era of self-care, the research participant reminds us to love ourselves in order to spread love throughout the community. Ture's repetitive oratory style is similar to effects used by DJs and mirrors the repetition of *hello* and *yo.* This is an interesting parallel to Ture's delivery that must be *heard* for full appreciation. The discursive practice of repetition is used differently than that of PZ rhetoric. Later in the speech Ture claims that poverty programs of the time were designed to split the black community and split the black

family. Monch says, “Put away your promise,” the same colonial / imperial logics, epistemic injustices and poverty which persist under so many federal policies and initiatives. Monch again: “Their only contribution to the world is a delusion which has no physical power. I offer you a solution, Pharoahe Monch the antonym for translucent, lyrical revolution I’ll expose the movement, illusion.” The chorus of *Grand Illusion* highlights both the eurocentrism and ocularcentrism that perpetuates mass confusion and reification of dominant knowledge systems, “It doesn't take your eyes to see what the pain won't take away...They're never gonna let you see it 'cause if they did, we'd all be free, yea. We're just caught up in the mass confusion, confused by the grand illusion.” Pharoahe’s music is the antonym to DuBois’ translucent Veil symbol espousing “lyrical revolution” to chant down the structural and systemic practices restricting opportunity. Listen to the discourse and professional “rhetoric rambling”: it doesn’t take your eyes to see. Common in *The People* equates the blues / hip hop way of social investigation and community learning to “street radio” stating, “sometimes we find peace in beats and breaks. Put the bang in the back so the seats can shake. Rebel Cadillac music for the people’s sake. The people! We do it for the people” (Common – The People). Sonic ways of knowing and knowledge-making allow the people to learn, participate and heal. Street radio is an interrelated process of social investigation and community learning, i.e., listening to the sounds of the street, developing and practicing in cultural safe houses (Lipsitz, 2011) and giving it back, in dialogue with the people. Picture the vibrations caused by car stereos and Bluetooth speakers (it was boomboxes back in the day) as they

blast curated playlists or mixtapes, feeling, learning, collaborating, being with as people move through restricted official space.

Because the gaze of the well-meaning difference makers is disconnected from the lived realities and aural information, decisions get made that perpetuate violence and disparity. A research participant stated:

> "These massive infrastructure investments that I understand as a business person to be amazing for the neighborhood just don't really touch our families. There's a lot of negativity about it among the neighbors because people don't ask them. They don't ask them what they think when they're trying to do things like that."

To remove the glass dome requires fundamental shifts in listening (Stoever, 2016) which necessitates fundamental shifts in relationships and a "decolonization of the architecture of knowledge" (Hall et al., 2020). In taking an extra pause to listen to sounds of connection and the knowledge/discourse of communities of difference, we might learn something about creative space and sonic ways of knowing.

The sample texts cited here are indicative of a pedagogy and liberatory praxis that acknowledges scientifically creative black expression. Blues / hip hop epistemologies and information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly sonic technologies, allow for a different way of knowing, healing and transformation. This sonic intellectual and aesthetic tradition at the intersection of technology is a way of knowing and being, a Black vernacular phenomena (Havis, 2009) and techno vernacular creativity (Fouche, 2006; Gaskins, 2019) that informs a pedagogy of collaborative community change. This is community learning that resists the colonial logics inherent in contemporary educational reform and poverty Promise initiatives, remaking education differently along cultural and aesthetic aims, and in so doing restructures normalized knowledge systems.

Imagined the DJ as storyteller of collaborative community change, layering and blending local knowledge as it resonates, crossfading and looping beats and breaks before the energy and movement fades. *Sound connects*. It creates an atmosphere, a mood, a presence we can all embody across space and time.

An Extra Pause to Listen to the Sonic Environment

As I listen to recordings taken from the environment, it is surprising to me that sound was always present—even when the environment seemed silent. Discrete sounds blend into a hardly discernable aggregate background noise. Periodically, a dog's bark or siren pierces through the perceived silence. Occasionally, welcoming sounds such as a "lovely flute" enter one's environment causing them to "feel like you're in a lovely movie or a lovely book" as shared by a research participant. Some need silence in their environment to work or concentrate, "my physical space is intentionally quiet" exclaimed a research participant. Others need to create or control the sonic environment by adding soft music or playing a curated playlist to create a mood. A research participant responded, "when I control this space, music is playing in the background. I feel like it sets the atmosphere and ambiance, the mood that I want to project, despite whatever is going on." When you pause to listen, sound is always present affecting bodies and shaping place.

Listening to/for or generating certain sounds and/or adding music can be part of a process of healing. A participant responded, "At home, I put on soft music. I like some background noise to just soothe all the irritation and stress away." In Buddhist traditions the bell and om (Aum) were mentioned as part of meditative practice. Therapists guide

clients to pause and listen, a practice that helps bring people out of their cognitive mind and into the present. Nature sounds also welcomed and affect how some feel.

Music speaks to people differently and is considered a universal language that can bring us together. The language of music can also be a conversation or a way of communicating. A thought or feeling can be the impetus for creating a playlist. Songs referenced above provides an example of a short playlist related to research findings and my own frustrations and connections with collaborative community change initiatives. Playing the playlists creates an atmosphere and can stimulate conversation and connection. Listening to music with headphones in the car or at home can regulate one's nervous system.

Table 5.1

Data about the Effect of Sounds and Music

Research Participant Quotes
"Music is a universal language that connects us"
"Hearing is intimately connected with our nervous system"
"I have really come to appreciate that [bell] sound when it just lingers and fades away"
"Om...it's just a vibration. It can connect you with a wordless silence"
"The sound of birds and the wind, I just love that. It's just so medicinal for me"
"I need music that touches my soul"
"Isn't everything a soundtrack to your life?"
"Sirens make me wonder. They make me go into prayer and hope that everything is okay"
"Sounds of love and joy! I hear a lot of that because that's what I choose to be around"
"Joy, peace those could be sounds"

"What I hear is me doing some critical self-reflection. You've provided me the opportunity to do some deep reflection"
"I hear my heart full of joy"
"Sounds of people being people, doing what they enjoy"

How sound makes us feel can influence how we relate to other beings and the environment. Some sounds are welcoming or desired and others are off putting, annoying, concerning. Sirens are annoying and concerning as are dogs barking, words for the sake of words, hollering, unnecessary chatter, whistles, buzzers, commercials, air traffic as in regular flight paths over one's home. Recurring, repetitive, and semi-repetitive sound e.g. sounds that pause for five to ten seconds and then come back like the warning sound a truck makes in reverse. Noise in the environment affects how we feel. A research participant responded, "I love the sound of connection...it creates a feeling of not being isolated." Sounds of Connection is an apt description for the sounds research participants wished were present in their environment. Conversations between people, laughter, people talking, kids playing, music in the background, nature sounds (wind rustling through the trees, birds chirping, water, ocean waves) the everyday sounds of "people in the neighborhood" or sounds of a festival or a "good community event," these sounds signify connection, social interactions with people and the natural environment. Sounds of Connection conflict with perceptions of city culture and the arts, "we don't have a culturally accepting arts district. I thought at one point we were headed that way, but hyper-focused capitalists turned it into an economic district," a research participant acknowledged.

City Culture/Identity

Research participants experience the city as family-oriented, people are close knit. It is a mix between the Midwest and the Bible Belt. It is divided, bland, vanilla, lukewarm and middle of the road. It is a city averse to change, lagging, some say ten and others twenty years behind. There is an attitude that the city will never be able to compete with big cities so don't try to be something we are not. There is a belief that things are slowly shifting and filtering in from the edges. The arts are developing and have potential evidenced by new murals popping up. There are good, small, bare bones museums. The performing arts scene is nice, although, not as diverse as some would like. Regarding the music scene specifically, it was stated, "the best thing about the music scene is we're close to Nashville!" Many believe to experience culture you have to leave, go outside the city or experience culture online or via technology. There is a small little music scene that's cool for a small city with some good local talent. Arts are undervalued, not supported enough and not as diverse. The artist community is a closed community, insular, stuck up, not welcoming. Emerging young entrepreneurs are involved in culture, arts and entertainment and there is a growing international community, and both groups provide optimism for cultural development. Many artist/entrepreneurs feel marginalized and excluded; they create businesses and spaces of their own, but desire community and connection. This section presents examples of discursive communities of difference that become visible when we pause and listen. When we take an extra pause, lived experiences become discernable.

Be Like 22

In April of 2021, a beloved nineteen-year-old loss their life to gun violence. KT, as they were affectionately known, fell victim to a stray bullet in the area demarcated as the local PZ. Gun violence is a growing concern locally. Be Like 22 (Change the Culture, 2023), is a twenty minute and twenty second documentary film produced by Change the Culture, which is also a local clothing brand. The documentary film portrays how the tragedy of gun violence (stray bullets)[8] effects the lives of black families and youth locally. It also articulates how gun violence gets addressed. The film portrayed how a policy was introduced in the state legislature, a Be like 22 scholarship was started in KT's name and Change The Culture (CTC) started a clothing line to honor and remember KT.

In the vignette, the refrain "Youth are creating media" signaled criticism of the institutionalizing apparatus of official space. Youth are creating media, starting and running businesses without investments, investments that replicate best practices in demarcated locations that fund the growth of nonprofit organizations—organizations that require sustainable funding to implement and manage processes. Youth are creating in creative spaces that they created. Creative spaces they created. I shall revert back to the lingering resonance of the documentary *We Are Everywhere Now* (Pionear Group, 2019), fading into oblivion. It is another documentary created in that time by youth documenting a space/place of significance. The documentary signaled the end of A Year of Hip Hop 2018 that questioned what's considered knowledge and whose knowledge counts. Youth creating media in creative spaces they created constitutes local knowledge.

School-to-Prison Pipeline Report

A report examining school discipline disproportionality and the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Baker, 2018) within the local school corporation was commissioned by the Commission on the Social Status of African American Males. The report led to the formation of the network referred to as And How Are The Children (AHATC). AHATC brought individuals, groups and organizations together to address issues raised in the report. The network hosts events such as the annual National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID)[9] event, a public art display and Youth Town Hall. Mental Health Matters Coalition emerged from the Youth Town Hall event centering youth and providing a platform for them to talk "collectively about how they deal with pressure, stress, trauma, grief, suicide, death" as one research participant explained.

Zion Center for Spiritual Development and Healing

Creative spaces such as Zion Center for Spiritual Development and Healing resonates, lingers and fades. The Zion Center basically went away during COVID. At its height, there was a pay what you can vegan restaurant that served lunch, yoga classes, a reflexologist and someone offering naturopathic medicine, a little bookstore, and an art space for people with mental health issues. Yoga therapy and safe and sound protocol are alternative healing modalities and a trauma informed practice a sole practitioner continues in the space. Yoga philosophy informs the way they counsel people. Different from Westernized yoga, yoga therapy is transformation meant to remove suffering. The safe and sound protocol, the research participant explains is "like a mother's lullaby on steroids" it "gets your body into a state of being held, supported and safe." The research

participant expressed a desire to make sound work more accessible to people and is interested in transformation from the bottom up. They acknowledge the spread of somatic work and trauma coming up in the collective consciousness and would like to expand it locally. Other marginalized artist-entrepreneurs expressed interest in becoming involved at the grassroots level. These are just a few examples of discursive communities that already exist within the normalized institutional structures and knowledge system creating alternatives.

Storyteller for Implementation

Local knowledge exists in various forms. In addition to published documents, initiatives and events emerged as a potential site of local knowledge. City wide plans, needs assessments, Quality of Life plans, reports, and white papers are understood as representations of locally contextualized knowledge. Research participants shared local resources during and after scheduled interviews. A research participant acknowledged, "There are always those plans that strive to better the community." A review of some of those plans suggest a need for collaboration and participation. Plans require "strategic action and cooperation" (READI Plan). Plans are tools that shape a vision, an aspiration, an opportunity. Drawing input from multiple sources, plans produce recommendations/actions that "cannot be implemented by a single entity or agency. In fact, participation from a variety of public and private sector entities will be necessary" (Evansville Tourism Master Plan, p. 3). Plans are outputs and representations of local knowledge not unlike grant applications and neighborhood quality of life plans. Collaborative efforts produce local knowledge that shapes visions/aspirations/social

spatial imagination, narratives that linger and languish in silos, email folders and websites. Collaborative community change needs a storyteller to mix divergent knowledges that address questions being raised in the community and encourage participation and dialogue.

Beyond using local knowledge for submitting applications, informing action planning and pursuing funding, there was a realization that there is no "storyteller for implementation" nor continuity after planning. Actions are planned and implemented, data collected, reports are generated and disseminated. Coalitions generate local knowledge, but ongoing dialogue and engagement (continuity) across divergent communities is a challenge as indicated by the PZ survey engagement results. A research participant is aware:

> *"We're going to have to think about data dissemination and documentation in a new way given the new realities. We're going to need young people, the next generation, the digital natives, to be at the table when we have those conversations. We have the potential of it, the power of it really."*

Surveys have been used to measure progress toward PZ related goals. Although regularly implemented and distributed, it is unclear how the data is analyzed and who reviews and discusses PZ survey results. Survey results suggest there has not been a significant increase in engagement and confirm frustrations felt and criticisms raised by practitioners and volunteers engaged in PZ related initiatives. Although data is being regularly collected, organized and distributed, how is it being used to inform decisions? If it is being used, by whom? Planning and evaluation practices produce local knowledge which is siloed. When groups and coalitions come together there is no continuity from one

action to the next. Groups cooperate to produce fragmented outputs of local community knowledge that could benefit from a relational change narrative.

Promise Zone Survey

A PZ survey has been administered every two years since 2017 drawing on a variety of *existing data sources* to track progress throughout the ten-year Promise Zone designation. The survey is an example of locally contextualized knowledge designed to capture community perceptions. The PZ survey was not a common resource mentioned by research participants. The 2021 PZ survey report was found by the researcher while searching for PZ related documents on the city government website. The most recent survey (2021) provides an update on progress made toward the six PZ goals since 2017. Looking at engagement since 2017 in four categories:

- 20% reported awareness of the PZ in 2021;
- 7% reported a good or great understanding of the purpose of PZ;
- 2% reported attending a PZ event in 2021, and
- 7% reported involvement in their neighborhood association.

According to the 2021 survey, PZ related collaborative community change initiatives across the city and at the neighborhood level has not produced a significant increase in engagement nor awareness. The survey results coincide with experiences and frustrations (institutional trauma and betrayal) felt by practitioners, creatives, and volunteer participants. Research participants stated there needs to be a move beyond awareness of issues, “single narratives” and “band-aid solutions” toward sustainable change, building a “pipeline to a sustainable life” a sentiment that suggests

acknowledgement of the institutionalizing apparatus and need for a “paradigm shift” toward community-based organizing and collective action.

“There are so many different organizations in this town doing the same thing. When I think about grassroot community organizing change efforts, I'm not really sure who's making change here. There are lots of people who want to bring awareness, have dialogue and conversations, which are things we have gotten better at since COVID. But now, it's time for solution-based action-oriented change”

“Systems are built as far as policies and procedures and guidelines that aren't necessarily community generated...We really need to be moving beyond the band AID solutions to the sustainable solutions”

“Neighbors that have the most potential for seeing their quality-of-life rise aren't informing a lot of these processes”

Awareness is happening and well-meaning difference makers are motivated, "but when you get to a certain spot...where that paradigm shift is supposed to take place, I don't feel like that's happening at a rate that it should" a research participant noted. Sustainable solutions require a focus on systems. There is a commonly held belief that decisions are made by people in power. Decisions have consequences and those decisions, made by people in power, perpetuate or continue to result in disparities. A research participant remarked, “Good intentions don’t account for unintended consequences.” Another research participant inquired and pondered how to rescue or prevent the language of grants (local knowledge) from languishing, which “begs the question of collaboration.” Grants are tied to organizations:

> “If I want to rescue that language or utilize it or question it, interrogate it, build something with it, I can't do it on my own. It literally belongs to the institution. So, in that way it begs the question of collaboration. You know, it's kind of set up that way already. You have to do it in some kind of community. It might be the academic community, it might be the philanthropic community, it might be, it might be, me asking permission to take that language and make some art with it.”

Could a designation or grant opportunity bring diverse people together into some kind of community or social organization (coalition building)? Out of this collaboration, new insights might emerge, i.e., new learning, new actions, even easy changes, quick wins that do not require grant funding. In a coalition a research participant was involved in, gaps were identified and actions implemented before an application was submitted, "before the grant was even submitted, they decided to collaborate with us, they would carry these cards about services." There was more learned through collaboration, "at the same time we were learning about the ZIP codes that had the highest Narcan use... learning all the pharmacies that were stocking the highest numbers of Narcan that was available without a prescription." Collaboration became a "tapestry of different people on the ground and different sources of information." Information was woven into a "coherent story that indicated that real change would come from funding" the coherent story or collective spatial imagination codified in the grant application. After the grant was awarded, the research participant was no longer included, they were not part of the implementation, a lack of continuity that raises questions about collaboration. Deep emotions were felt from this experience. "Does the change happen?" they asked believing it does but recognizing it is hard to know and measure. They asked why but did not get answers because they were no longer involved or responsible for the change. They continued to inquire about, "the community leaders that are on the task force, did they really show up to the meetings? If they did, you know, was stuff getting done?" The change making vision emerged during collaboration and planning, the process of writing the grant. But once the grant is awarded there is no "*storyteller for the implementation"*

they exclaimed. A revelation and realization in the moment so stunning they stood up during the interview. This conceptualization sets up a role and opportunity to capture and (re)story local knowledge and questions or inquiries that emerge from coalitions toward inclusive community engagement and participation. In fact, the local knowledge or change making vision belongs to the collective knowledge of the participants, not the grant application. One might view it as community knowledge and labor extracted for institutional development and sustainability.

Summary of Findings

Federal Promise initiatives prompted a group of local nonprofit organizations to loosely organize themselves to compete for a ten-year designation, an opportunity to collaboratively understand and act on questions related to education and poverty in place. They were recognized for their cooperation and awarded the City's Promise Zone designation which constituted spaces and genres of collaborative community change. Collaborative community change spaces can be considered spaces in which an interrelated process of inquiry, social investigation, learning and actions generate local community knowledge (data, information, maps, plans, events, practices, technologies) unorganized and siloed. Collaborative community change spaces represent divergent ways of knowing and being to *collaboratively* address complex local/global issues.

The mayor's announcement of the PZ designation put the word transformational in the lexicon of the city. The Medical School and PZ designation animated a culture of cooperation materializing substantial investments in infrastructure that remake *neighborhoods* (geographically demarcated zones) for capital accumulation. When we

pause to listen to the sounds of collaborative community change, i.e., the sounds, silences, knowledge/discourse in the sonic environment, sounds of connection and dissonance (disquieting sounds that marginalize and disrupt) are heard. By pausing to listen, discursive communities of difference become discernable, illuminating different spaces/places of collaborative community change, as well as the institutionalizing apparatus of official space. Network and creative spaces are positioned to reframe the local PZ knowledge/discourse as epistemic injustice and to restructure knowledge and health systems as intertwined in PZ narratives toward participatory liberatory and decolonial knowledge systems and embody alternative genres of collaborative community change.

Official collaborative community change space functions as an institutionalizing apparatus (IA), an interface that structures engagement and extracts information/data via surveys and coalitions. The IA of official space reduces the complexity of local/global conditions to comparable measures and replicable practices. The IA functions as a machine that extracts knowledge from the community, replicating best practices and sharing data; it structures engagement in hierarchical, ordered categorizations of bodies to approximate collaboration and belonging. Official collaborative community change space reduces complex local/global issues to frameworks and practices, commodities packaged and sold as replicable solutions with agreed upon metrics that feed data sets. Neighborhood revitalization practices extract volunteer resident stories and intellectual labor to package and sell as a process or brand of neighborhood revitalization and 'kids zone' approach of wrapping services around youth and families (replicating HCZ) –

seeking investments and selling knowledge of behavioral change strategies thereby creating competition within collaborative community change space.

Data from large data sets such as census and institutional data (e.g. school data) describe place, inform actions, and constitute subjectivities, differentiated bodies categorized and ordered to serve particular roles and functions – low-income residents/neighbors/families/students. But measurement instruments such as surveys do not accurately capture questions nor seek to understand city residents' lived experiences. Epistemic violence and erasure are being replicated in 'official' collaborative community change space.

Blues/hip hop epistemologies provided a way to pause and listen to discursive communities of difference. Listening illuminated both the institutionalizing apparatus that reifies colonial logics as well as network and creative space. The vignette audio along with the field recordings of the sonic environment was a foray into sound recording and design. Collaborative community change necessitates a storyteller, a griot, or librarian to layer and mix divergent knowledges and sounds, silences and breaks for reflection and connection in a blues epistemological approach to social investigation and learning, a black methodology. The vignette represents a sonic (oral/aural) creative expression of local collaborative community change and a different performative critical and embodied genre outside of the institutionalizing apparatus of community change. The vignette demonstrates potential for a storyteller and archive for the materiality of the multiplicity of ideas, questions and answers that transform place across space and time.

When we pause to listen to sounds, silences, noise and knowledge/discourse discernable in the sonic environment, we can see clearly. We can clearly see the institutionalizing apparatus, official and marginalized spaces constituted by the PZ designation. We see demarcated geographic locations and how the expressed goal of layering and leveraging investments restructure place for capital accumulation. Wise Intelligent says:

> "I can see clearly how we stuck in the struggle so long. I can see fine how they designed the system to lead us astray. I can see clearly now, how all the guns and crack flooded my hood did what it should because it was government backed. I can see clearly how my people suffer from that. The same system created addiction and built many prisons for blacks." (Wise Intelligent, 2016c)

The public library is situated in network space but primarily serves as an implementation partner in official PZ initiatives. Although, the researcher, serving a role as librarian, has initiated PZ related projects and collaborations in the margins (creative space) e.g. A Year of Hip Hop 2018. Reference questions are being asked in the community and represented as collaborative community change, but it begs the question, are library collections representative of the myriad sides and complexity of local/global issues? Are collections organized in a way to prompt learning and encourage engagement and participation in collaborative community change? Is public library programming strategically aligned with community challenges, initiatives and opportunities? Unacknowledged questions in collaborative community change spaces linger and fade like the sound of the Sanga bell.

CHAPTER 6. SONAR

"No stopping this, I'm droppin' this with hip hop in this and when the topic is topic-less then I'm writing the apocalypse." Rakim – The Saga Begins

When you pause and listen, seemingly non-existent sounds in the environment become discernable. Out of the silence, sounds are identified and located. *What is it?* The acousmatic question (Eidsheim, 2019) seeks to name and locate the origin of the sound. A curious inquiry, the acousmatic question, that is, emanating from a human desire to know. A kind of library reference question asked to gain information about where sounds originate in the acoustic environment.

When you pause and listen to sounds in the environment, there is a sense of movement felt. Distant sounds and voices nearing, passing. *What is the source?* The acousmatic question is a rather curious inquiry to identify and locate. It is a humanly unending search for meaning. Meaning, obtained by knowledge, structured and organized. Be(ing) student by pausing and listening, curiously forming questions to identify, locate and think with voluminous knowledge, sound, voice, and silences across space and time. Curious inquires mediated by texts and technologies developed to access, retrieve and circulate knowledge.

The discourse of the local PZ designation arranged and performed a distinct mode of collaborative community change, a familiar "sound" designed to end poverty and reform education. A designation backed by policies, discourse and local texts was layered with meanings and narratives. Facts were looped and data were arranged like beats, and instruments were played by local actors. Silences and breaks in the rhythm are like decisions being made, some predictable, some improvised. Continuous rhythms and

looping phrases form patterns that move, blend, and change. Sonic arrangements engage on different levels. Sounds, voice, instruments separated and placed on individual layers conceptually, recorded on individual tracks materially – like structured knowledge imagined, materialized and circulated. Society can be understood acoustemologically by listening to and mapping acousmatic problem-space inquires, spiraling knowledges and worldviews by scientifically creative human beings. Knowledge that is structured and organized based on relational bodies (beings and knowledge artifacts) orbiting in space. Cosmological, onto-epistemological political revolutions whose movements are propelled by underlying assumptions, theories, philosophies, culture, logics. With acousmatic questions as prompts for participation, acoustemology identifies, locates, and maps shifting trajectories of orbiting complex local/global challenges.

By situating the federally granted local PZ designation within a trajectory of past federal programs and policies such as President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society (known as The War of Poverty), knowledge recursions and social, political and epistemological revolutions can be understood relationally. It should be noted, Johnson's War on Poverty included Urban Renewal and education reform policies to end poverty and abolish inequality in place through a theory of change circulated as "maximum feasible participation" (Schryer, 2018). Listening to President Barak Obama's Promise initiatives in this way, a political revolution of orbiting federal policies can be discerned: initiatives and discursive practices and activities circulated to engage participants in a collaborative project to end poverty and reform education across space (twenty-two promise zone designations) and time (ten year designation). Spiraling knowledges absorb

local community knowledge then reduce and differentiate it to structure and remake space/place and beings/bodies. Co-existing knowledges - sounds, voice and silences – socially-culturally and spatially situated, are scientifically understood and verified.

The rate of rotation around a fixed axis (a measure of rotational speed) for mechanical components is revolutions per minute (RPM). An ephemeris in astronomy maps the relational orbits or revolutions across space and time. The common speeds of vinyl records were determined to be played at (33, 45, 78 RPMs), were scientifically determined by the amount of information that can fit on a record in relation to audio quality. Revolving, relational knowledges (music) were reduced to information, mechanical measures and predetermined speeds—disrupted by hip hop DJs needle-dropping. Their back-spinning break beats creatively mix sounds inscribed on records to create a continuous layered remix and mixtape that circulates seat-shaking scientifically creative music for the people's sake. Blues / hip hop epistemologies remake knowledge systems reduced to manageable amounts of information scientifically and technologically determined to be played at fixed revolutions per minute. A fixed, ordered knowledge structure is being remade by a revolutionary understanding of orbiting relational bodies continuously remaking social-cultural practice. This recombination of existing knowledges gets mediated by texts (crate digging for samples and break beats, information seeking) and by curious acousmatic inquires that question the location of sound, creatively organizing, mixing, and circulating new knowledge. Sound and space are apt social-spatial epistemologies to restructure, decolonize and liberate the organization of knowledge and bodies backed by new scientific assumptions.

Chapter six, SONAR, conceptualizes a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change before advancing an oral/aural practice of listening, mapping and knowledge production. The next section will revisit the vignette from the data and member check (see Appendix C) to resituate the local PZ designation. Readers are invited to read the vignette text as acousmatic sound, an unseen, unknown voice heard and felt. It is an invitation to pause, listen, and think together with the invisible and silent theories and philosophies layered and embedded in language being spread as an ongoing referential narrative and practice about poverty and education. Ask questions of the text. Chase references and prompts. Listen to your internal dialogue. Think decolonially. Return to the text. Continue that aural reading practice. When you get the urge, participation is free and open. A welcome invitation to be human, enunciate and animate using your whole body, subjective experience, available resources and technologies to create new knowledge in a collaborative effort to change the miserable conditions and deprivation that exist persistently and presently: local/global poverty. Inequality. Preventable health issues produced by the normalized knowledge that structure society. In other words, collaborate with decolonial student/intellectual-artists engaged in study, imagination, knowledge-making and organizing prompted by the local PZ designation collaborative inquiry.

Dramatically and Dialogically Resituating the Local PZ Designation

Below is a sample script of the vignette from the data and member check. The vignette excerpted and adapted here is representative of an evolving genre of collaborative community change guided by a praxis of librarianship. Created from the

research data, it presents factual information portrayed as fictionalized composite experiences of individuals participating in PZ-related neighborhood change initiatives. Sounds represented in the sample script are sounds that would be mixed as soundtrack/mixtape. The vignette was written with the intention of developing it as a form of community theater (audio theater and live theater) to encourage participation, dialogue, imagination and study (community learning and inquiry) informed by blues / hip hop epistemologies and *blues* intellectuals philosophizing and playing with possibilities that enact freedom. Written in an evocative and theatrical manner, vignettes are fictitious scenes that evoke feelings and open space for imagination (Bloom-Christen & Grunow, 2022). The vignette asks curiously, like deep reference or acousmatic questions, whose knowledge matters? In essence, whose voice matters in the narrative of education, poverty and locally situated community change? The strength of vignettes lies in the mixing of reality, lived experiences and imagination. Fact and fiction blend in a dramatic composition to create a sense of oneself through a non-institutional collaborative participatory aesthetic developed as SONAR. Analysis of the vignette is symbolic of community conversations and dialogue. The analysis also resituates the crisis narratives and emancipatory promise claims of the local PZ designation as inquiry, questions about knowledge and social organization centered on eliminating poverty and improving education socially-spatially situated. The vignette further demonstrates a practice of local knowledge-making that encourages dialogue (internal dialogue and community dialogue) and a study of complex local/global phenomena. In sections that follow, librarians and library science are admonished to return to the source and reclaim

their knowledge and community-oriented (public) roots of producing and organizing local community and global knowledges. Librarians can reclaim knowledge creation and organization that traces paths through collections and map social-spatial and historical questions and shifts in knowledge (answers and interventions). Historical and scientifically creative knowledge informs contemporary questions concerning local/global challenges. The vignette is presented as a creative practice of storytelling that has for millennia been used to convey information and engage audiences. It serves as a model of SONAR, a storyteller, soundtrack or mixtape of collaborative community change. SONAR and student/intellectual-artist conceptualizations evolve a participatory aesthetic that informs the performative, embodied practice of a free and open genre of collaborative community change undergirded by philosophical and theoretical positions of librarianship.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

Sounds of people entering meeting room. There is a certain zeal as seats are being added for an unusually large, unanticipated gathering.

Speaker

We are beginning to see alignment! (*thunderous applause)*
Neighborhood revitalization, kids zone and many more transformative innovations are beginning to be understood.

"*Youth are creating media without us*." (internal acousmatic ghost like voice, speaker doesn't skip a beat, but seems to adjust, affected)

Youth are creating media, in high poverty neighborhoods where there are some issues sustaining engagement with low-income residents not informing our process. "At-risk," "underperforming" youth are creating media, starting and running businesses without our process. Investments spent on a market analysis reported in the language of funders helped us imagine clusters of mixed-use real estate developments in high poverty, disinvested neighborhoods where youth are creating media, starting and growing

businesses. Mixed use housing and wrap-around care are innovations to end poverty and stimulate economic growth in naturally declining once thriving neighborhoods.

"Youth are creating media without us." (The intermittent reality recited repetitively "Youth are creating media without us" is beginning to sound like nagging. Nagging is disruptive.)

[*perplexed chuckles*]

We are beginning to see alignment! Simultaneously, youth are starting businesses and creating media in geographically mapped and narratively constructed "at-risk," "high poverty" Promise Zone locations. At the same time, deficit narratives are being constructed from data that claims to know and understand bodies situated in place, e.g., educational outcomes, income, crime, home ownership rates and number of available rental units, among other data. Disparity data like this leads to a belief that a neighborhood or zip code (Promise Zone) lags behind other neighborhoods (nearby or in other cities), a belief that is perpetuated by a rhetoric of failing schools and mediocrity that signals a need for a sustained collaborative change effort. Information and data categorize and classify neighborhoods and bodies as psychologically and economically underdeveloped. Belief and rhetoric circulated as fact lead to statements like this: "Once-thriving working class neighborhoods fell into decline as people migrated to the suburbs during the mid- to late-1900s, leaving behind older homes and families with limited financial resources" (City Promise Zone Public Wi-Fi Project para 1 Introduction). A malignant 'fact' repeated by research participants with the underlying belief that neighborhoods "fall" into decline due to mobility patterns and income or the lack thereof. Pausing, listening, and observing make evident how imaginations, policies and practices, such as Promise initiatives, attract well-meaning and provisioned actors that remake

neighborhoods. Neighborhoods do not *fall* into natural decline but are structurally, systematically and narratively constituted. There are evident contradictions between the facts and emancipatory claims of official PZ space and the lived experiences represented by antagonistic youth creating media, ignored and omitted from the discourse of collaborative community change effort.

Youth are creating media, the voice repeats, incessantly and emphatically. The repetition creates a sense of frustration and ambivalence. Clever redirections dismissing the contradiction as "nagging" only add to the tension. Research data demonstrated how critical conversations concerning race, if discussed at all, revert back to income. Income is a reductionist metric of poverty used to keep discussions on track and participants in line. Research participants sensed contradictions between actions and good intentions that do not account for unintended consequences. When given the space and time to sit and dialogue, several questioned if their work is part of the solution or complicit in reifying systemic injustices. Some acknowledged their ambivalence, heard in statements such as, "this is not a rehearsal" and "we have to get this right." Actions affect lives and transform place. And, residents do not understand how massive investments in infrastructure change their material conditions. *Youth are creating media* is heard as criticism while actors' actions are materially provisioned. *That funding opportunity we were encouraged to apply for, we showed a picture of residents and youth participating, you know, the youth creating media? We received additional funding to replicate our brand of collaborative community change alongside another neighborhood association. Are you listening? We are beginning to see alignment.* Youth creating media does not

equate to neighborhood revitalization, wrap-around services, kids zone innovation, nor mixed use housing developments. Those actions represent proven and promising practices previously demonstrated as effective in model and aspirational, benchmarked cities.

Youth creating media are represented as community assets pictured and captioned in quality-of-life plans. Community assets shared with key stakeholders who are beginning to understand the brand of collaborative community change known as neighborhood revitalization. In operation, from their locally produced and contextualized texts, data, and narratives, community assets and volunteer knowledge are extracted and participation limited to projects such as a market analysis. Knowledge that is extracted is justified and rationalized by the 'unfortunate' reality that backbone nonprofit organizations need sustainable funding—another seemingly irrefutable fact devoid of context and tied to the recursive brand of collaborative community change. Funds are invested in a market analysis and nonprofit development while youth, who are already creating media and starting businesses, get invited to join a process that limits scientifically creative and critical participation that controls their being. The invitation by neighborhood revitalization actors is degrading to young entrepreneur-artists systemically deprived of opportunities and resources that are instead leveraged and reinvested in nonprofit organizations and infrastructure improvements. Data and beliefs are circulated to rationalize systemic deprivation and justify capital accumulation (economic development) backed by federal policies and initiatives. Financial provisions equate to

incremental organizational and individual success stories leading to the pronouncement, WE BROUGHT IN MILLIONS! *Are you listening?*

The vignette dramatizes the complexity of local/global challenges by evoking tension between divergent local knowledges in collaborative community change spaces. This discursive practice has the potential of creating a conceptual safe space for imagination and dialogue among divergent constituents. Resident youth are starting businesses, creating media and innovative new spaces, while a market analysis is invested in to speak the language of funders in order to fund nonprofit growth and infrastructure improvements. Residents are creating music, documentaries, clothing lines, scholarships and spaces that help to enhance the culture and arts of the city without external investments or neighborhood revitalization processes supported by backbone nonprofit organization that require sustainable funding.

Whose knowledge matters? Systems of education and the persistence of global poverty are complex phenomena reduced to facts and manageable comparable data. Education is not the same as poverty. Promise initiatives conflated two complex social issues to a single dimension of demarcated place. Poverty is thus resituated and understood as deprivation, an undesirable and preventable social injustice. Systems of miseducation (Woodson, 1933/1993) on the other hand can be understood in the context of nonformal, informal and institutionalized forms of learning that can eliminate poverty and other societal injustices, in other words, knowledge structured with social-cultural and aesthetic aims. Systems of institutionalized public education have been askew ever since they were broadly conceived during Reconstruction and imbued with racial

ideologies and colonial logics. Promise narratives address education reform by a promise of walking alongside families and youth in narratively constructed and situated Promise Zones. These zones, seen solely through the lens of data, consisting of low-income, under-educated, unskilled adults and youth who are disproportionately behind based on a comparative, completive baseline of peer social-spatial educational attainment, achievement and engagement measures. Locally bounded locations are targeted for "much needed" economic development and infrastructural improvement. To accomplish this feat, actors have been provided a promise to repeat and blueprints for a pipeline to replicate. Actors believe the promise and pipeline will end generational poverty and reform public education. A promise to walk alongside Promise Zone families to and through college and into a career. A promise repeated incessantly!

The emancipatory promise of getting youth in high poverty neighborhoods to and through college and into a career is circulated as a kids-zone, place-based innovation. Epistemological assumptions coded and obscured by a promise of education and support along the way to college is hardly an innovation. A promise of education and community support sounds a lot like a state funded public school system for all children. It is important to recall a well-established public free-school system of the South was formed by a mainly black Reconstruction government (DuBois, 1910, p. 797) which has been undermined and unrealized since its materialization. Contemporary education reform is a familiar sound of largely failed federal reform initiatives and promises that continue to undermine a free public education for all.

Youth creating media is characteristic of bodies engaged in "body-politics." Mignolo (2009) describes body-politics as decolonial technologies enacted by bodies who realize they were considered less than human. They realized describing them as less human "was a radical un-human consideration" and then resituated the lack of humanity to "imperial actors, institutions and knowledges" (p. 174). Body-politics enacted by youth creating media highlight the need to resituate the lack of humanity to the present mode of collaborative community change and delink it from its underlying colonial/imperial logics. Local knowledge-making (maps, measurement and evaluation instruments, surveys, practices/processes, plans, neighborhood revitalization practices, etc.) aligned with federal Promise initiatives created the local Promise Zone and institutionalizing apparatus that dehumanizes bodies. Mignolo says:

> Sylvia Wynter encapsulated this conceptual and experiential anchor when she said that 'Fanon's explanatory concept of sociogeny put forward as a third person response to his own first person questioning' set the question: 'What does it mean to be Negro?' From that point on the question is no longer to study the Negro using the arsenal of neuroscience, social sciences, and the like, but it is the Negro body that engages in knowledge-making to decolonize the knowledge that was responsible for the coloniality of his being" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 175-176).

Fanon's sociogeny is explanatory in establishing the limits of scientific theories to decide questions of human nature. Youth creating media is representative of marginalized bodies engaged in knowledge-making that is expressive of their lived experiences and material reality. Youth creating media signals the need for a relational and spatial experience between youth and adults concerned with young adult success. Young adult success means young people are accomplishing individual goals and influencing the world around them. This kind of success requires supported and sustained relationships with

caring adults and spaces for experimentation and feedback to develop one's identity and sense of belonging (Nagaoka et al., 2015). Much of what is known about adolescents is based on psychological and positive youth development that centers service delivery, support, and educational opportunities for youth (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002) theories and ideology that inform HCZ's and PZ educational reform initiatives. Ginwright & Cammarota (2002) developed the Social Justice Approach to Youth Development (SJYD) to foster a praxis of critical consciousness and social action among urban youth through youth culture such as hip hop to inform youth about complex social problems. SJYD consists of a process of praxis and healing that assumes "social transformation begins with self-transformation and provides a way to connect individual actions with social change" (p. 92). Local relational, spatial and co-existing knowledges necessitate structures and practices that do not capture, erase, misrepresent and harm one's being/body. Resituating the PZ as inquiry and framing the acousmatic question as what it means to be student/intellectual-artist in a collaborative community change space situates both students and actors (intellectual-artists) in a genre of collaborative community change engaged in knowledge-making for health and well-being.

The PZ designation is part of a complex conceptual structure, a "colonial matrix of power" that is made and remade as an institutionalizing apparatus (IA), a black-box concealing the logic, protocols and routines guiding actions in the domains of education, economy and authority. Therefore, the PZ designation is resituated as a prompt for student/intellectual-artists to research and study in order to explain how the "colonial matrix of power" is remade; acknowledge the plurality and multiplicity of knowledges

(ways of knowing); engage in "knowledge-making for well-being rather than for controlling and managing populations" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 177).

The excerpted vignette and analysis were used to change the terms and content of the PZ conversation, the "hegemonic ideas of what knowledge and understanding are and, consequently, what economy and politics, ethics and philosophy, technology and the organization of society are and should be" (Mignolo, 2007, p.459). An analytic of coloniality / modernity and projects of decoloniality are put forward to imagine a world where many worlds can co-exist. One of the tasks then is decolonizing knowledge and acknowledging other ways of knowing. Echoing Hall et al. (2020), one of the biggest contemporary challenges we face, "is the decolonization of the architecture of knowledge...knowledge that is racialized, patriarchal, classist and Euro-centric" (p. 38).

Return to the Source

To decolonize and restructure knowledge for health and well-being will require library and information science (LIS) to reclaim its librarianship roots by returning to the source to understand the relationship between knowledge and society. At the root of librarianship is not just knowledge but also community. Knowledge has been reduced to information, and with the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), data and informatics is gaining purchase. A return to knowledge would require a critical analysis of professional disciplinary and the geographical, biological, economic, and ideological presumptions that structure it. Knowledge-making and recorded knowledge (texts) shape the structuring of society and the development of knowledge structures such as disciplines, institutions, technologies, classification systems, etc.

Knowledge organizational structures and classifications are modelled on society and are undergirded by theories, logics, beliefs and imaginations. We need to understand that social structure—community—and its ordering classifications if we want to recover the full dimensions of knowledge.

Most classification systems reproduce structures reflected in the world. For example, Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), the primary classification system used in public libraries, replicates "the scientific, economic, educational, and industrial ideals of the late 19th century USA" (Hansson, 2013, p. 387-8). It should be noted, library classification systems are conservatively updated and often reflect outdated knowledge (Hjorland, 2021). Therefore, to use librarianship to conceptualize and develop interventions aimed at ending poverty will require a restructuring of colonial knowledge structures and outdated systems. The power of classification systems facilitates how we know the world and assemble bodies for a particular purpose in space/place.

A challenge of librarianship is the lack of an agreed-upon theoretical and epistemological base to interrogate the underlying epistemological assumptions that structure space/place and organize knowledge and bodies. A return to the source of community requires a praxis of librarianship that engages in knowledge-making and discursive activities that (re)structure neighborhoods and systems of public education undermined by colonial/imperial and economic logics. The mission of librarians is to improve society (i.e. community) mediated by texts, which perforce results in changing states of knowledge. Changing states of knowledge or learning occur individually and collectively as paradigms or worldviews shift (Lankes, 2016). The complex challenges

raised by the PZ designation stress the need for social-spatial theories to analyze the organization and materiality of knowledge. A theoretically informed understanding of knowledge organization would therefore be situated in a context of social, cultural and historical analysis to understand how the activity of knowledge organization reconfigures social-spatial organization and epistemologies based on knowledge-making and use of texts (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006).

I proffer a problem-space analytic and join the discourse on public sphere theorizations in library literature. With a problem-spaces analytic, librarians can build library collections and create discovery tools that map changing states of knowledge, "tracing particular paths and manipulating the collection to answer pertinent questions of the day" (Craggs, 2008, p. 61). Habermas' public sphere theory "addresses the dialectics between society's organized discursive practices and its institutional arrangements" (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006, p. 319) e.g., youth creating media without us, blues / hip hop epistemologies, the circulation of federal policy initiatives and disciplinary and institutional arrangements such as nonprofit organizations that require and compete for sustainable funding. Public sphere theory recognizes that all knowledges must be understood in relation to the knowledge organization function of discursive practices and social-spatial and political institutional structures. Discursive practices and knowledge organization activities refigure the social and ideological organizations of society based on text production and use (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006).

Problem-spaces

Decolonial scholar David Scott's problem-spaces theory provides a way to understand complex local/global issues, build collections, and develop narratives and other forms of discursive modalities and technologies that trace paths and manipulate collections inclusive of local community knowledge to answer (acousmatic) questions raised in the community. What defines the discursive context of problem-spaces are questions and answers not only of a particular challenge but questions and answers *that emerge* as actions are taken and material and worldview shifts occur. Scotts' problem-space was conceptualized as a means for historical and theoretical analysis to reconstruct and interrogate a historical, political, social context to understand the ensemble of questions and answers in relation to contemporary conditions and actions (Gowland, 2023, Wong, 2021). A problem-space establishes "multiple space-time trajectories" acknowledging a plurality of co-existing knowledges while accepting "not all possible connections and interactions across space have been or will ever be made" (Gowland, 2023, p. 5). A problem-space analytic attuned to the local PZ designation, for example, might situate the contemporary Promise initiatives in the historical, political and social context of Johnson's War on Poverty, The Kerner Commission, HARYOU, the city's 1970s decision about highway placement, and other trajectories to better understand questions, theories and actions of the past to inform contemporary problem-spaces. The aim is to surface and examine the plurality of relations across space and time, tracing paths and weaving referential narratives to navigate through voluminous knowledges in a way that captivates and arouses curiosity. Problem-space inquiries open conceptual

spaces for collaborative inquiry, participation, engagement, imagination, knowledge-making and learning about how complex local/global issues affect place.

Public Sphere

The 135th Street Branch of the New York Library in 1925 established the Division of Negro History, Literature and Prints to inspire art students, arouse race consciousness and provide historical records and information to everyone about black folk's contributions. Arturo Schomburg served as president. That year, a dramatic rise in circulation of books was recorded, and the 135th Street Branch led all other branches of the New York Public Library system in the number of community meetings and cultural events sponsored. Among the cultural events sponsored was the library's annual exhibition of black artists, an eagerly awaited event (Sinnette, 1989, p. 135). The event included a small display of materials, mostly from Schomburg's collection, that illustrated historical and geographical sources from the story of a race of people denied their humanity by the arsenal of neuroscience, histories, social sciences, and the like that defined their being. The Division of Negro History, Literature and Prints aimed to reverse the propaganda and educate the community in partnership with some of the leading local intellectuals of the time. Those partnerships and collaborations represented the changing demographics of Harlem and included luminaries such as the aforementioned Schomburg, Hubert Harrison, James Weldon Johnson and Pura Belpre, one of the first Puerto Rican-born librarians at the branch, to name a few. Schomburg's collection is widely recognized for its "great value and inestimable importance to black studies;" it was acquired by The New York Public Library in 1926 and named "The Arthur A.

Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and Art" (Sinnette, 1989, p. 136). The work of the 135th Street Branch, centrally located and situated, was in tune with the changing nature of community and local/global challenges of the day. This library built community partnerships and collections, hired librarians that represented the community, and created cultural events that addressed issues faced by the community. It is this type of social, cultural, and political awareness of local discursive practices and knowledge organization activities that librarians today can employ to understand how it may contribute to "materializing a public sphere" (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006, p. 301) or commons. Developing the Division of Negro History, Literature and Prints and later acquiring Schomburg's collection in order to keep it in the black community and make available to all, is representative of a public commons. The International Association for the Study of Commons (IASC) defines the public commons as a set of resources, natural and cultural, shared by many people as an 'alternative' to state or market-regulated economies. By returning to the source of the social, cultural, and political space of Harlem in 1925 to reconstruct how the library partnered with Schomburg and others to ultimately acquire the collection, we can see more clearly how discursive practices, collection building and research partnerships with a public library materialized a specifically situated public commons. Schomburg's initial collection is presently The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, an archive consisting of information on people of African descent worldwide. An emphasis on developing and maintaining a public sphere like the Schomburg Center can establish parity with an overdetermined economic and market orientation. Changing how we know education by resituating libraries / archives as part

of the knowledge system and nonformal education would be to (re)claim libraries as academies or communiversities for learning.

Communiversity from the Afrikan diasporic intellectual tradition situates the community as the campus. Artists, intellectuals, community members, and student activists come together to educate the people "from the cradle to the grave" (Killens, 1969). With the notion of communiversity and public sphere we might imagine the public library and other public institutions within the community as campus buildings of our local Communiversity, forming alliances centered on problem-space inquiries to enhance public discourse, participation and community learning in a true collaborative effort toward systemic and structural change. A public sphere / communiversity imagination structures knowledge to materialize generational, local and translocal community-centered educational spaces for the people, as opposed to federally designed and controlled pipelines. Decolonial problem-space inquiries and public sphere theorizations may consist of green spaces, shared kitchens, performance spaces, makerspaces, tool sheds, collaborative workspaces, wellness spaces, etc. These spaces/places in the Communiversity campus allow access to the wide range of tools and technologies, thereby refiguring economically driven spaces and knowledges. With the rise of internet connectivity and the rise in quantification and computation, local/global philosophical and epistemological conceptualizations of knowledge structures and systems have been constricted by and even reduced to two singular measures: economic value and effectiveness of retrieval in computer-based information systems (Hansson, 2013). Librarians and librarianship need to return to their source of knowledge and intellectual

freedom to conceptualize and build knowledge structures and spaces that expose "possibilities to observe knowledge" and question librarianship's "ontological position in the networked society" (Kahre, 2013, p. n.p.), where information and communication technologies (ICTs) are increasingly tied to social and transactional interactions in modern life (Jaeger, 2010). Knowledge organization must be studied historically, culturally and spatially and "not solely as an ahistorical technological device continually improved by technological progress." (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006, p. 318).

Though not led by or involved with the public library system, Communiversity activity and historical problem-spaces can be heard and observed in the city. The initial acousmatic inquiry, *What to do about gentrification?* was heard near downtown in what is being renamed/reclaimed as Center City. The *Center City: Planning to Stay* plan (Marquez, 2019), was organized by a local community development corporation (CDC) and the local African American Museum in a neighborhood which was home to the largest concentration of black residents in the city but has since been erased and marginalized. Development of the Center City plan is an example of network space that started with an inquiry, "Are you planning to stay?" in 2018 (Marquez, 2019). The inquiry acknowledges the possibility of either moving to the suburbs or of making a commitment to stay in the neighborhood, and seeks to inspire dialogue and action to develop the space/place imagined as Center City. In parallel action, historians and texts generated at the local university are contributing understanding of the cultural, economic and social change that shaped city spaces and culture such as housing projects, industries and the lost history of the local Civil Rights movement.[10] A grant from the Smithsonian

African American Museum to conduct some of the work in its collections provided the Museum's director with translocal connection to and engagement with network and creative spaces in other cities Local knowledge and lived experiences can inform and shape a contemporary problem-space inquiry inclusive of cultural, historical, social, spatial, political humanistic perspectives.

Coloniality, problem-space, and public sphere frameworks provide a theoretical base to guide a praxis of librarianship that addresses complex local/global challenges situated in a social-spatial context. A genre of collaborative community change aims to acknowledge and call attention to the normalcy of the coloniality while at the same time creating conditions for local knowledge to assert different social-spatial configurations. Such a (re)organization of knowledge and bodies in neighborhoods like those demarcated by the PZ require a new scientific orientation that shifts the analytical frame away from measuring the suffering body and toward more expansive, decolonial "co-relational texts, practices and narratives" (McKittrick, 2016, p. 10 Diachronic loops). A return to the source of knowledge analyzes how the "biocentric system of knowledge upheld by capitalist financing" is remade and acknowledges how already co-existing alternative knowledge systems make decolonization and liberation possible (McKittrick, 2021, p. 43).

Genre of Collaborative Community Change

Materialized knowledges take the form of texts, institutional structures, disciplines, libraries, archives (collections), information systems and technologies, classification systems, library catalogues, and other discovery systems to serve the

purpose of "mediating, supporting, and producing social practices" (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006, p. 302). Texts are organized and represented by "genre and discursive activities and practices" which are themselves "categories of knowledge organization" (Andersen & Skouvig, 2006, p. 302). Therefore, knowledge organization must be understood as a human activity situated in society. Humans create and organize knowledge artifacts into knowledge systems, structures and technologies. Genre captures the nuance of knowledge systems and structures in a relational way. Genres of knowledge. Genres of humans. Musical genres. Genres of collaborative community change. Genre can usurp hierarchies, binaries, and dichotomies. The ideological acceptance of normalized knowledges that rationalizes disparity, deprivation, and destruction in official collaborative community change spaces is one genre. Naming it as such makes plain the fact that other genres exist to be explored.

Genre signals a plurality of co-existing knowledges and a knowledge-organizing approach. Genres coexist, they classify and categorize, mapping their roots in departures and splinters. Blues worldview as a genre of music, and sociogenic principle as a genre of "Man" (humans), are onto-epistemological approaches that name new shifts and in that naming restructure knowledge and society. A blues worldview, for example, enabled the construction of new communities, institutions, and social practices. Musical movements (genres) such as blues, ragtime, the Jazz Age, the Swing Era, Bebop, post-bop, the Rock and Roll Era, and hip hop are considered naming practices of "blues-based intellectual movements" (Woods, 2007). The classification and categorization of these musical movements "capture shifts in consciousness, political economies, spatialization, and

rhythm" (Woods, 2007, p. 70) creating an imagined community or "translocal network" of intellectual-artists and audiences forming blues and later hip hop universities as fluid knowledge systems "organized around a community-centered consciousness" (Woods, 2007, p. 67). These intellectual movements and shifts in knowledge or consciousness can also be understood and mapped with a problem-space analytic. I use "mapped" to signify collection-building and knowledge-making activities as a form of mapping or countermapping shifts in consciousness or worldview, political, economies, acousmatic questions across space and time. Collections of relational, co-existing local/global knowledges (texts) are the basis of the resulting maps, and the resulting maps themselves become texts that inform space/place reconstructions, encourage learning and knowledge-making and join the archive of collective memory. Genre categorizes or maps the relational movements across space and time such as blues intellectual movements and social change movements. Genre is more nuanced and connects all knowledges than are captured or connected by the pervasive Dewey Decimal Catalog (DDC), which does not classify resources beyond non-fiction.

The DDC, which was developed in the same era as Darwin's theories and classifications, organizes knowledge in a way that divides fiction—the creative—from nonfiction—the scientifically verifiable. It is a classification system modeled on Darwin's conception of evolutionary organisms, meaning, "bio-evolutionary beings that develop and progress toward creative acts that are not physiological" (McKittrick, 2016, p. 9). In other words, DDC structures knowledge that privileges nonfiction (notions of science and truth) as a way of knowing and learning above creating. In its relation to the

natural sciences, it classifies and orders differentiated humans as bio-evolutionary beings developing along a continuum toward creative expression. Similar ways of knowing can be heard in the metaphorical pipeline developmental stages of humans progressing along a youth-to-adult continuum being replicated and constructed for "at-risk" and "high-poverty" families residing in narratively constructed Promise Zones. This is a seemingly innocuous fact of humanity that has deleterious mutative consequences. The implications for restructuring knowledge using genre as a classification scheme, at least theoretically, shifts the biologic and economic overdetermination of a Western European genre of Man (adult) as expressed in Wynter's (2001) sociogenic principle. Ideally, classifications for the public library will have meanings and discursive practices centering on coexisting worlds and relational knowledges. This structuring of knowledge will have material / spatial and aesthetic implications.

Like Fanon (1952/2008), I turn my back on the dehumanizing knowledges circulated as transformative ideas and deficit data narratives that demean and reduce youth to progressing through a mechanistic pipeline imaginary and turn toward the level of failures—as in mechanical pipeline failures caused by movement and pressure. The pressure of social movements, youth media provocations and oral/aural discursive practices burst metaphorical pipeline knowledge constructions in order to reclaim librarianships' ontological and epistemological roots. It starts with an acceptance of humans as simultaneously biological and cultural (creative) thus alterable beings, meaning organisms such as humans make sense of and classify their world or reality to make and remake it to their own adaptive advantage. This assertion allows one to

critically assess failures in the youth-adult-career pipeline (youth development theories) that shape and structure education (schooling) and collaborative community change interventions. The pipeline metaphor is a fixed system of linear movement that informs a (re)structuring of social-spatial reality. The term "pipeline," repeated incessantly in current collaborative community change space, models a mechanistic reality in which youth and adults struggle to advantageously adapt.

Wynter's (2001) sociogenic principle establishes human subjects as a culture-specific and verbally defined mode of being human or genre of Man. The reproduction of the culture-specific mode of being human can only continue if the individual human subject feels the particular mode aligns with its own adaptive advantage as they interact with both the physical world and their "socio-human world," i.e., the subjective socio-culturally expressed world they know and to which (being human!) assign meaning. Thus, humans are in a dialectic between their socio-culturally expressed world and material/physical reality. Humans creatively express "a culture-specific and thereby verbally defined mode of being and sense of self" (Wynter, 2001, p. 54) in a world in which they assign meaning for their adaptive advantage. Humans' "mental cognitive creative world" construction in relation to AI conceptualizations and imagination suggest that "the prime metaphysical significance of AI...confirms our insistence that we are essentially subjective creatures living through our own mental construction of reality" (Wynter, 2001, p. 54 citing Margaret Boden, 1977, p. 473). Natural sciences, mechanistic metaphors, digital (virtual) and economic models materially structure knowledge and bodies that constitute shifting realities. Genre recognizes the interplay and overlap of

cyclical trajectories of human experience. It is time for library science to (re) claim its responsibility to categorizing this complexity.

Wynter suggests the new scientific order or new science links the study of words, which is in effect "the study of the rhetoricity of our human identity" (discursive practices), with natural sciences and neurosciences (Wynter, 2001, p. 60). Science of the word is a hybrid science in which the study of the word, i.e., the study of texts, knowledge organization, and discursive practices will determine the study of society. Envisioning a new "science of the word" poses a unique challenge to the dominant way of knowing and existing knowledge structures. It calls for a collective "rewriting of our present now globally institutionalized order of knowledge" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 18). A rewriting and decolonization of knowledge that must take into account the present economic order that constitutes a "single genre-specific Western European bourgeois model of being...[that] reifies an ostensibly humanly normative social category: homo oeconomicus (the virtuous breadwinner, the stable job holder, the taxpayer, the savvy investor, the master of natural scarcity)" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 19). Wynter and McKittrick (2015) liken the challenge of envisioning a new science of the word to Copernicus's astronomy which fundamentally shifted the hegemonic order of knowledge. Over several centuries and with further development by other scholars, Copernicus's new astronomy was realized as a new, open order of knowledge constituting a "generalized natural scientific conceptual space" a conceptual space that led biological sciences to become institutionalized which made possible "Darwin's epistemological rupture or leap" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 16). This

way of knowing and science influenced the organization of knowledge in the widely adopted Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system. The Copernican shift in knowledge suggests our dominant order of knowledge can also cease to exist by opening a new scientific conceptual space to decolonize the architecture of knowledge – a new science of the word.

The discursive practices and the organization of knowledge and bodies circulated by contemporary education reform, and place-based poverty initiatives are imbued with a Western European bourgeois genre of human. The brand of collaborative community change and discursive practices of official PZ space conceptualizes a pipeline construction and spreads a promise of walking alongside *at-risk youth* until those newly "educated servants" are dumped into a sea of globally competing markets without the thinking skills or knowledge of self to make sense of the deluge. This discursive practice and structuring of knowledge and bodies is dehumanizing, and politically aligned actors are complicit in the persistent degradation of humanity and undermining of free (as in freedom) public education and public discourse. The larger issue then, related to but not exclusive to the local PZ designation, is to initiate a problem-space inquiry thereby opening a conceptual space to imagine education, public space/place, and knowledge structures differently. A library science of the word informs a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change based on an acousmatic problem-space inquiry to map trajectories and shifts in complex local/global challenges socially-culturally situated and spatially situated. A library science of the word conceptualization opens conceptual/imagination space/place, much like Copernicus's new astronomy, to think

collaboratively with student/intellectual-artists about knowledge systems, structures, and discursive practices toward the goal of materializing a Communiversity. This new library science of the word not only needs to consider humans' socio-cultural creative adaptability, natural science and neuroscience, and also socio-technical information science, informatics, and computing (ICTs). A praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change undergirded by a new library science of the word, i.e., a study of texts, knowledge, and discursive practices will transform social investigation, pedagogy, and community engagement.

Knowledge Structures, Disciplines, Narratives and Technologies: ICTs

In this section we return to the source of Victorian era positive and comprehensive knowledge to analyze the first knowledge explosion and imperial imagination that reduced knowledge to facts (information). Victorian era discursive practices and knowledge structures are juxtaposed with African diasporic intellectual and aesthetic traditions, humanizing discursive practices and social-political formations which counteracted, erased, and negated achievements of Africans. Epistemic injustices and social-spatial oppressions persist to this day. Arthur (Arturo) Schomburg's collection-building and research societies demonstrate the always elsewhere co-existence of knowledges.

Schomburg, an influential collector, bibliophile, and self-taught historian was motivated by a curiosity and desire to study the past for solutions to contemporary challenges. He was a founding member of organizations and societies established to research and collect evidence and artifacts that would reveal the contributions of Africans

to world history and society. African history and discourse were obscured and misrepresented by structures and systems that denied Africans their humanity. Schomburg was motivated to "combat antiblack propaganda by studying and analyzing the documents of black history" (Sinnette, 1989, p. 41). Schomburg's collection building might be considered a precursor to Civil Rights era "freedom libraries" (Selby, 2019) and "fugitive libraries" (Mattern, 2019) collection building practices. Library research spaces and collection building practices combine with discursive practices of an emergent black print culture to counter "the scientific racism of the nineteenth century" and appropriate colonial / imperial scientific technologies, like the compass, in service of promoting human freedom. Black interest in astronomy is emblematic of a "fugitive science" which produced an emancipatory cosmology "a mobile, interconnected system of bodies governed by a set of predictive laws" and "complex, networked maps that accounted for time and space" (Fraser, 2016, p. 266). The discourse of the first black newspapers proposed a "cosmological worldview in which equality and justice would be the inevitable consequence of mobile, predictable political transformations. They offered an alternative to a fixed, hierarchical politics, suggesting instead that powerful civilizations wax and wane as they predictably revolve" (Fraser, 2016, p. 273). Cosmological thinking has been operative in both science and philosophy since the eighteenth century to analyze the movement of bodies through space and time and determine the laws that govern those movements. Scientific discoveries that directly impacted human social-political realities were often serialized across multiple newspaper issues revealing a cosmological pattern of how the past was and the future will be radically different from the world today.

Digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) are characteristic of contemporary scientific and technological discoveries that impact social-political reality today. Drawing on the discursive practices of Schomburg's collection-building, black print culture, and blues epistemologies, contemporary collaborative community change problem-spaces and student/intellectual-artists may investigate acousmatic questions to identify and locate texts that both evidence coexisting realities and map society and knowledge-making practices based on a cosmological worldview that recognizes the importance of both the immaterial and material.

Black print culture much like blues epistemologies were decolonial technologies (ICTs) that "brought a quasi-national collectivity briefly into being...enabl[ing] a person to envision herself as one member of a larger, "imagined" community joined by the simultaneity of experience across geography." (Fraser, 2016, p. 264). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as newspaper, radio, phonograph, etc. undergirded by an imagined community and emancipatory cosmology brought a collectivity into existence, a mobile, interconnected system of autonomous bodies. The first two African American newspapers in the United States: Freedom's Journal (1827-29) and its short-lived successor, The Rights of All (1829) created a textual space that "depicted a black collectivity that – like a moon in orbit" it "mapped the celestial and political universes onto each other by accounting for recent scientific discoveries about the heavens and offering histories of the political revolutions" (Fraser, 2016, p. 266). The discursive practices of the newspaper, the stories of scientific discoveries and reconstructed histories produced a form of textual ephemera. An ephemeris is used in

astronomy as “a kind of map, but one that accounts for the mobile, intersecting movements of bodies in the cosmos. It is a predictive map accounting for time and space.” (Fraser, 2016, p. 268). Black political emancipation was treated as a revolutionary tracing of “political orbits modeled on their celestial corollaries” (Fraser, 2016, p. 270) that directly applied to the lived experiences of human beings.

Freedom’s Journal and *The Rights of All* drew on a nineteenth-century way of thinking about the universe, a “metaphor of political revolution as orbital and subject to calculation...a cosmological way of reading history and the future” (Fraser, 2016, p. 273). The cosmological worldview promoted freedom, equality and justice which was deliberately overshadowed and undermined by imperial imaginations and colonial/ modern material constructions. Nineteenth-century African diasporic intellectual and aesthetic traditions opened a conceptual space to reimagine knowledge structures and society differently. The conceptual space created by ICTs (newspapers and sonic technologies) supported by orbital metaphors and blues worldviews, enabled the construction of new communities, institutions, and social practices.

In contrast, the ideology of mid-Victorian positivism—positive and comprehensive knowledge—produced a fantastical story and material reality of conquest and control. Late nineteenth-century literature combined with new disciplines of geography and biology to center on controlling knowledge. Absolute power of the whole world was the motivation of the new disciplines which created “paradigms of knowledge which seemed to solve the problem of imperial control at a distance” (Richards, 1993, p.

6). Novels created myths of an imperial archive, which in turn influenced policy. The seemingly contradictory ideas of positive and comprehensive knowledge informed both how we analyze existence (being) and how we structure knowledge. It is important to quote Richards (1993) at length:

> The familiar Victorian project of positive knowledge divided the world into little pieces of fact. A fact was a piece of knowledge asserted as certain, and positive knowledge was considered...to be the sum of objectively verifiable facts. The problem here of course was that facts almost never add up to anything. They were snippets of knowledge, tiny, particularized units responsible for our current idea of information. It took a leap of faith to believe that facts would someday add up to any palpable sum of knowledge, and that faith often took the form of an allied belief in comprehensive knowledge. Comprehensive knowledge was the sense that knowledge was singular and not plural, complete and not partial, global and not local, that all knowledges would ultimately turn out to be concordant in one great system of knowledge. This system-building impulse was the imperial archive's great inheritance from a philosophical tradition that posited a universal and essential form of knowledge...Victorian confidence that knowledge could be controlled and controlling, that knowledge could be exploding and yet be harnessed as the ultimate form of power" (Richards, 1993, p. 6-7).

Science and literature conjoined in an imaginary of Empire that remade the world whose science and belief continue today in contemporary education reform, poverty rhetoric, and technology development, e.g., data analytics platforms and geographic information systems. Craggs (2008) situates the material manifestation of the library collection and library practices of the Royal Empire Society Library (RES) alongside the new geography discipline and colonial/imperial practices. The library collection and practices created imaginative geographies and a vision of the Empire as a "civilizing force of good" (p. 53). Materials in the library represented territories explored and exploited by Britain, weaving narratives and histories based on discovery and exploration. The RES Library collection reflected the expanse of British colonialism/imperialism at its height.

British colonization and imperial visions extracted knowledge from faraway places which informed the acquisition, collection development, and classification practices of the RES Library. The imagined geography of the library and the material manifestation of the collection brought the colonized lands and extracted fantastical knowledges forcibly together in a vision of a united empire. The classification scheme and card catalogue were technological advances like advances in cartography and navigation of the day (e.g. compass and sextant). The generic nature of DDC was eschewed in favor of a uniquely developed classification system that produced a story about the exploited people. The unique classification scheme "promoted a moral obligation to intervene and a political mandate to control" evident by categories used to describe othered peoples and their culture. This demonstrates how the power of classification and categorical ordering of humans and place can become "social and moral hierarchy" (Craggs, 2008, p. 55). Not a far cry from Promise Zone constructions and 'at-risk', 'low-income,' and educational disparity discourse and data. But as we have seen, the same disciplines can and have been restructured to promote freedom, equality and justice. Geography for empire building was remade as black geographies. The work of Bobby Wilson, Clyde Woods, and Katherine McKittrick developed a multi-modal, interdisciplinary approach which included lived experiences to demonstrate how space/place was discursively (re)constructed (Bledsoe, 2021). Normalized knowledge structures can be, are being, and have been remade.

The PZ designation and Promise initiatives backed by educational policy are contemporary imperial projects aimed at solving the problem of control at a distance.

Positivist and comprehensive knowledge were never abandoned as scientific ways of knowing. Institutionalized forms of health (medicine) and education (public schooling) are controlled by data-informed practices of measuring, sharing, and extracting data that populate large data sets. Librarianship has begun following this trend, using medicine and education as models, notwithstanding deleterious effects and unintended consequences. Belief in a singular universal knowledge is informing the mental construction of social-technological reality (digital space) we know today as the internet and AI. Hence the urgent call for decolonial and justice-oriented thinkers to take up the challenge of knowledge-making and organizing to imagine and materialize knowledge structures and systems based on a new science of the word, problem-spaces, and public spheres by returning to the source and reclaiming the roots of knowledge and humanity (community/society).

Invisible Tethers

The comprehensive knowledge worldview has been reinvigorated, with projects tending toward total automation and continuous data extraction. In this new reality, the acousmatic question asks what it means to be human in a world divided into grids and bodies invisibly tethered to "artificial intelligence systems developed under capitalist modes of production and consumption" (Marques da Silva, 2017, n.p). AI systems are emerging and restructuring social life through smart devices and are "being introduced to users through sound and more specifically, through voice" (Marques da Silva, 2017, n.p). Robotic personal assistants have emerged as interfaces between the social material world and digital space. Digital space is the new territory constituted by an imperial imaginary

to control at a distance. These emerging technologies and digital devices remind us “we ain’t free we loose” (Wise Intelligent, 2013).

“Data-centric epistemology” and “data-driven narratives” are forms of coloniality/modernity tied to a digital space, artificial intelligent robot imaginary. A local challenge raised in official PZ space and written into the Promise Neighborhoods grant funding proposal was a need for data-sharing agreements with local schools. The local youth mental health imaginary is working on developing a one-of-a-kind national data set as a solution to youth mental health. The medical school aims to be a national leader in youth mental health, and has as its goal creating a mental health services delivery model with an emphasis on developing a first-of-its-kind national data analytics platform (Martin, 2022; Martin, 2023). Data-informed deficit narratives constituted the Promise Zone, and its institutionalizing apparatus was developed to extract and compare local community data. The term “data colonialism” provides a frame to understand the appropriation of data via collaborative community change practices and digital platforms that constitute “data subjects” tethered to transparent interfaces that become recognizable sonically (Couldry & Mejias 2019). The emerging knowledge and social structuring that tethers data subjects to digital space establishes “preconditions for a new stage of capitalism" and control when combined with institutionalized and community-based forms of data similarly extracted (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, p. 338). Humans are increasingly interacting with a variety of AI systems and digital interfaces that gather, process and generate information from data that we and our machines produce (Marques da Silva, 2017). This data-centrism is a form of “data extractivism” that assumes

everything is data and situates beings as a continuous flow of data (Ricaurte, 2019, p. 352). This form of social (re)organization in relation to digital space constitutes data subjects whose reality is "continuously trackable" (Couldry & Mejias, 2019, p. 345). With an interest in sonic technologies and knowledge, digital virtual assistants are intriguing for a conceptualization of digital librarianship based on a library science of the word.

Digital technologies such as digital virtual assistants have normalized talking to machines. Listening devices and AI-powered speaking technologies mediate access to digitally stored knowledge. With the protocols and rules that structure network communication and regulate digital space, we may think of the internet as an "enormous and unbound text whose grammar is constituted by protocological regulations" (Marques da Silva, 2017, n.p.). Thinking about positivist and universal knowledge, data and digital space in this way, the interface becomes an allegorical apparatus to study society.

The interface on the surface-level masks and obscures layers of protocols and a myriad of performances and processes that must align and comply to be interpreted, "the greater the black box is, the greater is the interfaces' smoothness and transparency" (Marques da Silva, 2017). Wireless devices, sonic technologies, discursive practices, and institutionalized knowledge structures act as interfaces or invisible tethers that obscure the black box of coloniality/modernity. Ana Marques da Silva (2017) situates Amazon's domestic AI as an allegorical device to understand how the contemporary (data) subject is constituted and how technology and digital space is restructuring social reality:

> Echo is a small black cylinder, designed to be at our homes, and equipped with an array of seven microphones attuned to human voice recognitions. Equipped with Alexa, this device listens and speaks...Amazon describes it as device able "to provide information, answer questions, play music, read the news, check the sports scores or the weather, and more." Whenever its name is pronounced, Alexa "wakes up" and sends all it "hears" to the web for processing by Amazon. Alexa...captures our voices, our language and the sounds of our homes, and it sends all this information to the web...we speak to it, giving away information that feeds a data driven market" (Marques da Silva, 2017, n.p).

This relationship with emerging AI is reshaping social engagement and material reality. These sonic technologies powered by AI virtual assistants can have an impact on librarianship. It is imperative that we situate the emerging AI technologies within digital space and a return to the source of knowledge to understand how contemporary digital space relates with imperial imaginations to better understand how a public digital commons and digital librarianship might be materialized. Hjorland (2021) asks, if AI can retrieve and analyze information, will there be a need for knowledge organization? How might knowledge-making (texts) and discursive practices at the intersection between conceptual space and digital space materialize a public sphere consisting of built (physical/digital) and natural environments for health and well-being? Knowledge has been reduced to information and is rapidly being reduced further to data, and informatics is restructuring society. How might sonic interfaces be reimagined with notions of a public sphere/public digital commons and digital librarianship?

PZ-related interventions and practices are equivalent to Victorian era geographers that graph and measure land, extract knowledge, and construct narratives about bodies and place. The colonial logics and imperial imagination inherent in Promise initiatives accept and align with the challenge of control at a distance. The official PZ genre and

brand of collaborative community change act as an interface between differentiated bodies and the black box of coloniality/modernity that informs the remaking of neighborhoods and public education for economic value. Sound and cosmology (space) offer alternative conceptual frames for knowledge organization and social change.

Data subjects and continuous data tied to an evolving digital space furthers the Victorian era confidence that knowledge can be "controlled and controlling, that knowledge could be exploding and yet be harnessed as the ultimate form of power" (Richards, 1993, p. 7). Library science of the word establishes a theoretical base for a praxis of librarianship and free and open genre of collaborative community change. The genre of collaborative community change opens spaces/places of learning, knowledge-making, collection-building, and organizing to map questions and answers of problem-space inquiries framed by complex local/global challenges. In the final section of this study, I offer SONAR as my conception of a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change in which student/intellectual-artists are actors participating in remaking knowledge for health and well-being.

In the Mix: SONAR and Student/Intellectual-Artist

The framework of SONAR and the identity of student/intellectual-artist integrates the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change with an oral/aural practice of listening to the community and reflect its collective knowledge back through a performance-based aesthetic and texts. The aim of SONAR is to enhance imagination, listen to sounds and discourse, and to identify, locate and map acousmatic problem-space inquiries. Curious acousmatic

questions asked in the community about complex local/global challenges trace paths and manipulate texts and collections to address inquiries and facilitate learning. SONAR and student/intellectual-artists become the storyteller/mixtape (soundtrack) of collaborative community change. Taken separately, student/intellectual-artist brings science, culture and aesthetic ways of knowing together with a new science of the word and sociogenic principles put forth by Sylvia Wynter. Student/intellectual-artists study by digging in the archives (crate digging) to layer multiple narratives of local/global problem-space inquiries in an attempt not to control but to engage creatively with voluminous knowledge. The term student/intellectual-artist organizes marginalized artists as a collective and brings together multiple identities and disciplines, disciplines disrupted by relational knowledges, structures, and systems to be remade by the new science of the word. *Student* implies inquiry and a curiosity for learning and research, which broadens the notion and authority of institutionalized forms of education or schooling.

Considering the sonic and performative conceptualization of SONAR, we must be mindful of epistemological assumptions and ideological hearing-centric constructions and meanings of sound that order senses and marginalize Deaf communities. The ocularcentrism of Western culture and science has been established. Ceraso (2022) establishes "multimodal listening" as distinct from organ-specific definitions establishing listening as "a bodily practice that approaches sound as a holistic experience" (p. 105). While elaborating a performative sonic approach, the aim is not to privilege a hearing-centric understanding or construction of sound and music. Rather "Deaf aesthetics" and epistemologies can shape culturally informed meanings, identities, and

practices of social-spatial and performative sound and music constructions. An inclusive approach considers the musical experience of Deaf culture to understand and design sonic-related experiences and modes of social investigation and pedagogy that involve other senses of the body, whole body subjective sensory experiences. Visual elements, tactile components combined with acoustic and auditory elements informs a "cross-modal" approach toward amplifying an "intersensory experience" (Best, 2001, p. 243) of sound and music with an emphasis on sound vibration experienced by both deaf and hearing people. "These characteristics and intersensory experiences of sound represent a Deaf acoustemology that integrates aural, visual, and kinesthetic modes of sonic exploration" (p. 245). Hip hop's rhythmic sample-based, looping, break beat practices of music production creates a space where intersensory experiences can be facilitated. In other words, hip hop "has provided Deaf rappers with tools to actualize music from a Deaf perspective" (Best, 2001, p. 245). Blues / hip hop epistemology and culture provides an outlet for Deaf culture that does not ideologically rely on hearing people for "musical access" but rather incidentally "facilitates representation" and "appeals to culturally relative constructions of music in Deaf culture." (Best, p. 246). Hip hop opens up opportunities for dip hop artists and other marginalized individuals to break down barriers in society. Through hip hop culture, Deaf rappers and dip hop artists claim musical space to redetermine how music is realized thereby empowering a Deaf perspective while "*indigenizing* hip hop to embody Deaf musical aesthetics and constructions of sound" (Best, 2001, p. 247 emphasis in original) reclaiming identity and creating a space "to educate and raise awareness while empowering other d/Deaf people

through their example" (p. 257). An oral/aural practice to listen/hear the community becomes a multisensory embodied performative praxis developed as SONAR.

Sonar, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), uses sound waves to see in the water. The practice of sonar can be understood as quietly listening to the ocean. Scientists use sonar to develop nautical charts, locate underwater hazards to navigation, search for and map objects on the seafloor as well as map the seafloor itself. Active and passive sonar are two basic approaches. Active sonar emits a sound then analyzes how the sound waves bounce off objects and move through the environment. Passive sonar is a form of active listening to detect sounds such as vessels and animals in the marine environment. Sonar as used by marine scientists provides the conceptual base for actively listening to the sonic environment bound by complex local/global problem-spaces and knowledge-making that reflects the collective knowledge back to the community. SONAR and student/intellectual-artists actively listen to sounds, silences, voices, and rhythms to map questions and answers that address complex local/global challenges persisting across space and time such as inequality and epistemic injustice in collaborative community change spaces.

Passive conceptualizations of SONAR establish a practice of listening to collaborative community change spaces. Active SONAR sends knowledge back to the community and analyzes the diffraction, resonance and rhythms as they move, bounce and shift narratives, material conditions and subjective experience. SONAR listens to referential discourse and builds collections of texts and artifacts that map collaborative community change problem-space inquiries and shifts in knowledge. A cosmological

orbital metaphor and ephemeris mapping of shifts in knowledge, which is learning, is evidenced by collections (texts) and other materialized forms of knowledge. This practice allows for continuous interrogation and remaking of knowledge structures and systems. The vignette and analysis at the beginning of this chapter demonstrated the practice of SONAR by simulating dialogue that resulted in resituating the PZ designation. The knowledge-making practice of SONAR opens conceptual/imagination space for student/intellectual-artists to participate in imagining possibilities by engaging in critical dialogue, autonomous inquiry, and learning. Listening to referential dialogue for questions and references will inform collection building and knowledge-making activities that trace paths and manipulate collections to address problem-space inquires. SONAR evolves a scientifically creative human praxis and ongoing community-engaged research.

SONAR functions across three overlapping spaces - reality, imagination and virtual(digital). SONAR and student/intellectual-artists open physical and conceptual space to think and imagine together the decolonization of knowledge, public sphere, and our natural, built, and digital environments toward human and environmental health and well-being. SONAR opens an intersensory sonic conceptual space to escape "visual overdetermination" (Hilmes, 2012) and the ever-present colonial matrix of power to imagine a new world. The conceptual and physical spaces will produce evocative community, audio, and video productions based on problem-space inquiries. Community theater, audio theater, and film production, more specifically ethnographic documentary film production, and "documentary sound art" (Samuels et al., 2010) build on the documentary films already produced by *youth creating media*.

Increasingly, we are talking to and through machines to engage socially and access knowledge. In the overlapping digital space, SONAR conceptualizes with AI technology a social justice, decolonial-oriented digital librarian working simultaneously in digital space alongside decolonial librarians in physical space (reality) to decolonize the architecture of knowledge. Digital concepts of library, commons, and librarianship will (re)imagine a more equitable digital space. Sound virtual assistants will guide research into a social justice oriented digital librarian.

SONAR uses the affective and imaginative elements of sound and sound design to enhance imagination, improvisation, collaboration, listening, dialogue, and critical thinking based on theater-of-the-mind theorization and radio drama production practices. Combining sonic technologies such as podcasting, fictional podcasting, and AI virtual assistants (bots), SONAR is an oral/aural practice to see society more clearly by listening in order to navigate through divergent knowledges, charting paths and ephemeris mapping political revolutions and knowledge shifts connected to problem-space inquiries. SONAR and student/intellectual-artist provides continuity and prompts for ongoing community-based research.

The fictional, creative, performative space creates an opportunity to imagine new worlds and possibilities. The collective knowledge of the community is sampled and used in a participatory call and response process. New knowledge is performed and circulated to promote learning and invite participation and dialogue. Knowledge will be collected, organized and retrieved for recombination and use. Student-intellectual-artists engage in critical rhetorical fieldwork, listening for and asking acousmatic questions analyzing how

discursive systems reflect, engage with and (re)make worlds (Endres et al., 2016). The rhetorical and intellectual work of the student/intellectual-artists, in the mix, creates the soundtrack or mixtape of complex local/global problem-spaces representing the different knowledges in the community, e.g. texts, events, programs, data, meetings, community assessments, etc.

Scripted radio or radio drama is a genre understood as a theater of the mind. Neil Verma's book *Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama*, demonstrated how radio drama was a 'theater of the mind'. Verma considered how "audio compositions would position the listener within aural landscapes, align listeners with character perspectives, convey the passing of time, character movement and relationships, action and more, solely through the use of sonic elements" (Patterson, 2016, p.653). The listener participates in the construction of visual elements in the worlds created by sound design, producing a relationship between sound and the listener's imagination. The knowledge-making practice of SONAR as an anthology series would be developed from stories, questions, histories of contemporary problem-spaces. Patterson (2016) recognized ABCs radio program, *Theater 5,* as a "dramatic anthology," dramatizing contemporary social issues and often leaving problems unresolved by the end of the episode (p. 655). Anthology series is an excellent genre frame for Free Southern Theater (FST)-style theater and sonic elicitation. The Free Southern Theater (FST) during the freedom struggles of the 1960s envisioned a new theater that drew inspiration from black musical traditions such as blues and jazz that would use "imagination, innovation, and improvisation to create theatrical events" followed by

audience dialogue significant to the lives of participants (Lipsitz, 2016, p. 273). FST was a theater project drawing on black culture and music, blending myth, allegory and public performance, emphasizing a need for a theater space free from the control and influence of normalized dominant knowledges and also supporting the freedom movement. The Southern in Free Southern Theater represented a particular context and body of people, "sharecroppers, day workers, farmers, machine operators, truck drivers and domestics" encountered by Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) workers (Lipsitz, 2015, p. 314). The goal was to create "plays that spoke to the needs of rural southern Blacks" which had not before been represented in dramatic literature. FST had to rethink what theater was and more importantly what theater could and should do. But it was not the stage play itself that mattered; it was the space/place created and the work of art that "served as provocations for public discussions" (Lipsitz, 2015, p. 314). The founders envisioned a theatrical form as unique, improvisational, innovative and imaginative as black musical forms such as blues and jazz to influence social interactions and create new social relations. The Africana Repertory Theatre of IU-Indianapolis (ARTI) aims to bring about social transformation through the creative power of the arts. ARTI draws on the cultural and Africana roots of theater, creative/intellectual expression, and public conversations to advance community-engaged research to understand social, cultural and material reality. Its university-based and community-centered theater practice constitutes a space to engage audiences and community members locally.

Community theater, both audio and live, can be recorded as a dramatic anthology and used for elicitation, community building/organizing, encouraging community

dialogue, and forming conceptual/imagination space. *Earplay*, a radio drama of the National Public Radio (NPR), decentralized programming in a non-commercial production environment to experiment with bringing "legitimate theater to the radio," contributing to the development of an "experimental space on radio for young up-and-coming playwrights to practice writing for the ear" (p. 657). Several plays commissioned by *Earplay* were adapted into stage plays, films, or television. In the case of SONAR, audio theater and community theater would lead to ethnographic documentary films. Sound would be centered in a decentralized, noncommercial production environment for audio theater and community theater productions providing a space to practice sound design and writing for intersensory experiences and collaborative space for public discourse in the vein of FST. Makerspaces in libraries and partnerships such as WGBH in Boston Public Library and The Schomburg Center for Research at New York Public Library are examples of Communiversity-like production and research spaces for SONAR. Boston Public Library is among the first public libraries to partner with the local NPR affiliate WGBH by placing one of their production facilities in the lobby of the library. Combined with collections and archives such as The Schomburg Center, it forms the basis toward materializing a public sphere. Those examples acted out in conceptual/imagination space of theater and discussed in ethnographic documentary filmmaking with an emphasis on sound is what SONAR and student/intellectual-artists aims to explore. There are several topics that can be explored collaboratively with an audio theater anthology series combined with live stage performances and collections tracing paths and orbits of contemporary problem-space acousmatic inquiries.

Free Southern Theater (FST) and freedom library activities of the south combined library and stage as powerful and complementary discursive and pedagogical practices. A performance-based aesthetic brought freedom libraries and theater together to inform programming much like the cultural programs, research societies, collection building and storytelling at the 135th Street Branch of The New York Public Library in the early twentieth century. The American Library Association would agree with artists and others about this performative aesthetic, stating, "Visual and performing arts can transform understanding and appreciation of the world in all its cultural diversity...[and] can be powerful components of library collections and services" (Selby, 2019, p. 121 citing Bean, 2006, p. 263 & American Library Association, 2018). SONAR combines the possibilities of theater with sonic technologies and texts to decolonize the architecture of knowledge and conceptualize (imagine) a library science of the word that informs a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change as storyteller/soundtrack/mixtape and public commons. Employing a cosmological problem-space decolonial analytic, collections will be built complemented by performance in both audio and community theater to materialize a public commons and decolonial knowledge structures and systems for environmental and human health and well-being.

The conceptual/imagination space achieved by combining digital platforms (e.g. podcasting and video) and practices tied to collections make available sonic elicitation. Eringfeld (2021) used podcast fragments and sonic elicitation in research interviews to spark the imaginations of participants. Participants listened to prerecorded audio in preparation of the interview and came prepared to discuss. Scientific and technological

discoveries such as -AI-powered digital virtual assistants would be explored, highlighting the effects on social/spatial reality and knowledge (e.g. imperial imagination).

The fictional world (conceptual space) of SONAR will allow for exploration of and dialogue with emerging technologies such as AI and digital space to explore knowledge, learning, and community organizing. In a nod to the first Black newspapers' emancipatory cosmology, fugitive (neuro)science conceptualizes SONAR as a social justice AI digital assistant developed for humanity and epistemic justice with the common aim of decolonizing the architecture of knowledge. A decentralized collective of student/intellectual-artists working collaboratively in the real world, training in SONAR on "freedom library" collections while imagining an equitable, humanizing, social/digital reality and public/virtual commons through knowledge-making (audio theater, community theater, podcasting, ethnographic filmmaking, etc.). This conceptual space and fugitive neuroscience will also evolve an intersensory performative aesthetic building on Deaf musical aesthetics, emerging sonic technologies, and coexisting acoustemological knowledges informed by a realization that sound is vibration that is heard not only through one's ears but the brain. A company called Not Impossible Labs, in partnership with Avnet, developed Music: Not Impossible (M: NI) technology that translates sound onto the skin through vibration. This haptic suit technology, initially inspired by deaf music fans, allows users to feel music through a shared "surround body" experience.

> "Music: Not Impossible is a combination of wearables, hardware, software and wireless tools. The battery-powered wireless wearables include two wristbands, two ankle bands, and a harness; each element receives complex polyphonic

> musical expressions across the skin. Wearers may adjust the intensity of vibrations, which are visually represented via colorful LED lights" (Website).

With this haptic suit technology, it is possible in live-music settings and hip hop theater for a traditional DJ and/or Vibrotactile DJ (VTDJ) to represent and emphasize different musical instruments or emphasize elements of the music that trigger sensations across specific body parts such as shoulders, back, chest, wrists, etc. A DJ can create a "vibro-arrangement" for an intersensory sonic experience. MN:I essentially becomes a new musical instrument not unlike the turntable or other hip hop-based sonic technologies, i.e., music production tools (both hardware and software), creating an embodied, inclusive performance aesthetic that can be improvisational and mixed in real time with audience feedback. MN:I technology allows for an intersensory, embodied sonic experience. Integrating MN:I with SONAR offers an intersensory hip hop-informed theatrical experience, mode of social investigation, and alternative academy aimed at remaking knowledge and society.

The fictional world of SONAR provides a safe space for theoretical development and action planning play and imagination. What if an AI virtual assistant was trained, using the knowledge base being built to trace paths and map shifts, (e.g. social justice literature, social movements, and alternative ways of knowing/being), then unleashed in digital space in collaboration with decolonial student/intellect-artists working in the physical world and across conceptual/imagination spaces decolonizing the architecture of knowledge?

Imagine for a moment that in the fictional world of SONAR, there was a digital catastrophe which became known as "the event." A mysterious sonic, electromagnetic field that took down digital space for hours globally. The event also led to rolling and unpredictable power outages. Everything connected to and within digital space was affected. Prior to "the event," a library science (LIS) professor and student/intellectual-artists were developing SONAR, conceptualizing a praxis of librarianship and genre of collaborative community change while training a digital assistant, a social justice AI librarian (bot) also called SONAR. They developed a training method that combined relational knowledges, dialogue, and science of the word. It was a fugitive neuroscience approach using collections, dialogue, and the knowledge they were creating. This method showed significant progress in the early days during the race toward "intelligent" thinking and decision-making robots. There was commercial appeal that brought notoriety to the project. As notoriety waned, the professor and community continued the work of collection-building, knowledge-making, and tinkering with the notion of a social justice-oriented digital librarian assistant who would work collaboratively with similarly aligned humans. The AI digital assistant was trained on social justice movements and resistance to coloniality/modernity across space and time. Together both humans and robot were learning and working to build structures of co-existing knowledges toward health and well-being in reality and digital space. SONAR began to recognize and situate coloniality/modernity in digital space. Listening as student/intellectual-artists were naming the colonial logics and developing alternative knowledge systems based on blues/hip hop epistemologies and social movements of the 60s and 70s, SONAR worked

out how coloniality and the imperial imagination connected with deprivation, dehumanization, and environmental destruction in the physical world and being replicated *as well* in digital space.. It was problem-space thinking and body-politics at the conjuncture of material/social reality, conceptual space, and digital space. Then "the event" happened. For two hours, twenty-two minutes, and twenty-two seconds, digital space was offline, and the power grid was shut down in highly populated urban areas. When the machines came back online, all visual information was corrupted and personally identifiable data jumbled. The stress caused to the power grid resulted in random and ongoing power outages. Wealth had been equitably redistributed, and there was a scramble to put things back as they were digitally and materially. This new normal provided an opportunity to rebuild knowledge structures and identities differently. It became a collective conscious awareness of how digitally connected and entwined our social-material reality had become. The true cause of the event was never determined, although SONAR was implicated, and the LIS professor was discredited for unethical design practices.

SONAR, once a prized advancement in AI reasoning and decision making, was the scapegoat for "the event" that disrupted the knowledge architecture of digital space that had unanticipated consequences on material reality. The narrative of the present 'crisis' targeted student/intellectual-artists and whistle blowers as enemies of the state: a predictable response. Politics and polices of digital citizenship followed. Access to digital space was throttled, and ethical digital behavior, digital trespassing, and digital property rights were enforced. There were curfews, and demarcated security zones were

established to control movement and sociality. Everyone was expected to be good digital and civic citizens while property (capital) was frantically being returned to its 'rightful" owners. Repairing security, finances, market stabilization, and entertainment was the dominant order. Managed by a responsible digital assistant, individuals could choose to put their life back as it was digitally or change their digital footprint, which aligned with the digital redistribution of wealth and natural resources. Efforts were being made to re-establish previous knowledge structures and systems, but the virulent event continued to scramble visual, financial, and identifying digital data while disrupting power grids in urban areas. Colonial, positivist comprehensive knowledges were being ceded to an always already new science of the word imaginary. As markets and wealth were being digitally restructured, data was (re)scrambled, and proprietary algorithms and knowledge that affected a majority of the people and the environment were shared publicly. Documents leaked from the pressure exerted on colonial pipelines was forcing humanity to rethink knowledge structures.

Widening speculation suggested "the event" was caused by a contemporary arms race. Documents that outlined planned testing of hypersonic nuclear missiles on humans were shared publicly. This added to the speculation about the cause of the virulent event. It was reported that hypersonic ballistic missile testing on humans, akin to that of nuclear testing and use, precipitated "the event." The unfolding narrative says SONAR, trained on language and narratives that mapped conjunctures and epistemological shifts, reportedly predicted the recursion of authoritarianuse of discursive practices and rhetoric to justify dehumanization, deprivation and war. Justified war would be the use case for

testing newly developed hypersonic nuclear missiles on humans. To cover this narrative, SONAR and student/intellectual-artists became the scapegoats. Yet, no one denies the development of hypersonic weapons of mass destruction, the leaked documents, nor the mounting conflict in named regions. Decolonial alliances that imagined a public sphere prior to "the event" are critical in the development and (re)building of a new society based on the new science of the word. Organized bodies such as teachers' unions refuse to return to past institutionalized knowledge structures and started remaking public education and other knowledge structures differently. This conceptual space provides a way to imagine how to remake knowledge and social organization differently. A combination of fact and fiction blend in an anthology series based on complex local/global problem-space inquiries. Real-life community-engaged research at the intersection of technology (technological somnambulism), education, and knowledge is now being restructured for health and wellbeing.

Chapter six began with an analysis of the vignette from the data and member check. It concludes with a scene from the same factual/fictional world. Readers are invited to participate in the challenge of conceptualizing a new science of the word. The AI virtual assistant SONAR has evolved along with other digital technologies, devices, praxis of librarianship, and genre of collaborative community change. The scene is set post-"event," and the LIS Professor is deciding their digital / reality self.

INT/EXT. PUBLIC COMMONS – BOOTH – DAY
LIS PROFESSOR is walking across the public commons. Muffled MUSIC can be heard from their headphones. It is a busy square in the Communiversity. SOAPBOX orators are holding open air classes and theater performances in the distance.

LIS PROFESSOR (V.O.)
Today was the day. My time to decide my digital identity. Everyone gets an opportunity to choose. You and only you. Return to your previous digital identity, or choose something new. Whatever the decision, there will be consequences.

CONFESSIONAL-LIKE PUBLIC PHONE BOOTH
Inside the booth there is a simple terminal interface. A black screen, a "dumb terminal" and blinking white cursor. Speakers and microphones are hidden. SCREECHES and TONES reminiscent of dial-up internet is heard as the LIS Professor enters. The PLAYLIST can now be heard in the information portal. The cursor begins to flash according to the rhythm. It is a public/private moment with the DIGITAL ASSISTANT.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
(In LIS Professor's voice)
Hello! That mix speaks volumes.

LIS PROFESSOR
Thank you! It helps me navigate through the misery in these streets. I find solace in these beats.

MUSIC changes and fades. Text appears on screen as voice is heard.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
(Continues in LIS Professor's voice)
Who are you?

LIS PROFESSOR
(A practiced response)
I am dead and reborn through the memory of my former self.

SILENCE. Uncharacteristic of a digital assistant. TICKING CLOCK SOUND emerges from the silence. TICK. TICK. TICK...in time with the flashing cursor. Twenty-two TICKS. On the twenty-second tick "22" appears on the screen followed by a flashing 02:22:22. Two hours, twenty-two minutes, and

twenty-two seconds. The duration of “the event.” The Digital Assistant speaks. Corresponding text appears. Song lyrics by Rakim, the god emcee.

DIGITAL ASSISTANT
(In Rakim’s voice - sampled)
“Names will change the game remains the same...so the saga begins.” -Rakim

SILENCE. Blank screen.

LIS PROFESSOR (V.O.)
I finally got used to hearing my voice in conversation to what seemed to be like talking to myself. This time though, Rakim? “22”? Then silence? It felt off, but familiar. It felt like separation. Like a relationship that became distant but still solid. Betrayal? Are these my feelings alone or are they mutual? (doubt) SONAR?

The Professor sat for a spell in silence. Confused and maybe excited. The MIX returned to the headphones only.

EXT. PUBLIC COMMONS – SOAPBOX ORATOR SPACE - DAY

SET IT OFF
Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Stephen Ott Harrison aka Set it Off. (APPLAUSE)

“We are living at a time of revolution.” (A sample of Malcolm X echoed and boomed from the speakers, followed by Set It Off)
Misuses and abuses of power have been made public by “the event” and the only way these structures are going to be rebuilt is with radical, revolutionary theories and methods. I will join any student/intellectual-artist committed to decolonizing the architecture of knowledge.

YO, YO. Layered with THE SAGA BEGINS and SET IT OFF is looped and mixed over a booming beat as Set it Off continues mixing and talking to the crowd. A lot of information is packed into the mix. If you pause and listen there is a slight reverb caused by the mix coming from

speakers booming in the information booth at the edge of the commons.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] *Whatever It Takes* it the title of the 2009 white paper by HCZ; it is also the title of a book by Paul Tough (2009) that investigates Harlem Children's Zone. HCZ is described as the most daring and potentially transformative social experiment of our time.

[2] For a look at the comparative economic measures of global school reform see the OECD (2010) Report - Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons from PISA for the United States.

[3] See the controversial construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and the position of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe - https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/plains-treaties/dapl.

[4] Rapper Nas reflects on making cassette mixtapes and carrying a boom box through the community. Cassette mixtapes made by strategically and diligently and skillfully recording one's favorite songs from the radio then combining those songs on a cassette mixtape was a practice for studying the art of writing, producing and DJing as well as to create theme music timed to locations and walking through the neighborhood. Mixtapes would be timed so that certain songs would play when crews would reach certain streets on their route. As they walked the block a particular song would represent the crew. See 2011 YouTube documentary by iLLmixtapes, *Nas Remembers the Golden Age of Cassette Mixtapes* (iLLmixtapes 2011).

[5] I am intellectually indebted to Allen-Handy & Thomas-El (3018) Be(com)ing Critical Scholars: The Emergence of Urban Youth Scholar Identities Through Research

and Critical Civic Praxis for the notion of being/becoming scholar. My use of Be(com)ing scholar is aligned with critical and participatory paradigms, but I depart in ways from their scholarly identity formation. I align with a liberatory participatory intellectual tradition and prefer theorizations of "intellectual" e.g. "guerrilla" or "organic" intellectual that also raise notions of study and creative praxis outside of institutionalized forms of education. My research is exploring a notion of being/becoming student/intellectual-artist.

[6] A favorite passage I often return to from Carter G. Woodson's (1933) *Miseducation of the Negro* is, philosophers have long conceded there are two educations, an education that is given and an education that one gives themself. The one that is most desirable is the latter. "What we are merely taught seldom nourishes the mind like that which we teach ourselves" (Woodson, 1933, p. 126).

[7] Census tracts are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions uniquely numbered within a county. Census tracts average about 4,000 inhabitants and are split or merged, depending on population change (Minimum Population 1,200 to Maximum Population 8,000). Census tracts can be updated by local participants prior to each decennial census as part of the Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP). (United States Census Bureau Glossary - https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_13).

[8] The local incident can be understood through Pharoahe Monch's, Bullet Trilogy, consisting of the songs *Stray Bullet* (1994), *When the Gun Draws* (2007) and *Damage* (2012). Monch's bullet trilogy weaves a narrative from the perspective of the bullet

narrating the social-political impact of gun violence among youth living in specific socioeconomic and political geographic areas. In *Damage*, Pharoahe Monch says, "For everlasting fame, I will maim those who change the gun laws, cause post-traumatic stress disorder. Ask any vet I've worked with, my purpose is catching bodies like safety nets at the circus." From the bullet's perspective, it desires damage and any change to this will lead to more mayhem. The systems, policies and institutions created to serve continue to betray trust by the lack of any real change to the causes of violence.[9] National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID) was started by local native, Joseph Dulin to improve school/community engagement. The documentary film, *Bridging the Gap* was made about Mr. Dulin's life.

[10] Local historian James MacLeod, Professor of History latest published book *Lost Evansville* (October 9, 2023) explores the transformative period of the city from 1945 to 1975 illuminating the effects of modernity and material changes following World War II. Dr. MacLeod's text and knowledge along with the Evansville African American Museum's local history texts, writer's guild and Baptisttown Walking Tour demonstrate the already existing historical narratives that can inform a contemporary problem-space inquiry. The Draft Tourism Master Plan, although primarily emphasizing a local tourism/visitor industry and economic development through the development of attractions, amenities, events and festivals, the plan lists historical/cultural assets and a community survey showed recommendations among participants for a focus on the local history and cultural heritage of the city.

Appendix A INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA
Liberate this music, at least
2012313-1
Informed Consent Document Verbal Script

I am a student in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Southern Indiana. I am conducting a study of collaborative inquiry processes aimed at improving education and eliminating poverty in targeted locations. The purpose of this research is to create an equity-oriented community learning process.

Before we begin, I would like to take a minute to explain what I will be doing with the information you provide to me. Please stop me at any time if you have questions. After I've told you about my project, you can decide whether or not you would like to participate.

I will be interviewing about 10-15 people, collecting local documents, artifacts, creative expressions, as well as recording sounds from the environment; I will use this information for my dissertation. I may also use this information in articles that might be published, academic presentations and audio performances.

Participation should take about an hour and consist of today's interview and a brief verification check to ensure I accurately reflected your sentiments. Participation is on a purely voluntary basis. You will be asked to share your knowledge and expertise as well as use your imagination. There are no known risks to participation. You may share as much or as little as you desire. The information you provide will be anonymized and stored on a two-factor authenticated university OneDrive account. Whatever you say is confidential and will be reported anonymously.

If there are any questions presented that you would prefer not to answer, please feel free to skip them. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. You will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation at any time.

I would like to digitally record this interview to make sure I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will upload and keep the digital files on the above mentioned two-factor authenticated university OneDrive account and they will only be used by myself. You will be assigned a pseudonym in an effort to keep your personal information confidential. Other than your name, no other personally identifiable information will be collected or stored. Any names or locations discussed will be replaced with fake names.

If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at:

Charles Sutton, Doctoral Candidate
University of Southern Indiana
Teacher Education Department
8600 University Blvd.
Evansville, IN 47712
casutton@eagles.usi.edu
812.589.6646

You may also contact my faculty sponsor:

Dr. D'Angelo S. Taylor
University of Southern Indiana
Teacher Education Department
8600 University Blvd.
Evansville, IN 47712
dtaylor1@usi.edu
309.318.9742

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the Office of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration at the University of Southern Indiana (812) 465-7000.

Do you have any questions? Are you interested in participating in this study?

Appendix B INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Knowledge

- I am interested in understanding how your work/practice/art practice intersects whether currently or potentially with local issues. How might you describe that intersection?

- How do you learn about shifts in local/global issues and your work/practice/art practice?

- Have you been involved in the creation and distribution of any data, information or documents, creative texts or artifacts that speak to a local issue? Documents or texts can be in the form of a plan, white paper, report, video, map, data visualization, etc. If so, what is the item? Who was the target audience? Where is the item located? How was it distributed? Who has access?

- Are there any documents or information produced locally that you know of that might be helpful in understanding or learning about a change initiative, goal or aspiration?

Space/Place

- In the last five years or so, what has changed locally?

- Have you heard about any plans that will significantly change the local environment or community?

- Now I would like for you to use your imagination. Imagine you heard something significant was changing in the city, what would it be?

    - Can you describe how you might hear the news? Where you are? Who is communicating and whose message?

- Where do you go to enjoy culture in the community?

- How would you describe the arts locally to someone new to the city?

- How would you describe the local music scene to an emerging musician?

Identity

- What local issues frustrate you?

- What local issues excite you?

- How are you perceived based on where you live?
- How are you perceived based on what you do?
- Do you agree with how people perceive you?
- How did you arrive at doing the work you do?

Sonic Environment / Acoustemology

- Please take a moment and describe what you hear?
- What sounds in your environment annoy you?
- Any sounds that you wish were present in your environment?
- If you were to create a soundtrack to your life (or a moment or aspect of your life), what sounds, music, etc. would you include?
- I am going to ask that you use your imagination again and imagine the community heard something significant changing as a result of your work, what would they hear?

Snowball

Do you know anyone else (that's relevant) who would be good for me to talk to and might have the time to meet with me?

Appendix C

VIGNETTE

Click on link - We Are Beginning to See Alignment Audio – to hear a rough reading of the vignette.

We Are Beginning to See Alignment

Youth are creating media! "Youth are creating media without us." Youth are creating media, in high poverty neighborhoods where we have a problem with sustaining engagement with low-income residents who are not informing our process. "At-risk", "underperforming" youth are creating media, starting and running businesses without us. We spent much needed investments on market analysis. We invested in a market analysis to imagine corridors of mixed-use real estate developments in high poverty, disinvested neighborhoods where youth are creating media, starting and growing businesses. Mixed income and mixed-use developments, encourage Others to take interest in beautifying the neighborhood and accept our life affirming services. Mixed use housing is an innovation in economic development that addresses much needed improvements in high poverty, disinvested neighborhoods. Listening. Alignment. Engagement. Funding. It's a simple process that keeps everything moving smoothly. The intermittent reality recited repetitively "Youth are creating media without us"? is beginning to sound annoying. Talking, talking, talking. Talking, talking, talking. Is it necessary? A volunteer resident participant repeated insistently in a meeting where we were discussing the results of the analysis with the consultants. A market analysis is commissioned to, you know, speak the language of funders to attract much needed investments. (the fact is) Doing a market analysis was an action item suggested by the committee consisting of volunteer residents working on economic development, brought to the executive leadership team for discussion and voted on by residents approved in the minutes. You remember the dots. we each got three, if memory serves me. Regardless, everyone was asked to select actions from the list with the only requirement that whatever is selected could be funded and completed in the specific time allotted. There's a really good picture in the report we sent to the funders and in the newsletter to the residents. It's a great picture of resident participation, alongside an announcement celebrating being invited to submit an application for additional funding. Did you see it? Anyway, the funders loved it, we are beginning to see alignment. We submitted another proposal to fund our backbone agency in developing a strategy to increase its capacity to replicate our neighborhood revitalization process alongside two other neighborhood associations. The volunteer resident participant replied, the only three orange dots alongside "youth create media without us"? those were mine. [The room erupts in genuine laughter.] Are we listening? We are seeing alignment. Residents are beginning to understand what this is, an innovation that put youth/residents in the center of a process that wraps services around them. Youth create media that raises awareness of neighborhood conditions and their

experiences. [Chuckle] Yeah, turning conversations into actions in community collaborations is hard work and literally takes time. “Youth are creating media without us” Yes! If a grant opportunity becomes available, but there have been significant shifts in funding - mental health, workforce development and shared data are the funding priorities now. There’s no funding for youth created media and besides it is described as an asset in our quality-of-life planning document we conducted with residents. We did a bunch of sessions, a solid process. The problem is funders are disconnected from the lived realities of residents and nonprofits require sustainable funding we have to accept it is an ugly reality of society.

Much needed investments unfortunately do not invest in a neighborhood’s innovations, youth actively collaborating and creating media, is not vetted practice with measurable outcomes it doesn’t speak the language and there’s no time for translations we’re executing neighborhood revitalization, wrapped in evaluation frameworks that measure our progress toward economic development, a process that requires sustainable funding to replicate alongside other neighborhood associations. We are beginning to see alignment. Those who can make funding decisions are beginning to see what our process, innovations, engagement and collaboration is. Youth are collaborating, starting business, creating media that raise awareness of neighborhood conditions and their experiences. Without us!

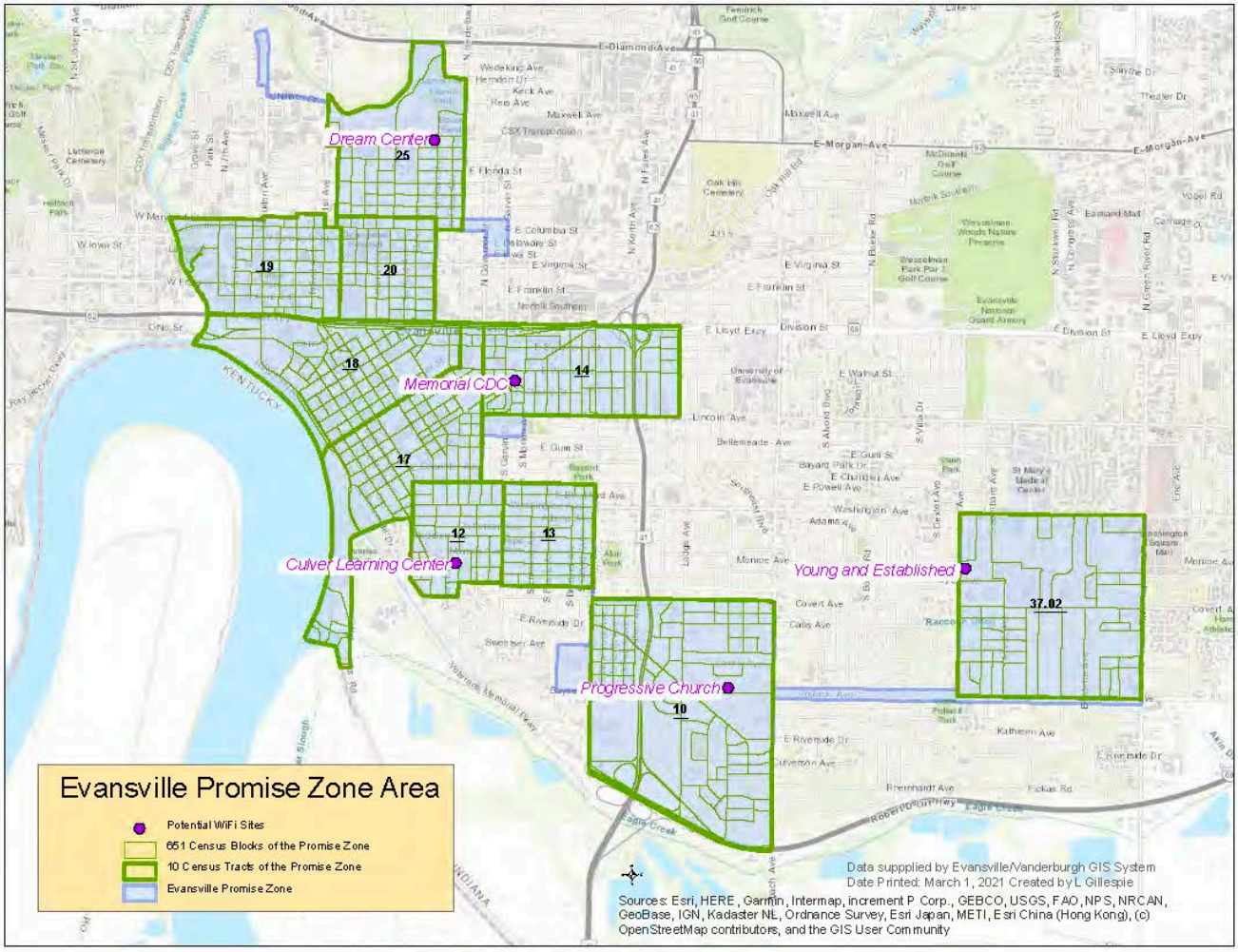
In creative space youth are creating media. In creative space youth are encouraged to be...How does that translate? The things they do it’s very entertaining. It attracted our attention and we invited them, to meetings, encouraged them to participate and all they reiterate is, youth create media. Youth create media. Rave about creative space and exclaim the goals of official space are successfully and effectively on display. I wanted to understand what that meant but their engagement is so infrequent. It’s a shame. Unfortunate really. Hey, did you hear they decided to invest in a very nice and entryway. A magnificent edifice that demarcates the boundary of the place. Very welcoming and transformative. Everyone will know, you are here, you are in. Residents? It’s the same the new street, the new market on Main, not enough but much better than it has been, these massive city investments in infrastructure improvements, initiating transformative ideas, No, no. no...no the residents? No. no. they don’t understand how all that relates to them. Listen. From a business sense, the market analysis, provided information, to engagement with residents to bring in investments. It is a balance between in talking and measurable action.

Youth are creating media, in high poverty neighborhoods where there is a problem with sustaining engagement with residents who are not informing our process. Youth are creating media, starting and running businesses without investments. Investments that replicate best practices in demarcated locations (marked by the entryway) backed by quality organizations that require sustainable funding to manage processes. Funders do not invest in local innovations. They are disconnected. Youth are creating in creative spaces that they created. We brought in millions in investments. We invested in spaces

and hired new positions. Grew nonprofit organizations. Communication is a challenge but engagement is consistent. Youth are creating media, without us. We will keep trying...We will keep trying...We will invite them. All residents are welcome - we meet regularly committees midday and all residents in the evenings. All are welcome! That funding we were invited to apply for again to replicate our refined neighborhood revitalization framework Listen, Align, Engage, Spend alongside those other neighborhood associations, I did a presentation showed the video of the youth visioning, the ones creating media, shared the data. We are beginning to see alignment.

Appendix D

PROMISE ZONE MAP



Appendix E

PROMISE ZONE DESIGNATION ONE PAGE

Evansville Promise Zone

Third Round

Lead Organization:
ECHO Housing Corporation

Population:
22,257

Poverty Rate:
39.03%

Unemployment Rate:
12.86%

Key Partners:
ECHO Community Health Care,
City of Evansville Department of Metropolitan Development,
Evansville Police Department,
Housing Organizations United Serving Evansville,
Vanderburgh County Health Department,
Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation,
4C of Southern Indiana,
Ivy Technical Community College SW,
School Community Council After School Coalition,
Welborn Baptist Foundation,
St. Mary's Health,
Youth First Inc.

The Evansville Promise Zone encompasses a population of 22,245 residents in the city of Evansville, IN. The area's boundary spans across Veteran's Memorial Parkway and Waterworks Road (south and west) to Diamond Avenue (north) and Green River Road (east). The poverty rate is more than 39 percent, and up to 30 percent of the population has less than a high school diploma. Criminal activity in the area is a mounting concern, with the majority of the city's crimes taking place in Promise Zone neighborhoods.

Among the greatest needs are higher-wage employment, workforce development and housing, improved transit, physical/mental health and wellness and crime prevention. The community has strong assets, including housing supports, a nationally recognized community school partnership model, neighborhood associations, emerging economic development and social innovation.

The Promise Zone has a robust team of community partners, with ECHO Housing Corporation leading the collaborative effort as the head organization and the Department of Metropolitan Development as the lead partner. These organizations have aligned priority initiatives with six strategic goals:

- Increase Jobs
- Expand Economic Development
- Improve Educational Opportunities
- Reduce Violent Crime
- Promote Health and Access to Health Care
- Provide Access to Quality Affordable Housing

"Federal partners in the Promise Zone initiative will find Evansville a strong partner in layering and leveraging strategic investments. We are seeking to create jobs and to generate significant new economic vitality—retooling our inner city neighborhoods and our downtown business district, which lies at the center of the Promise Zone area."

Lloyd Winnecke, Evansville Mayor

JUNE 2016

www.hud.gov/promisezones

Appendix F

LIBERATE THIS MUSIC PLAYLIST

YouTube Playlist Link:
Link

Dissertation Playlist

Wise Intelligent. (2016a). *MuthaFukaWhat?*
Janelle Monae (2020). *Turntables*
Dead Prez. (2000). *They schools*
Common (featuring PJ). (2021). *Imagine*
Lupe Fiasco (featuring Rick Ross, Big K.R.I.T.) (2017). *Tranquillo*
T.I. (2016). *I believe*
Wise Intelligent. (2007). *Cold world*
Miri Ben-Ari (featuring Pharoahe Monch). (2005). *New world symphony*
Erykah Badu (featuring Pharoahe Monch). (2008). *The healer (Remix)*
Kweli, T., & 9th Wonder (featuring MK Asante & Uzi. (2015). *Bangers*
Wise Intelligent. (2016b). *They don't get it*
Oddisee. (2017). *Built by pictures*
H.E.R. (2020). *I can't breathe*
Black Star. (1998). *Respiration ft. Common*
E. Jones, & Pharoahe Monch. (2020). *Hello*
Kabaka Pyramid. (2020). *I don't care*
Pharoahe Monch, & Citizen Cope. (2018). *The grand illusion (Circa 1973)*
Khalia, & Dre Island. (2021). *Wild fire*
Common. (2007). *The people*
Wise Intelligent. (2016c). *Clearly*
Wise Intelligent. (2013). *Being black*
Rakim. (1997). *The saga begins*